

Kerri Childress, Editor  
 VISN 21  
 3801 Miranda Avenue  
 Palo Alto, CA 94304-1290  
 www.visn21.med.va.gov

## Where to find us!

### VA MEDICAL CENTER SAN FRANCISCO

4150 Clement Street  
 San Francisco, CA 94121-1598  
 (415) 221-4810

### VA DOWNTOWN S.F. VA OPC

401 3rd Street  
 San Francisco, Calif., 94107  
 (415) 551-7300

### VA EUREKA OPC

714 F Street  
 Eureka, CA 95501  
 (707) 442-5335

### VA SAN BRUNO OPC

1001 Sneath Lane  
 San Bruno, Calif., 94066  
 (650) 615-6000

### VA SANTA ROSA OPC

3315 Chanate Road  
 Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
 (707) 570-3855

### VA UKIAH OPC

630 Kings Court  
 Ukiah, CA 95482  
 (707) 468-7700

### VA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

#### VA MARTINEZ OPC

150 Muir Road  
 Martinez, CA 94553  
 (925) 372-2000

#### VA MEDICAL CENTER SACRAMENTO

10535 Hospital Way  
 Sacramento, CA 95655  
 (916) 843-7000

#### VA REDDING OPC

351 Hartnell Avenue  
 Redding, CA 96002  
 (530) 226-7555

#### VA CHICO OPC

280 Cohasset Road  
 Chico, CA 95926  
 (530) 879-5000

#### VA MCCLELLAN OPC

5342 Dudley Boulevard  
 McClellan Park, CA 95652-1074  
 (916) 561-7400

### VA MARE ISLAND OPC

201 Walnut Avenue  
 Mare Island, CA 94592  
 (707) 562-8200

### VA OAKLAND MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM

Oakland Army Base  
 2505 West 14th Street  
 Oakland, CA 94607  
 (510) 587-3400

### VA OAKLAND OPC

2221 Martin Luther King Jr. Way  
 Oakland, CA 94612  
 (510) 267-7800

### VA FAIRFIELD OPC

103 Bodin Circle, Bldg. 778  
 Travis AFB, CA 94535  
 (707) 437-1800

### VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

3801 Miranda Avenue  
 Palo Alto, CA 94304-1290  
 (650) 493-5000

### VA MENLO PARK DIVISION

795 Willow Road  
 Menlo Park, CA 94025  
 (650) 493-5000

### VA LIVERMORE DIVISION

4951 Arroyo Road  
 Livermore, CA 94550  
 (925) 373-4700

### VA CAPITOLA OPC

1350 N. 41st Street, Suite 102  
 Capitola, CA 95010  
 (831) 464-5519

### VA STOCKTON OPC

500 W. Hospital Road  
 Stockton, CA 95231  
 (209) 946-3400

### VA MODESTO OPC

1524 McHenry Blvd., Suite 315  
 Modesto, CA 95350  
 (209) 557-6200

### VA MONTEREY OPC

3401 Engineer Lane  
 Seaside, CA 93955  
 (831) 883-3800

### VA SAN JOSE OPC

80 Great Oaks Boulevard  
 San Jose, CA 95119  
 (408) 363-3011

### VA SONORA OPC

19747 Greenley Road  
 Sonora, CA 95370  
 (209) 588-2600

### VA CENTRAL CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

2615 E. Clinton Avenue  
 Fresno, CA 93703-2286  
 (559) 225-6100

### VA SOUTH VALLEY OPC

1050 North Cherry Street  
 Tulare, CA 93274  
 (559) 684-8703

### VA CASTLE OPC

3605 Hospital Road, Suite D  
 Atwater, CA 95301-5140  
 (209) 381-0105

### VA SIERRA NEVADA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

1000 Locust Street  
 Reno, NV 89502-2597  
 (775) 786-7200

### VA LA HONTAN VALLEY OPC

345 West A Street  
 Fallon, NV 89406

### VA SIERRA FOOTHILLS OPC

11985 Heritage Oak Place  
 Suite #1  
 Auburn, California 95603  
 (530) 889-0872

### VA CARSON VALLEY OPC

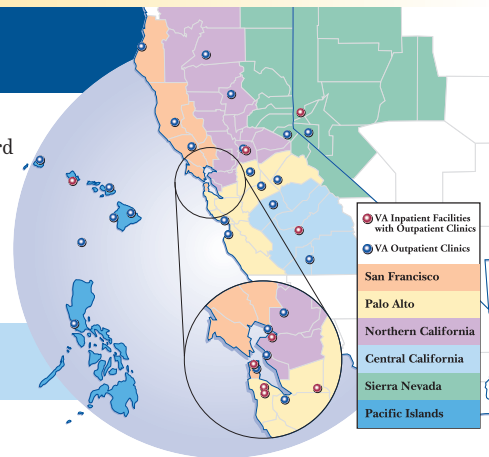
925 Ironwood Drive, Suite 2102  
 Minden, NV 89423  
 (888) 838-6256

### VA PACIFIC ISLANDS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

459 Patterson Road  
 Honolulu, HI 96819  
 (808) 433-0600

### VA PTSD RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

459 Patterson Road  
 Honolulu, HI 96819  
 (808) 433-0004



### VA MAUI OPC

203 Ho'ohana Street, Suite 303  
 Kahului, HI 96732  
 (808) 871-2454

### VA HILO OPC

1285 Waiuanuenue Ave., Suite 211  
 Hilo, HI 96720  
 (808) 935-3781

### VA KONA CBOC

75-377 Hualalai Road  
 Kailua-Kona, HI 96740  
 (808) 329-0774

### VA KAUAI OPC

3-3367 Kuhio Hwy, Suite 200  
 Lihue, HI 96766  
 (808) 246-0497

### VA GUAM CLINIC

US Naval Hospital  
 Wing E-200, Box 7608  
 Agana Heights, GU 96919  
 (671) 472-7250

### VA AMERICAN SAMOA CBOC

Old Army Reserve Building  
 Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799  
 (684) 699-3730

### VA REGIONAL OFFICE & OUTPATIENT CENTER MANILA

United States Department of  
 Veterans Affairs  
 PSC 501  
 FPO, AP 96515-1100  
 (011) 632-523-6300

# Veterans' health matters

## Serving Our Women Veterans

**I**n November 1994, the Center for Women Veterans was established in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under the Office of the Secretary. Its primary mission is to review VA programs and services for women veterans, and assure that they receive benefits and services on a par with male veterans, encounter no discrimination in their attempt to access them, and are treated with respect, dignity and understanding by VA service providers.

Currently, women make up approximately 15 percent of the active force, are serving in all branches of the military, and are eligible for assignment in most military occupational specialties, except for direct combat roles. The increase in the number of women serving in the military significantly impacts the services provided by the VA. Projections show that by the year 2010, women will comprise well over 10 percent of the veteran population, an increase of six percent over current figures.

VA has developed initiatives for women veterans to ensure that they receive the benefits to which they're entitled. Most VA regional offices, medical centers and vet centers have a designated Program Manager to assist women veterans in

accessing VA benefits and health care services. (Contact information for all Network 21 Women Program Managers can be found on page 2 of this issue.)

VA conducts research on a broad range of issues related to women's health care, including breast cancer, osteoporosis, mental health, post-traumatic stress disorder and access barriers to health care. The results of these projects have contributed to improve health care for all veterans within the VA network.

VA regional offices and health care facilities have continued to enhance women veterans' programs and initiatives related to outreach and personal assistance. It's important to recognize that the availability of specific programs may vary from facility to facility. Just as in your own community, not every hospital or service provider offers exactly the same programs and services.

VA recognizes the importance of the contributions made by women veterans in the service to their country and the price many have paid to preserve our freedoms. Our goal is to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits and health care services to which they are entitled by Law and are afforded these rights in a courteous and effective way. We take pride in being a provider of choice to millions of veterans. ■

## WOMEN *in the* MILITARY



**SERVICE ★ HONOR  
COURAGE**

### inside this issue:

- Women Veterans Program Managers..... p. 2
- Women's Trauma Recovery Program ..... p. 2
- VA National News..... p. 3
- VA Facility Highlights... p. 4
- A Laughing Matter ..... p. 6
- Word Search Puzzle ..... p. 6
- Resilience: A Tribute ..... p. 7
- Where to Find Us..... p. 8

## Women Veterans Program Managers

### Northern California Health Care System (Sacramento)

Julie LaGuardia, NP  
julie.laguardia@va.gov  
925-372-2494

### VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (Hawaii)

Janis Cruce, MSN, FNP  
janis.cruce@va.gov  
808-433-0477

### VA San Francisco Medical Center

Cheryl Wenell, RNP, MS  
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415-221-4810 X3956

### VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System (Reno)

Denise C. Haynes  
denise.haynes@va.gov  
775-328-1864

### VA Central California Health Care System (Fresno)

Dr. Adrienne French  
adrienne.french@va.gov  
559-225-6100 ext. 5446

### VA Palo Alto Health Care System

Ann Thrailkill, RNP, MSN, CS  
ann.thrailkill@va.gov  
650-493-5000, ext. 64153 ■

# Network 21 Program Serves Women Who Suffered Trauma

**R**ecently, several national and regional media outlets ran stories about a special program for women at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System at Menlo Park. Called the Women's Trauma Recovery Program (WTRP), it was the first VA residential program for women suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or military sexual trauma (MST).

The WTRP staff is reaching out to women who can benefit from this 60-day residential program for women veterans who are coping with the aftermath of trauma. "The program isn't for everyone," said Dr. Darrah Westrup, who oversees it. "The interpersonal demands pose a challenge to women who have been extremely isolated and find it difficult to trust others. If we could just reach these women early in their trauma years, we could save them so much pain," she said.

Women come to the program from all ages and walks of life. Most arrive on the brink of

emotional disaster and must share with each other secrets many of them held inside for decades. Women are treated for both combat PTSD and military sexual trauma.

The program at Menlo Park was established in 1992, and is a recognized model for women's trauma recovery, combining leading research, clinical expertise and an interdisciplinary approach to pursue a common mission – improving the mental health of women veterans.

"Our program is about facilitating that miraculous drive to recover," said Dr. Westrup. "We help women who've survived traumatic experiences learn how to live fulfilling lives, despite carrying heavy burdens. It's all about helping women reclaim their sense of self-worth and personal power."

To learn more about the program and/or how to be recommended for it, please visit [www.womenvetsptsd.va.gov](http://www.womenvetsptsd.va.gov), or talk to your local VA health care provider. ■



## New Secretary of Veterans Affairs Named



In December, **Dr. James B. Peake**, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and former Army Surgeon General, was sworn

in by President George W. Bush as the nation's sixth Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Secretary Peake stressed his commitment to easing the transition of our current generation of returning, combat experienced men and women and of "the opportunity to look to the future of this newest generation of combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan – getting it right for them and for their families."

Peake, who retired in 2004 as a three-star general, is a board-certified thoracic surgeon. His commands included the U.S. Army Medical Command, headquartered at Ft. Sam in Houston, Tex.; Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash.; the 44th Medical Brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C.; and the 18th Medical Command in Seoul, South Korea.

A native of St. Louis and a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Peake attended medical school after serving in Vietnam, where he earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Peake assumes leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the second largest cabinet department, with about 250,000 employees and a budget last year exceeding \$82 billion.

## Work Program Payments Ruled Tax-Free

Payments to veterans under two specific programs of the

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) – the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) and Incentive Therapy (IT) programs – are no longer taxable, according to the IRS. Veterans who paid tax on these benefits in the past three years can claim refunds.

Recipients of CWT and IT payments no longer receive a Form 1099 from VA. Veterans who paid tax on these benefits in tax years 2004, 2005 or 2006 can claim a refund by filing an amended tax return, using IRS Form 1040X.

The CWT and IT programs provide assistance to veterans unable to work and support themselves. Under the CWT program, VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by veterans, who learn new job skills, strengthen successful work habits and regain a sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Veterans are compensated by VA for their work and, in turn, improve their economic and social well-being.

## Millions Receive VA Cost-Of-Living Increases

As of January 1, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) began providing a 2.3 percent cost-of-living increase in disability compensation, pension, and survivors' benefits for millions of veterans and eligible family members. Under the disability compensation program, tax-free payments will generally range from \$117 to \$2,527 per month, depending on the degree of disability. Special payments up to \$7,232 per month apply to the most severely injured veterans.

The maximum annual pension disability rate for permanently and totally disabled veterans or veterans over age 65 can range from \$11,181 to \$18,654, based on household income and

whether veterans are in need of help with activities for daily living.

Dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) benefit payments for survivors of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected disability can range from \$1,091 to \$2,499 per month. Survivors of wartime veterans receiving death pension benefits are also entitled to an increase. The maximum annual payment rate for a surviving spouse can range from \$7,498 to \$11,985. Under each benefit program, additional allowances may be payable for helpless, minor or school age children.

For more information about VA benefits and services, visit VA's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or call 1-800-827-1000.

## VA Is Leader in Hospice and Palliative Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is providing hospice and palliative care to a growing number of veterans throughout the country as the need continues to rise for care and comfort at the end of life.

VA provides palliative care consultation services at each of its medical centers, and inpatient hospice care in many of its nursing homes throughout the country. VA contracts with community-based hospice programs to enhance VA's ability to provide this critical service when and where needed.

Nearly 9,000 veterans were treated in designated hospice beds at VA facilities in 2007, and thousands of other veterans were referred to community hospices to receive care in their homes. ■

# VA facility highlights

san francisco

## New 3D Imaging Laboratory Opens

The San Francisco VA Medical Center recently opened its newly remodeled 3D Imaging Laboratory – an expanded state-of-the-art laboratory that offers the latest in 3D visualization methods.

The concept of a 3D imaging laboratory was developed in 2002 by Judy Yee, MD, SFVAMC's Chief of Radiology. Dr.

Yee conducted novel research on Virtual Colonoscopy (CT Colonography) as a new technique for colorectal cancer screening. This test made use of the data obtained from CT

scanners and combined it with graphical software to create two-dimensional and three dimensional images of the colon that the radiologist can use for patient diagnosis.

The clinical impact of the Virtual Colonoscopy has been significant and the SFVAMC was one of the first in the country to make it available to veterans. This test is now used clinically at other sites throughout the world.

The new 3D Imaging Laboratory houses many state-of-the-art post-processing workstations with multiple different computer platforms needed to address the

expanding use of 3D imaging in everyday patient care.

3D imaging is now used for: Coronary CT angiography, aneurysm evaluation,

musculoskeletal applications, CT urography, and brain/body perfusion techniques.

This laboratory will allow the SFVAMC to continue to be a leader in the field of 3D imaging, and will provide for excellence in clinical care, research and teaching. ■



Judy Yee, MD,  
Radiology Service,  
SFVAMC

palo alto

## Palo Alto VA Introduces New Women's Center

The Women's Prevention, Outreach & Education Center (WPOEC) is a new outpatient mental health program at VAPAHCS, developed to meet the needs of our rapidly growing female veteran population. WPOEC provides clinical care, outreach, education and research, with a focus on the provision of gender-specific care.

Services include assistance with enrollment and eligibility, screening and assessment, health

promotion, case management, psychoeducation, and group and individual therapy.

One new service available through WPOEC and collaboration with the Women's Health Center is the Returning Women's Health Connection Clinic, a primary care clinic for women who have recently returned from Iraq or Afghanistan, stateside or overseas. "The one-stop shop approach was a timesaving, efficient and effective way to get a holistic perspective on your current health," said Air Force veteran Patricia Teran-Matthews,

who served in Iraq during part of 2003-2004. "I was very impressed with the comfortable environment that addressed women's specific needs and concerns."

To learn more about the program, please call the WPOEC general information number at 1-888-4HER-1VA, or you may visit its website [www.palo-alto.med.va.gov/WPOEC.asp](http://www.palo-alto.med.va.gov/WPOEC.asp). For specific questions regarding eligibility or enrollment in WPOEC or VA services, please contact Renee Wagner, MSW, at 650-493-5000, ext. 22558. ■

sierra nevada

## VASNHCs Welcomes Doctor Cipollina

The VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System Women's Health Program is pleased to introduce Dr. Carmela Cipollina, Women's Health, Ambulatory Care. Dr. Cipollina is our full-time Women's Health GYN provider.

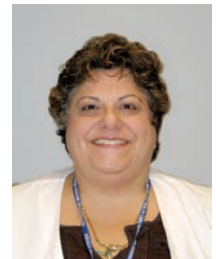
With our upcoming Primary Care remodel, her arrival could

not come at a more appropriate time. The remodel will include a separate Women's Health Clinic, with two exam rooms and a private waiting area for our women veterans. The remodel should be complete by the end of 2008 or the beginning of 2009.

"Here at VASNHCs, we can now say we have a truly comprehensive Women's Health Program," said Denise C. Haynes, Women Veterans Program

Manager.

"In the brief time that Dr. Cipollina has been on board, I've received rave reviews from our women veterans who've been seen in our Women's Health Clinic." ■



Dr. Carmela  
Cipollina, Women's  
Health, Ambulatory  
Care, VASNHCs

## VAPIHCS's new CT Scan

The VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (VA PIHCS) recently dedicated a new 64-slice Computed Tomography (CT) scan, the newest generation in CT scan technology. It has the ability to do cardiac studies and angiograms without the need to hospitalize patients for arterial catheter placements. The 64 "slices" refer to the number of images that are gathered at one time. Original CT scanners used only one detector to gather information, modern scanners use multiple detectors

to create images of the body. This technology can create more detailed images in a shorter amount of time. The CT scanner is a large donut-shaped X-ray machine that takes X-ray images at many different angles around the body. In each of these images the body is seen as an X-ray slice, which is recorded digitally. Imagine the body as a loaf of bread and you are looking at one end of the loaf. As you remove each slice of bread, you can see the entire surface of that slice from the crust to the center. The body is seen on CT scan slices in a similar fashion from the skin to



the central part of the body being examined. When these levels are further added together, a three-dimensional picture of an organ or body structure can be obtained. That picture can then be rotated and viewed from all different angles. VAPIHCS's new CT Scan is only one of two located in the Hawaiian Islands, and is another example of how we provide the best health care anywhere for our Pacific Islands veterans. ■

## New Services Available at VANCHCS

Two new health opportunities are currently available to our patients. One is our recently approved capability of identifying and providing care for **cochlear implant** patients, and the second is the opportunity for patients diagnosed with **age-related macular degeneration** to take part in a unique research project sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

A cochlear implant is an electronic device that overcomes damage to the inner ear hair cells by providing electrical stimulation to the remaining auditory nerve fibers. Veterans who have been implanted with this device are those whose hearing loss is of such severity that they do not benefit from hearing aids.

Pre-implant evaluations to identify candidates are available at the Outpatient Clinics at Redding, Chico, Martinez and McClellan Park. The closest Surgical Center

for VANCHCS patients is at the San Francisco VA Medical Center.

Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in the United States for people over 60 years old. An NIH clinical trial is studying 4,000 patients nationwide by looking at the effects of vitamins and nutritional supplements on the eye.

VANCHCS is the only VA facility in the country included in this research trial. Interested patients may contact Dr. Linda J. Margulies at 925-372-2600. ■

## Centralized Check-In Services Now Available

Veterans can now sign in for their outpatient clinic appointments using the new centralized check-in counter located at the main entrance of the Medical Center. This new service allows veterans the convenience of one check-in location for all their appointments, to get information about scheduling and to update their personal information, all in one stop.

The new space is designed for handicap accessibility



and has a private office for updates on personal financial information. During the check-in process, veterans can update addresses, telephone numbers, health insurance coverage, and changes to annual earnings. The opportunity to update a veteran's administrative records has been extremely convenient and helpful to those who need to make

these changes. There has been a 50 percent reduction in returned appointment reminders due to wrong addresses on file.

The centralized check-in process is used for most appointments, but not all. Patients who arrive for various procedures, like laboratory, X-rays and EKGs, are not required to do so. Some clinics, like mental health and the emergency room, are also excluded. The new check-in process is quick and easy and the friendly check-in staff is eager to enhance each veteran's appointment with courtesy and a smile. ■

# A Laughing Matter: High School Sweethearts

**G**eorge and Edith had been high school sweethearts 50 years ago, but had gone their separate ways after graduation. Then, two years ago, their paths crossed again, and they began seeing each other regularly. With age 70 just around the corner, they decided they might as well spend the rest of their lives together.

Excited about their decision to marry, they went for a stroll to discuss the wedding and what plans needed to be made. Finding themselves in front of a drugstore. George said, "Let's go in. I have an idea."

They walked in and asked the pharmacist: "Are you the owner?" "Yes sir, I am," he said. "How can I help you?"

**George:** "Do you sell heart medications?"

**Pharmacist:** "Of course."

**George:** "What about medications for rheumatism, osteoporosis and arthritis?"

**Pharmacist:** "All kinds."

**George:** "How about support hose, waterproof furniture pads and Depends?"

**Pharmacist:** "Yes, sir."

**George:** "Hearing aids, denture supplies and reading glasses?"

**Pharmacist:** "Yes."

**George:** "What about eye drops, sleeping pills, Geritol, Preparation-H and Ex-Lax?"

**Pharmacist:** "Absolutely."

**George:** "You sell wheelchairs, walkers and canes?"

**Pharmacist:** "Yes, indeed. But why all these questions?"

George smiled, glanced shyly at Edith and replied, "We've decided to get married and we'd like to use your store as our Bridal Registry." ■

## WORD SEARCH

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 W U J Z C Z Q E C M I N F M E F D T U Q J V I  
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 W A Q P I I H N S M U F E H R V S R R T K A M  
 U C V M O I I D E A D F J R W B E G L I L D V  
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 K W P F U L R Z F O L R E D I V O R P N B J P  
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| <input type="checkbox"/> BENEFITS      | <input type="checkbox"/> ISSUES    | <input type="checkbox"/> PROGRAMS | <input type="checkbox"/> SERVICES   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> IMPORTANCE    | <input type="checkbox"/> OUTREACH  | <input type="checkbox"/> RECOVERY | <input type="checkbox"/> WOMEN      |

# Resilience: A Tribute

By Joel Schmidt, Ph.D.

Psychology Internship Training Director, VANCHCS



**I** listen to people for a living. As a psychologist in VA, I hear about some of the worst experiences humans have to

bear. I've sat face-to-face with a Bataan Death March survivor, an airman shot down over Germany, a Marine who was at the Chosin Reservoir, veterans from every region of Vietnam, medics and infantry soldiers from Afghanistan and Iraq.

I've spoken with people who have faced unthinkable abuse in childhood, others who've been assaulted and brutalized by their own comrades, and parents who've had to attend their own children's funerals.

I've gained a surprising belief from hearing about so much agony: I believe in the

power of human resilience. I'm continually inspired by the ability of the emotionally wounded to pick themselves up and keep going after enduring the most traumatic circumstances imaginable.

Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans describe to me the constant hell of unpredictable IED attacks and invisible snipers. By the time they get home, many can't drive on the freeway, or be in the same room with old friends. One vet described it as being locked in an emotional cage, between numbness and rage.

Emerging from this terrible backdrop, many Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans have surprised me with their drive to recover, and their

unpredictable ways of giving back some meaning to their lives. For example, there was a veteran whose most powerful therapeutic experience was helping his grandmother keep her small business running. This cause gave him a reason to care, someone to emotionally connect with and ultimately a reason or get up in the morning.

This might sound like naive optimism when, in fact, treatment is often long and hard. Not every story has a happy ending. Some days when I go home my head hurts. I feel sad, or worried, or angry, or ineffective. On those days, I have to appeal to my own strategies for self-care, pick myself back up, and keep going.

I went to school to learn about people, and how to help them get

***Duty, Honor, Country*** – these three words, made famous by General Douglas MacArthur during his address to the 1962 West Point graduating class, were the inspiration for these posters, designed by Jon-Nolan Paresa, Visual Information Officer at the VA Northern California Health Care System.

better. Instead, it's often the very people I've spent my career trying to help who remind me how to care for myself. I keep a catalogue of them in my head, and I try to use this list as a road map, an inspiration, and a reminder of what human resilience can achieve.

I make it a point to compliment the people who sit in my office on their strength and ingenuity. But the truth is, I don't think many of them realize the depth of my admiration. Sitting with these people every day allows me to hope that I might also find strength to face future adversities. This solid sense of hope is a gift, and it's my humble desire to share it with the next person who sits with me. ■

## Duty, Honor, Country

### DUTY



Department of Veterans Affairs

### HONOR



Department of Veterans Affairs

### COUNTRY



Department of Veterans Affairs