



Veterans Day blends traditional, new

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) has a long tradition of observing Veterans Day in grand fashion. This year CAVHCS culminated a week-long celebration of Veterans Day events by participating in the inaugural River Region Veterans Day Parade November 11.

“Here in Alabama, we support our troops and we honor our veterans – and not just on holidays,” said Alabama Governor Bob Riley shortly after Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki chose Montgomery to join Birmingham and Mobile as a designated Veterans Day Regional Site. “It is an honor to know we now have three cities that are nationally recognized as model communities when it comes to celebrating Veterans Day.”

The annual kickoff of the CAVHCS’ Veterans Day celebrations was the 66th Annual Veterans Day Parade held on the Tuskegee VA Medical Center’s historic Vetegee Field November 4.

Tuskegee’s Veterans Day Parade is an event that celebrates

Veterans as well as historic ties between CAVHCS and the City of Tuskegee. This year’s Grand Marshall was Dr. Wallace Capel, a Tuskegee VA Medical Center Chief of Staff and retired Army Colonel. The parade was once again highlighted by participants ranging from local military units, area schools, college bands and beauty queens to drill teams, marching units and Veteran and military organization floats.



Drill teams from throughout the region presented the colors to the reviewing stand during the 66th Annual Tuskegee VA Medical Center Veterans Day Parade, which was also highlighted by college bands, beauty queens and Veteran and military organization floats.

The River Region Veterans Day Parade replaced the annual observance held at the Montgomery VA Medical Center November 11 at 11 a.m. The River Region Parade began with a military flyover of the State of Alabama Capitol building. The parade route began at the capitol building steps and proceeded down Dexter Avenue.

Montgomery’s parade started off with the roar of a military flyover executed by an F-16 from the Alabama Air National Guard’s 187th Fighter Wing. Shortly afterward the Governor of Alabama and Mayor of Montgomery were joined by Director of Montgomery’s Regional Veterans Benefits Office, Richardo Randle as they were greeted by thousands of well wishers who lined the street.

Greeted by blue skies and mild weather participants also included marching bands, drill teams

Please see ‘Veterans Day’

Page 3

Cholesterol Control, Prevention Knowledge is Power

Almost one out of every six Americans has high blood cholesterol, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This increases the risk of heart disease, which is the number-one killer of women in the United States.

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs. However, elevated amounts in the blood can lead to a buildup on artery walls, resulting in a heart attack or stroke. There are two types of cholesterol. HDL (good) cholesterol tends to be higher in women because it is associated with the female sex hormone estrogen. LDL (bad) cholesterol can increase with age and weight and is found in foods with saturated and trans fats.

The first step in managing your cholesterol is to know your cholesterol level. Your doctor can do a simple blood test that will show the amount of cholesterol in milligrams (mg) per deciliter (dL) of blood. Engaging in physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and whole grains can help lower cholesterol levels. If your level is especially high, your doctor might prescribe medication to

help lower it. You can keep track of your cholesterol levels with My HealthVet, a free, online program to educate Veterans about health care topics.

Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. Veterans. The number of women Veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA health care is in high demand by the women Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Department of Veterans Affairs understands the health care needs of women Veterans and is committed to meeting these needs. Women Veterans served and they deserve the best quality care.



CAVHCS All-Stars

We cannot express our gratitude for the excellent care that my father received from the entire staff at the Central Alabama Veterans Hospital from the time he was brought to the emergency room on October 9, 2010 until our discharge on October 20, 2010.

Dr. Robert Norvel went above and beyond my expectations when my mother went into a seizure while in my father's room on Tuesday, October 12, 2010. Mother has no privileges at the facility and yet she received lifesaving care by Dr. Norvel and the entire ER staff. He then went on to contact and speak with Dr. Joel Bolin, Mother's primary care physician, and made certain she was cleared before she was discharged from the department.

While Mr. Parker was an inpatient, there are no words to express the excellence in care provided by the entire staff of Tanya Early, R.N. Many of the nurses and nursing assistants were so kind, caring and gracious to my father. My parents have never received the level of care as was provided by the Montgomery facility.

Dr. Ginjupalli, Dr. Baloch and Dr. O'Donnell are the finest physicians I have ever encountered and we have been to many facilities with illnesses in our family. It was very reassuring that my father's infection was cured prior to our being transported for rehabilitation at Capitol Hill Healthcare. It was very serious in the beginning, we were not sure my father would live through his illness. Since his care, he is better and more to his normal self, than he has been in the last year. I have been to all of his outpatient appointments for the last two years and there is no comparison in the quality of care he has been given at the VA.

After the care we received during my father's illness, my husband, a retired CW2, will be eligible for benefits at Maxwell in two years, but we have decided that we will use your facility if needed. It is my hope that this letter be distributed to the Chief of Staff, Ms. Tanya Early, Drs. Robert Norvel, Baloch and Ginjupalli. Also I hope it will be posted in the break room and emergency room so that everyone will know and be aware of our appreciation for the care we received at the Montgomery Facility. -- Sincerely, Thalia P. Wells, Nicholas J. P. & Family.

This letter is to salute a volunteer, Mrs. Potts, who is the sweetest lady you have under your direction. She went out of her way to see we got in the right place. The lady in Triage was cordial and helpful and very instructional. Everywhere I went, people were on the job and knew what to do. -- Thank you again, Joseph H. J., Alex City, Ala.

I am forever grateful and thankful to Eddie Scott and Sandra James for taking such excellent care of me. My blood pressure was back up and these two ladies took excellent care of me. -- Respectfully, Melvin E. P. Montgomery, Ala.

My husband recently received a Colonoscopy at your hospital. I want to thank you and everyone responsible for the care that was given to him during his stay there. From the time we arrived, he was put in a private room, all of the nurses and staff were very nice and polite and exceptionally efficient. We want to thank each and everyone who had a part in his care for being so concerned and caring. -- Thank you!
Lillian and Charles A.

Update for CAVHCS 2010 CFC Campaign

How do you achieve CFC SUCCESS?

1. Reach 2010 CFC goal \$49,965.00
2. Reach Stretch goal of 15% more
3. SET ALL TIME NEW GOAL!

\$75,645.00

(2005 Previous High Goal \$70,344.00)

Thank you!
WE'RE FIRED UP FOR 2011!

POC: William Wheat, Jr. Sr. Project Officer Cell 334-799-1012
Judy Davidson Alt. Project Officer Ext 4710
Mary H. Smith Alt. project Officer Ext. 4845
CFC Campaign Headquarters will continue to receive pledges.





The CAVHCS Salute



Accredited by
The Joint Commission

The CAVHCS Salute is produced by the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care (CAVHCS) Public Affairs Office. CAVHCS Salute is an unofficial, internal communications publication.

Director
Associate Director
Acting Associate Director, Patient Care Services
Chief of Staff
Public Affairs Officer

Glen E. Struchtemeyer
Anita F. Willard, MPH
Carolyn Caver-Gordon
Cliff Robinson, MD
Al Bloom

Holiday Season Tips to 'Secure' your Happy Holidays

The good folks in CAVHCS Police and Security have put together some tips for your consideration as we enter the holiday season.

If traveling by vehicle; know where you are going and how to get there and back. Obtain a map or download the latest available GPS data.

Inform a family member where you will be and when to expect you back; give them your route, and travel and conduct your business during daylight hours if possible. To the extent practical, select well traveled and lighted thoroughfares. Bear in mind that routes which are congested during rush hour may be very lightly traveled at other hours. Use freeways and arterial streets and avoid less-traveled roads as much as possible, especially when driving at night or in unfamiliar locations.

If planning a "road trip" over the holidays, have your vehicle serviced and checked out sufficiently far ahead to allow for repairs if needed. Don't forget to have the mechanic check your spare tire and all fluid levels along with the other preventive maintenance procedures. Consider keeping spare fuses and a "breakdown kit" in your vehicle at all times. Breakdown kits may be purchased from a variety of sources, or you can assemble your own at any auto parts or hardware store using a commercial version as a guideline.



Minimally, a "breakdown kit" should include:

- a thermal blanket/bag
- a gallon of water
- a "HELP" sign/flag
- flares/reflectors

- a flashlight (check batteries semiannually)
- duct tape
- Also consider carrying:
 - a set of jumper cables, a tire gauge, and work gloves
 - a few hand tools (pliers, screwdrivers, Allen wrenches)
 - some rope
 - at least one bungee cord
 - towels and a roll of toilet paper (in a plastic bag)
 - a small 12-volt tire-inflator
 - an empty (new, never used) one gallon gas can
 - change for a payphone and a pair of comfortable shoes
 - a cheap/disposable rain coat/suit/poncho

All these items can fit in a small or medium size gym/duffle bag or a box and kept in your vehicle's trunk, backseat floorboard, or other storage area in the vehicle. Keep it updated, but never remove it from your vehicle. In addition to your basic "breakdown kit" you should also have a basic first aid kit in your vehicle at all times.



Know how to access your spare tire and jack. Vehicle owners should also consider obtaining towing insurance, either as a rider on their automobile insurance policy (such riders are usually very inexpensive for excellent coverage) or by joining an automobile club or other provider. Be prepared!

Making a habit of checking your fuel gauge whenever you start driving, and routinely "topping off" your tank, can prevent unexpected, untimely and dangerous roadside emergency situations.

WHAT IS YOUR CAR SCREAMING OUT TO THIEVES?



If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination or move them inconspicuously. This includes packages, backpacks, gym bags, GPS units, MP3 players, and so forth. Someone may be watching when you put items under/behind a seat or throw something over them. An opportunistic thief is on the lookout for "trunk-packing," and can break into your car the minute you're out of sight.

Certainly avoid leaving packages or shopping bags visible in your car - lock them in the trunk out of sight if you have to leave packages in your car unattended. Plan your shopping/errands so that you don't load your trunk until you are ready to drive to another destination. Load your trunk when you leave a location - never open a trunk, fill it full of valuables, close it, and then just walk away to do more shopping or other errands.

When returning to your vehicle, carry your keys in your hand and be ready to unlock the door and enter as quickly as possible. As you approach your vehicle, scan the area, glance underneath the vehicle, and take a quick look inside before entering.

'Veterans Day'

From Page 1

and veteran service organizations as well as a CAVHCS Fire Engine, CAVHCS police squad cars, and buses full of Veterans from CAVHCS and the Montgomery Vet Center.

"I've had several people come up to me the past week or so and ask me why we haven't had a parade before," said Mayor Todd Strange to the crown that amassed at the city's Riverfront Amphitheater shortly after the final parade participant marched by. "I told them, I wish I knew, but there is no better time than now to start."

On hand at the Riverfront Amphitheater were CAVHCS representatives from the Flu Vaccination Committee, Suicide Prevention Coordination and Voluntary services.

"I want to take a moment and say a big thanks to all of you who helped with the various Veterans Day Celebrations," said CAVHCS Director, Glen Struchtemeyer in a note sent to all staff. "The parade in Tuskegee was another big success. Yesterday the Inaugural Veteran's Day Parade in Montgomery was a great success. The Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System was well represented in the parade. Also, the employees supporting the ceremony at the Riverfront were much appreciated. I got very positive feedback on your support of the various events."

CAVHCS Photo Gallery

CAVHCS once again conducted its traditional series of Veterans Day observances leading up to Veterans Day. However, this year Veterans Day was a little different. This year's activities were kicked off with the annual Tuskegee VA Medical Center Veterans Day Parade and culminated with the inaugural River Region Veterans Day Parade - held in downtown Montgomery.



Federal Benefits Open Season

November 8 - December 13, 2010

To ensure that you have the right health, dental, and vision insurance coverage for you and your family, or to save money with a flexible spending account, learn about your options at www.opm.gov/insure/openseason/index.asp.

They're also on Facebook.

Visit them today and every day to get the latest information from OPM on the Federal Benefits Open Season. We'll post reminders, breaking information and items of interest about the health, dental, vision, and flexible spending accounts during the Open Season.

To view the Open Season Facebook page, go to www.facebook.com/fedbenefits.

Even if Facebook may be blocked at your work, you can stay informed by accessing it from other locations.



Diabetes Risk Assessment

November was American Diabetes Month. Wellness Is Now (WIN), VA's comprehensive employee wellness program, is doing its part to ADVANCE the Department by providing you with facts about the disease that affects 23.6 million Americans, 5.7 million of whom are still undiagnosed. Educate yourself on the risk factors, symptoms and treatment options for diabetes by visiting

www.VAemployeehealth.com.

Sign in using enrollment code "DVA," fill out your confidential Health Risk Assessment, and get on the path to wellness. For more information on this and all ADVANCE initiatives, please visit the ADVANCE Web site at <http://vaww.va.gov/ADVANCE>.



Reasons to Recycle

America Recycles Day - www.americarecyclesday.org was November 15th. Here are the top reasons from the National Recycling Coalition why you should redouble your recycling efforts today and everyday:

1. Recycling is good for the economy - American companies rely on recycling programs to provide the raw materials they need to make new products.
2. Recycling creates jobs - Recycling in the U.S. is a \$236 billion a year industry. More than 56,000 recycling and reuse enterprises employ 1.1 million workers nationwide.
3. Recycling reduces waste. The average American discards 7.5 pounds of garbage every day; most of which goes into landfills, where it's compacted and buried. To find out where you can recycle all kinds of products (batteries, carpet, paint, etc.) visit www.earth911.com. Brought to you by the VA Green Management Program (www.green.va.gov) and the Green Routine (www.va.gov/greenroutine).



Former CAVHCS Director Honored

Linda F. Watson, (former CAVHCS Director from January 2000 - September 2003) Director of the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., has been named Senior Healthcare Executive of the Year by the National Association of Health Services Executives.

In Jackson, Watson leads a medical center that has consistently ranked among the top of VA facilities in providing quality health care. "I am truly honored to receive this recognition," said Watson. "I have the great fortune of working with many, many outstanding employees throughout VA who are truly dedicated to ensuring the men and women who served in the military receive quality health care." Watson received her Bachelor's degree in Nursing and a Master's degree in Nursing Administration and Clinical Specialty from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Proposed Freeze

On Monday November 29 President Obama announced a decision to propose a two-year freeze in civilian pay to Federal employees. To address this issue and hopefully preclude rumor for fact Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration John U. Sepúlveda released a memorandum to all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Employees.

"The President today announced his decision to propose a two-year freeze in civilian pay for federal employees. The 2010 pay tables will continue to be in effect for calendar years 2011 and 2012. This two-year pay freeze will apply to all civilian federal employees, including those in various alternative pay plans and those working at the Department of Defense - but not military personnel. The freeze does not affect within-grade increases (WGI).

This proposed freeze is not a reflection of the excellent work that you do for our Nation's Veterans. It is the first of many actions to put our nation on sound fiscal footing. This pay freeze will save \$2 billion for the remainder of FY 2011, \$28 billion over the next five years, and more than \$60 billion over the next 10 years.

The proposed pay freeze measure requires the Congress to act. The President and Congress will work together over the next several months to forge a common-sense deficit reduction strategy that will rein in our deficits, keep our economy growing, and lay the foundation for American competitiveness for years to come."

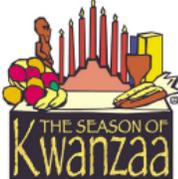
Thank you.

John U. Sepúlveda

Representatives of the Georgia Department of The American Legion recently conducted their annual two-day visit to CAVHCS Medical Centers in Montgomery and Tuskegee, Ala. The Georgia Department of The American Legion provides direct support to CAVHCS Medical Centers and the Columbus, Ga. Community Based Outpatient Clinic through volunteerism and generous financial support.



December

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|---|--|----------|--|---|
| National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month - www.nhtsa.dot.gov Colorectal Cancer Education and Awareness Month - www.ppsinc.org | | | World AIDS Day December 1  | | 2  | CAVHCS Employee Association Holiday Party  RSA Plaza Rooftop 770 Washington Ave. Montgomery |
| 5  HAPPY CHANUKAH | 6 |  Pearl Harbor Day DECEMBER 7 | FOOD DRIVE  Turn-in One Can One Ticket | 9 |  <i>Aplastic Anemia Awareness</i> | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 |  Human Rights Week | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21  Winter Begins | 22 | 23 |  | |
|  THE SEASON OF Kwanzaa | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |  | |

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. Editorial considerations will be made for propriety, promptness and print space.