

# The Bay State Patriot

A Publication Of

## Massachusetts Department Of Veterans' Services

Volume 3, Issue 2



Deval L. Patrick  
Governor

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.  
Secretary, EOHS

Timothy P. Murray  
Lieutenant Governor

Coleman Nee  
Secretary, DVS



### Secretary's Welcome

As far back as the 18th century, towns in the Massachusetts Bay Colony provided assistance to deserving veterans of the French and Indian War. Massachusetts began providing for its veterans immediately following the Revolutionary War and at the start of the Civil War in 1861. The Legislature formalized the assistance provided to veterans by establishing M.G.L. Chapter 115 and the Department of Veterans Services.

We are all duty bound to *honor* those who have died in service to America. While the measure of how much we *remember* these heroes can be gauged by parades, statues and memorials, the true measure of how much we *honor* those that have fallen is correlated to how we care for and support those who have returned and their families.

Working in partnership with local communities, the Department of Veterans' Services is the primary advocate for almost 400,000 veterans and their families in the Commonwealth, including more than 37,000 new veterans who have returned home since September 11, 2001. We should all be proud that we as a Commonwealth lead the nation in caring for and supporting our veterans. We should be proud that we continue to remember our fallen by supporting our veterans and their dependents throughout Massachusetts.

I wish you all a happy and healthy Memorial Day. Thank you for

#### In This Issue

[New Faces of DVS](#)

[Welcome, Superintendent Barabani](#)

[3rd Annual Women Veterans' Conference](#)

[A Battle Plan to Quit Smoking](#)

[DVS/MVSOA Training 2011](#)

[In the News](#)

[From Training to Employment](#)

[Winchendon Veterans' Cemetery](#)

[News from the VA](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

what you do, every day, to honor our brave men and women.

Sincerely,

Coleman Nee



### Quick Links

[www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans)

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

Find us on Facebook 

Follow us on 

## NEW FACES OF DVS

**Kenn Turner** has joined the Department of Veterans' Services team as the *Deputy Secretary of Administration & Finance*. Kenn is a retired Navy Captain and Submariner who has years of experience working as an executive-level business and operational leader in highly complex, matrix-driven corporate operations for Fortune 50 companies and the Department of Defense. Kenn's professional background includes work at AOL Time Warner, Hasboro, Inc. and Hallmark Cards, Inc. His military career includes work as an Assistant Weapons Officer on the USS Stonewall Jackson and Assistant Project Manager, Programming Division for the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations at The Pentagon.

## WELCOME, PAUL BARABANI, NEW SUPERINTENDENT OF THE HOLYOKE SOLDIERS' HOME

On April 14, 2011, Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray swore Paul Barabani in as the new Superintendent of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Over one hundred veterans, veterans' advocates, family and friends came out for the celebration.

Superintendent Barabani is a lifelong resident of Chicopee, Massachusetts and understands first-hand the importance and significance of the Soldiers' Home in his community. He had a distinguished 32-year career with the Army National Guard and retired as a Colonel in 2002. He went on to have a successful career with the Veterans Administration, working at the Medical Center in Leeds as the Administrative Officer to the Chief of Staff where he was involved in outreach efforts to enroll veterans of all generations in VA Healthcare. During his time with the VA, he worked to improve the Compensation and Pension Examination process at the Medical Center and a variety of efforts to ensure the timely delivery of quality medical care to veterans throughout Western Massachusetts. He holds a Bachelor in Business Administration from Anna Maria College and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Massachusetts.

We are honored and excited that Paul Barabani chose to come to the Soldiers' Home and continue his work with veterans. The veterans here, and throughout the Commonwealth will only benefit from his service. His experience and skills make him an ideal candidate for Superintendent, and it is his passion that made him the ideal choice. I hope you will all join me in welcoming Superintendent Barabani to the Soldiers' Home.

*Coleman Nee, Secretary*

## 3rd ANNUAL WOMEN VETERANS' CONFERENCE



The third annual Conference for Women Veterans will be held on **Saturday, June 18, 2011, from 8:00 AM till 3:30 PM** at Salem State University's George H. Ellison Campus Center.

The program will include forum panels on PTSD and wellness; children and families; and MST, women's health, and VA benefits. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information and registration.

## A BATTLE PLAN TO QUIT SMOKING

**COURAGE. COMMITMENT.  
THE WILL TO SURVIVE.**

You have what it takes  
to quit smoking.



The Department of Veterans' Services and the Department of Public Health's free statewide smoking cessation program has already helped 700 veterans and their families make an attempt to quit smoking since the program's launch, March 7, 2011. this year. The program provides a free two-week supply of nicotine patches and telephone support to help in the battle to quit smoking.

Smoking remains the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the Commonwealth, and the smoking rate among the Commonwealth's veterans remains higher than the state average. The smoking rate for Massachusetts veterans is 23.5%. Studies show that using medications like the nicotine patch, combined with telephone support, triples a smoker's chances of quitting for good.

Massachusetts veterans and their family members can now call the Massachusetts Smokers Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or go to [www.makesmokinghistory.org/veterans](http://www.makesmokinghistory.org/veterans) to take advantage of this program.

If you would like more information about this program, please contact Cayenne Isaksen at [cisaksen@massmail.state.ma.us](mailto:cisaksen@massmail.state.ma.us)

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TRAINING EVENT

The Department of Veterans' Services and the Massachusetts Veterans Services Officer Association (MVSOA) held their third annual joint Veterans Service Officers training from February 28 until March 3, 2011 at the Holiday Inn in Marlborough. Some attendees commented that this was one of the best training sessions to date. More than 200 hundred Veterans Service Officers and administrative staff attended each day.

The training was included sessions on Chapter 115 benefits, Reimbursement, and VA and Social Security processes. Bill Leamy, Authorizer and Evan Makrinikolas, Chief Authorizer provided the bulk of the administrative support functions and training sessions. Complements go out to Bill and Evan for their excellent work in putting the program together and for providing a high level of training.

## IN THE NEWS

Ron Saucier, Operations Specialist with the S.A.V.E. Team at the Department of Veterans' Services, has been chosen to be valedictorian at the annual ceremony for graduates of Operation ABLE of Greater Boston. Operation A.B.L.E. of Greater provides employment and training opportunities to mature workers 45 and older from economically, racially and occupationally

diverse backgrounds. The event will held at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston on June 28, 2011. Along with the graduates and their families, many city and state officials and executives from Operation ABLE's corporate partners will be in attendance.

Ron joined the Department of Veterans' Services in the fall of 2010 after having successfully completed a seven-week internship with the S.A.V.E. Team as part of his Operation ABLE training. He graduated from Operation ABLE's "Skills2Work" program designed specifically for mature workers who lack the computer skills necessary to succeed in the modern work place.

Ron served with the United States Air Force Security Service during the Vietnam Era in Italy. Ron is particularly knowledgeable about the needs of Massachusetts veterans of all generations.

### **M.O.S.T.<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM AT SMITH & WESSON DELIVERS TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT**

The Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP), in conjunction with the Smith & Wesson Corporation, recently trained two classes of military veterans in a specialized The Mobile Outreach Skills Training (MOST<sup>®</sup>) training program. Following the completion of these programs, twenty-five veteran graduates were offered employment by Smith & Wesson.

The M.O.S.T.<sup>®</sup> program is an intensive skills training, recruitment, assessment and placement program that prepares unemployed and underemployed individuals, including veterans, for production jobs in less time than traditional programs. The training is conducted over a period of two weeks in a state-of-the-art mobile training facility stationed by MassMEP on Smith & Wesson property.

Veterans were referred to the program through DVS, Veterans' Service Officers, and One-Stop Career Centers. Additionally, the Holyoke Soldiers' Home provided space for applicant interviews and program coordination.

The M.O.S.T.<sup>®</sup> program provides quick-start job training for small and mid-sized manufacturers seeking entry-level workers. The program's mobile training unit is outfitted with state-of-the-art training equipment that allows participants an opportunity to upgrade or learn new manufacturing skills. Because of its mobility, the program is able to move to areas where jobs and potential employees are located. The unit is generally situated onsite at an employer's facility or other location convenient for trainees and the company. Training, which is often customized to suit the needs of the participating employer, helps reduce the time typically required for new employees to become fully productive.

For more information on M.O.S.T.<sup>®</sup> and how to get involved, please contact 1-866-629-9442 or email [most@timewisems.com](mailto:most@timewisems.com)

### **SPOTLIGHT ON THE WINCHENDON STATE VETERANS CEMETERY**

In November 2004, the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon was opened. Presently, 1,335 veterans and dependents have been buried at the 210-acre cemetery - all with full military honors.

The cemetery consists of 31 acres for burials, a flag garden, a brick memorial path, monuments honoring various veterans' organizations, including police and fire, and one of the only monuments in the world dedicated to the Battle of the Bulge. Bricks for placement on the memorial path can be purchased by families and organizations, and dedicated in an honor of a fallen service member by

contacting the cemetery directly.

A team of seven women and men work to ensure that the grounds are cared for; that services are conducted in accordance with all regulations; and that the cemetery continues to serve as a place of honor and distinction for the men and women laid to rest. Each military burial includes chapel services (any denomination), a volunteer based Honor Guard, firing party, and bugle player (when available). A dedicated staff continues to provide the utmost care and attention to every service member who enters their grounds.

On Memorial Day, the cemetery will host their annual Memorial Day celebration at 9:00 a.m. (open to the public). Over 300 attendees are expected to come out for the event as it grows larger every year.

To learn more about our Massachusetts Cemeteries or how to arrange for burials, please visit [The DVS Website](#).

## NEWS FROM THE VA

### **Department of Veterans Affairs - Office of Survivors Assistance** *"Helping Our Survivors Through Their Time of Transition"*

For everyone, the death of a loved one is a life changing event - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Survivors Assistance (OSA) is here to assist survivors in making the necessary transition with benefits assistance.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said "Taking care of survivors is as essential as taking care of our Veterans and military personnel." He added, "By taking care of survivors, we are honoring a commitment made to our Veterans and military members."

The Office of Survivor Assistance (OSA) was established in October 2008 by Public Law 110-389, Title II, Section 222, and is the primary advisor to the Secretary on all matters related to policies, programs, legislative issues, and other initiatives affecting Veterans' survivors and dependents of survivors.

OSA monitors VA's delivery of benefits to survivors, makes appropriate referrals to VA offices for survivors seeking benefits and explores innovative ways of reaching survivors who are not receiving VA benefits for which they are eligible to receive. Some of these benefits include, but are not limited to, education assistance, home loan guaranties, health care insurance and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

"We are your advocate to ensure fairness, equity and appropriateness of all survivor benefits and to serve as the liaison for inter- and intra-agency collaboration and coordination on survivor issues," said OSA Director Debra A. Walker. "We are also fully committed to staying in step with the needs of survivors to advocate for the survivor community."

To fulfill its mission, the Office of Survivors Assistance has been working closely with senior VA leadership to provide up-to-date information on the issues faced by the survivor community. Always at the forefront, OSA gleans much of its information through direct interaction with the survivor themselves.

On many occasions, OSA is called upon for assistance with an individual's claim. While the thrust

of OSA operations calls upon it to serve in a policy capacity, OSA staff knows that every VA employee has the responsibility and privilege to provide the excellent customer service that our clients so deserve. On any given day, OSA staff may be found rolling up their sleeves, and working the issues of individual survivors who have contacted OSA directly.

As a rule, OSA sees these service opportunities as mutually beneficial; the survivor obtains the necessary assistance with their particular issue, and OSA benefits by reviewing the trends in requests for assistance, which helps identify possible gaps in programmatic services. Strategy-wise, by working on the micro level, OSA is better able to advise VA leadership at the macro level.

OSA has also established multiple partnerships with the Department of Defense agencies, Veterans Service Organizations and other non-government organizations to explore ways to ease the transition of survivors into the VA system, and to make a difference in survivors' lives.

OSA was a key driver in the addition of the term "survivors" to the title of the informational 2009 Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors Book, which was symbolic of VA's commitment in advocating for survivors both inside and outside of VA. It spearheaded updates to the benefits book by clarifying the language regarding bereavement counseling for survivors, which will ultimately make counseling more accessible for all survivors. OSA maintains a Web site to help survivors navigate through resources that may be available to them, and will continue to monitor policy and legislative issues as well as pursue outreach to survivors to ensure that survivor issues are fully understood and addressed at the appropriate level.

"It is our mission to make sure Veterans' survivors do not fall through the cracks as VA's mission to serve those who have borne the battle is not over when Taps is played. More information can be received by calling 202-461-1077 or visiting our Web site at [www.va.gov/survivors](http://www.va.gov/survivors). If you would like to write us, contact us at [officeofsurvivors@va.gov](mailto:officeofsurvivors@va.gov).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**For Information on Memorial Day Services throughout the Commonwealth, please contact your local Veterans' Service Officer.**

### **Monday, May 30**

- 9:00 a.m. - Memorial Day Services at the Winchendon Veterans' Memorial Cemetery  
111 Glenallen St. Winchendon, MA 01475
- 1:00 p.m. - Memorial Day Services at the Agawam Veterans' Memorial Cemetery  
1390 Main St. Agawam, MA 01001

### **Friday, June 17 - Saturday, June 18**

- 9:00 a.m./day - 6th Annual Central Massachusetts Veterans' Stand Down, Veterans Inc.  
Independence Hall, 59 South Street Shrewsbury, MA

### **Saturday, June 18**

- 8:00 a.m. - 3rd Annual Women Veterans' Conference, Salem State University

- Please visit [www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans) for ongoing and future events.

**The Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) advocates on behalf of the nearly half-million veterans in Massachusetts, their families, and survivors. DVS works to secure federal compensation and other benefits for which veterans may be eligible. The Department also administers needs-based benefits program through Veterans' Service Officers throughout Massachusetts and provides state funding to organizations offering homeless shelter, transitional housing and outreach services to veterans.**

Department of Veterans' Services

600 Washington St.

Boston, Ma, 02111

Phone # 617-210-5480

Fax

[www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans)

S.A.V.E.

Phone # 617 336 9522

Fax # 617-210-5755

[savemassveterans@gmail.com](mailto:savemassveterans@gmail.com)

#

617-210-5755