



THE AMERICAN LEGION

VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE

VAVS

HANDBOOK

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE HANDBOOK

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PREFACE

Securing, protecting and improving benefits earned by our Nation's veterans has been a tradition of The American Legion since its founding in 1919. Legionnaires are committed veterans advocates and dedicated volunteers. In April 1946, representatives of The American Legion were joined by contemporaries from several other veteran and welfare organizations at a historic meeting with Veterans Administration officials in Washington D.C. The participants recommended approval of an ambitious plan that called for community volunteer program participation in activities beneficial to veterans using Veterans Administration hospitals and domiciliary. The plan evolved into the Veterans Administration Voluntary Service.

American Legion volunteers bring special talents and understanding to veteran patients. These skills provide veterans a bridge between the medical facility and their community, enhancing rehabilitation, and speeding the return to productive, independent living.

MICHAEL D. HELM, Chairman
National Veterans Affairs and
Rehabilitation Commission

BARRY A. SEARLE, Director
National Veterans Affairs and
Rehabilitation Commission

GENERAL

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This handbook is based on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations and contains the policies and procedures of The American Legion pertaining to volunteer assistance rendered by Legionnaires in support of VA programs for the care and treatment of veteran patients.

The guidelines and suggestions contained in this handbook are intended to assist all individuals and groups of The American Legion - from National to Post level - who are engaged in VAVS volunteer activities. Specific problems relating to details at the volunteer work site must be discussed with the VA Supervisor or the Voluntary Service Program Manager at that particular VA medical facility.

DEFINITIONS

Rehabilitation: The process of restoring or supplanting capacities or opportunities which have been lost or impaired, in order to make an individual capable of becoming productive members of their community.

Without Compensation (WOC) Volunteers: Volunteers accepted in the VAVS Program are considered WOC employees. WOC precludes monetary payments, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy.

Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers: Individuals who participate in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled assignment under VA supervision. Frequency of participation is determined locally. Individuals are officially authorized to serve on a WOC basis as RS volunteers when the individual has:

- (1) Signed the “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement,” as contained in VA Form 10-7055, Application for Voluntary Service;
- (2) Been approved for assignment by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, or designee;
- (3) Participated in required interviews and orientations prescribed by the VA facility; and
- (4) Completed a trial period as established by the VA facility.

Occasional Volunteers: Occasional volunteers are those individuals serving under the VAVS Program who do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers. They must sign a “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agree-

ment,” as required by MP-5, Part 1, Chapter 300, Paragraph 4c. This waiver may be incorporated on VA Form 10-5392, Occasional Volunteers Time Sheet. Other than copies of these signed time sheets, no individual records will be maintained on occasional volunteers.

NOTE: Determination of minimum age for regularly scheduled and occasional volunteers is at the discretion of the facility management.

Student Volunteers: Student volunteers under the age of 18 must have written parental or guardian approval to participate in the VAVS Program and must have written authorization for diagnostic and emergency treatment if injured while volunteering. The minimum age for volunteers is determined by the facility management.

NOTE: Post secondary students will not be considered volunteers while receiving academic credit under a formal affiliation agreement.

Facility Representative: The VAVS Facility Representative is an experienced and knowledgeable Legionnaire who is the official liaison between the Medical Center and The American Legion in all aspects of the VAVS Program. The Representative will:

- (1) Assist with improving the VAVS Program;
- (2) Provide input to VA staff and the facility VAVS Committee;
- (3) Promote the recruitment of volunteers and the donation of financial and material resources in accordance with facility needs;
- (4) Advise members of the policy and procedures of the organization and facility;
- (5) Assist VA staff when an affiliated volunteer must be removed for cause;
- (6) Attend and participate in meetings of the VAVS Committee;
- (7) Serve as a member of a subcommittee or task force as requested;
- (8) Maintain records and make reports as required by the organization and VA;
- (9) Coordinate activities of the organization with the facility; and
- (10) Delegate responsibility and voting privilege to Deputy Representatives, as needed.

Facility Deputy Representative: Facility Deputy Representatives perform duties as assigned by the Representative. Assignments could include record keeping, correspondence, and training their membership on the policies and procedures of the organization and VA. Deputies attend and participate in VAVS Committee meetings. They may serve on subcommittees and task groups.

NOTE: Local Representatives and Deputy Representatives may represent more than one local VAVS committee, if the Facility Director believes accepting the appointment is in the best interest of the facility.

Facility Associate Representative: Organizations represented on the NAC may appoint one VAVS Associate Representative from adjacent states to the facility VAVS Committee when the organization has members in an adjacent state participating in the facility Volunteer Program. Duties (except for voting privileges, which may be delegated in the absence of the Representative) are the same as a Representative, but limited to the adjacent state. **The Associate Representative must hold membership in the organization in the adjacent state.**

Facility Deputy Associate Representative: Organizations represented on the NAC may appoint one VAVS Deputy Associate Representative to the facility VAVS Committee. Duties consist of those assigned by the Associate Representative. Deputy Associate Representatives may participate fully in discussions at facility VAVS Committee meetings and be appointed to subcommittees and task groups. **The Deputy Associate Representative must hold membership in the organization in the adjacent state.**

“Associate Representatives” and “Deputy Associate Representatives” are not second-class appointees to VAVS Committees. They are simply members of the Organization in an adjacent state who represent veterans from that state who participate in the VAVS Program in said facility. They are equal partners of “Representatives” and “Deputy Representatives” in the effort to serve veterans. The fact that the “Associate Representative” does not have a vote in the VAVS Committee is a matter of order. Organizations on that committee can only have one vote and it is given to the representative of the home state Organization.

NOTE: Appointments of Associate Representative or Deputy Associate Representative to the designation of Representative or Deputy Representative are authorized when the home State organization is not represented. These appointments must be made with the clear understanding that if the respective

home state organization later certifies representation, the previous appointment will revert to associate status.

Facility Honorary Representative: A Representative who serves at least 10 years on the VAVS Committee may be appointed by an organization to serve as an Honorary Representative; however, they may not hold office. Honorary Representatives will serve as advisors to the committee without vote and should receive all VAVS Committee correspondence, as do the other VAVS Committee members. Honorary Representatives may serve as members of task groups.

NOTE: This can apply to Deputy Representatives and Associate Representatives.

THE VAVS PLAN

PRINCIPLES OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program is a VA program. “VHA Handbook 1620.1” guides the conduct of the program throughout the VA medical care system. It is the fundamental principle of The American Legion and the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office that volunteer assistance is under the direct supervision of the VA staff, and that it is supplemental to the essential personnel, equipment, facilities and programs provided by the Federal Government for the direct and indirect care, treatment, and welfare of veterans.

Any individual or member of a voluntary organization with a sincere desire to serve, and who can meet the same requirements prescribed by VA for acceptance of members of voluntary organizations, may participate in the volunteer program. All are treated essentially alike. The particular capacity in which the individual will serve is determined by the medical facility needs and the abilities of the volunteer. However, non-affiliated volunteers are generally accepted to meet needs that are not being met by members of the voluntary organizations.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE VAVS PROGRAM

- (1) Attainment of the most effective use of community volunteer resources;
- (2) The coordination and integration of volunteer assistance into the medical facility patient care program;
- (3) Supplementing the work of VA staff in providing health care services to veterans and their families.

In order to implement this complex program, a VAVS National Advisory Committee exists. Medical centers and independent outpatient clinics are required to have a VAVS Committee.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ROLE

National Level

At the National level, the VAVS plan provides for a VAVS National Advisory Committee. The Committee is headed by the Chief Communications Officer (Chairperson), VHA Central Office, and the Director Voluntary Service Office (Deputy Chairperson). National organizations provide its members. For more information on this topic, please refer to “VHA Handbook 1620.1.”

The VAVS National Advisory Committee meets annually to discuss matters of mutual interest, and to submit recommendations for program improvements. The principal work of the committee is carried on during the year by appointed subcommittees and study groups, which present their reports at the annual meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee. The National Commander of The American Legion has designated specific members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff to serve as National VAVS Representative and Deputy National VAVS Representative(s). These National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff members represent The American Legion in all aspects of voluntary service in working with VA and other members of the national committee.

The National VAVS Representative of The American Legion is the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and has been designated “**The American Legion Nationally Authorized Certifying Official.**” In that capacity he/she certifies to VA Medical Center Directors the names of Legionnaires selected and recommended by Department officials to serve as Medical Center VAVS Representatives, Medical Center VAVS Deputy Representatives, Medical Center VAVS Associate Representatives, and Medical Center VAVS Deputy Associate Representatives. As the representative of the National Headquarters of The American Legion, he/she is responsible for giving advice to the Chairperson of the VAVS National Advisory Committee in planning volunteer service programs, and providing information about the capabilities and problems of Legion Departments in their participation in volunteer assistance programs. The National VAVS Representative attends VAVS National Advisory Committee meetings, provides orientation to Medical Center VAVS Representatives, Posts and Departments regarding policies, objectives, procedures, and study projects; and promotes the selection and certification of qualified VAVS Representatives and volunteers. He/she coordinates volunteer activities and evaluates Legion participation in volunteer programs through review of the minutes of VAVS Advisory Committee meetings and the Medical Center VAVS Representative’s Summary of Annual Joint Review.

In order to accomplish the large volume of work involved in providing national leadership to The American Legion participation in the VAVS Program, the National VAVS Representative has at least one Deputy National VAVS Representative who, with the National Representative, attends the National VAVS Advisory Committee meetings and serves on the subcommittees and study groups at the request of the Chairman of the National

VAVS Advisory Committee. Both National VAVS Representative and his/her Deputy(ies) review recurring reports and directives to identify and recommend any action necessary by the Facility VAVS Representative to strengthen The American Legion Voluntary Service assistance program, recommend changes in Legion policies and procedures, or provide essential guidance to Departments and Posts of The American Legion. Additionally, the Deputy prepares material for the annual report of voluntary service activities of The American Legion. He/she must be well informed and actively involved in order to identify trends and the need for special growth and expansion of volunteer participation to meet the changing needs of voluntary service in support of VA programs.

State Level

A. (State) Department Adjutant

The Department Adjutant oversees the VAVS program for his or her state and ensures that it is operating effectively and efficiently and submits an annual report to the VAVS Deputy National Representative.

B. (State) Department VAVS Chairman

The Department VAVS Chairman is responsible for the overall successful operation of the VAVS program on the state level. He or she sees that all VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives and Post Commanders are aware of their responsibilities.

Medical Facility Level

At VA medical facility level, the VAVS plan provides for a Medical Center VAVS Committee at each VA medical facility. The medical facility Associate Medical Center Director, or other senior management official, is responsible for the overall voluntary service program, and serves as Chairperson of the Medical Center VAVS Committee. The Voluntary Service Program Manager administers and operates the program under the supervision of the Associate Medical Center Director or other senior management official, and serves as Deputy Chairman of the committee. The membership of the Medical Center VAVS Committee includes one certified local Representative and up to three certified local Deputy Representatives (exclusive of satellite clinic appointments) of each voluntary organization, which is a member of the VAVS National Advisory Committee. The number of Deputy VAVS Representatives is based on the demonstrated need of the organization. Where appropriate, an Associate Representative and a Deputy Associate Representative may be included on the rolls of the committee. For more information on this topic, please refer to “VHA Handbook 1620.1.”

Each VAVS Representative of The American Legion is the connecting link between the medical facility and all of the Legion Posts, which have members participating in that medical facility voluntary service program. The VAVS Representative works with the medical facility staff in planning the best use of The American Legion resources in the community. The VAVS Committee holds regularly scheduled meetings quarterly, at which time the need for volunteers, as determined by using VA staff services, is brought to the attention of VAVS Representatives. Each VAVS Representative is responsible for bringing this information to the attention of the Legion Posts and assists in recruiting volunteers to fill the volunteer needs. Special VAVS Committee meetings are held as determined by the Chairperson.

The main purpose of the Medical Center VAVS Committee is to coordinate the plans and policies for community volunteer efforts, bringing these efforts together, and making them a meaningful part of the VAVS program for veteran patients.

DEPARTMENT VAVS CHAIRMAN

RESPONSIBILITIES

As the principal spokesperson of The American Legion for the state, the Department VAVS Chairman is certified by the Department Adjutant and assists the Adjutant with:

- (1) Developing and maintaining database of Department VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives.
- (2) Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with American Legion VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives, VA Voluntary Service Program Managers/Chiefs, local post members, the public, other governmental jurisdictions, contractors, and community agencies.
- (3) Ensures VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives are aware of their responsibilities.
- (4) Coordinates with National and the State level to effectively distribute VAVS program information.
- (5) Submits annual Department VAVS Summary to National Headquarters with recommendations for program enhancement or improvement.

QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be effective, the Department VAVS Chairman must have the following basic qualifications:

- At least two years of related Voluntary Service experience and a genuine interest in the welfare of veterans.
- Experience in how to become a volunteer, recruitment and retention strategies, VAVS hospital quarterly meetings, and/or experience as a VA Hospital VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative.
- Sufficient time available to attend Department VAVS functions and build relationships with VA Voluntary Service Program Managers/Chiefs, American Legion VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives, local post communities/members, the public, other governmental jurisdictions, contractors, and National Headquarters.
- Leadership ability to obtain the respect and support of the

members of the State he/she represents, and to promote and organize volunteer activities regularly.

- Effectively use a personal computer, Microsoft Office Software, e-mail, and internet to accomplish job functions.
- Currently registered as a VAVS Volunteer, with completed training on TB testing, Identification, signed Statement of Commitment and Understanding, HIPPA Privacy Act and current Personal Identification Card (PIV).

MEDICAL CENTER VAVS REPRESENTATIVES

RESPONSIBILITIES

As the principal spokesperson of The American Legion at the medical center, the certified Medical Center VAVS Representative is personally responsible for:

- (1) Attending all scheduled VAVS Committee meetings regularly or arranging for the certified Medical Center VAVS Deputy Representative to take his/her place.

NOTE: Organizations will be removed from the VAVS Committee when none of the certified members is in attendance at three consecutive meetings. Membership can be renewed with a letter of certification to the facility Director indicating the attendance requirement will be met. Notification to the respective National Certifying Official is required when an organization is removed from a local VAVS Committee;

- (2) Actively serving on VAVS subcommittees and discussion and work/study groups;
- (3) Representing, at VAVS Committee meetings, all of The American Legion Posts from his/her Department, which have members participating in the medical facility's volunteer program;
- (4) Keeping themselves and the Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager informed on the policies, procedures and activities of the Posts and the Department he/she represents;
- (5) Informing the Posts and his/her Department about the medical facility, its policies, procedures, and patient treatment programs, and mailing copies of the minutes of medical facility VAVS meetings to key members of the Posts and the Department;
- (6) Inviting, or arranging for the invitation of, officials of his/her Department and the Posts to attend special events, orientation tours, and volunteer recognition ceremonies at the medical facility;
- (7) Sharing his/her responsibilities with, seeking the advice of, and keeping the Medical Center VAVS Deputy Representative(s) fully informed;
- (8) Recruiting, screening and training Legion volunteers from the Posts he/she represents;

- (9) Arranging for speakers from the medical facility to appear before Post and Department meetings; and
- (10) Participating in the VAVS Annual Joint Review (see section VIII of this handbook as well as “VHA Handbook 1620.1” for more information on Annual Joint Reviews).

QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be effective, the Medical Center VAVS Representative must have the following basic qualifications:

- Sufficient time available to attend the VAVS Committee meetings regularly, participate in VAVS Committee activities, and a genuine interest in the welfare of veterans.
- Enough leadership ability to obtain the respect and support of the members of the Legion Posts he/she represents, and to promote and organize volunteer activities regularly.
- Knowledge of the policies, organizational structure, operational procedures, manpower resources of The American Legion Posts and Department he/she represents.
- Ability to comprehend and explain to The American Legion Post he/she represents and to his/her Department, the VAVS program, the need for volunteers and the role of The American Legion in aiding and carrying out the purposes and attaining the objectives of the VAVS Program.
- Initiative and health to engage energetically in all aspects of participation in the VAVS program by The American Legion.
- Official recognition by The American Legion and certification by the Nationally Authorized Certifying Official, to act as its spokesperson on the Medical Center VAVS Committee.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF THE RIGHT LEGIONNAIRE TO SERVE AS A VAVS REPRESENTATIVE

High on the list of criteria for the selection of Legionnaires to serve as VAVS Representatives is attendance at VAVS meetings. The failure of certified representatives to attend meetings regularly limits their effectiveness in the work of the Medical Center VAVS Committee, as well as, participation of The American Legion in the support of veteran patients. Organiza-

tions will be removed from the VAVS Committee when none of the certified members is in attendance at three consecutive meetings. Membership can be renewed with a letter of certification to the facility Director indicating the attendance requirement will be met.

Prior to recommending a Legionnaire as a VAVS Representative, the recommending Department official should arrange for a conference of the individual being recommended with the Voluntary Service Program Manager at the medical facility, to be sure that he/she understands thoroughly what their new assignment entails, and what their responsibilities will be. Mutual agreement among the certified VAVS Representative, the medical facility Voluntary Service staff, The American Legion Department involved, and the participating Posts will do a great deal to enhance the effectiveness of the Legion's contribution to the VA Volunteer Service Program.

Since The American Legion, by VA regulations, may not have more than one Department representative as a spokesperson with voting privilege on the Medical Center VAVS Committee, despite the number of Legion Posts and Legionnaires they represent, it is essential that great care be taken by the Department to select the best qualified Legionnaire available to serve as the Medical Center VAVS Representative. A brief summary of qualifications for a Medical Center VAVS Representative is included in this Handbook.

The VAVS Representative, Deputy Representative, Associate Representative and Deputy Associate Representative are looked upon by the medical facility staff and other members of the Medical Center VAVS Committee as representatives of the strongest and most influential veterans' organization. They are looked to for advice on methods for improvement in volunteer recruitment, as well as for the effective utilization of community volunteer resources in behalf of veteran patients. By their appearance, conduct, and oral statements, they either enhance or impair the image of The American Legion.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is the Nationally Authorized Certifying Official of The American Legion. He is responsible for certifying to the VA Medical Center Directors the names of Legionnaires, selected and recommended by an appropriate official of the Department, to serve as Medical Center VAVS Representative, Deputy Representative, Associate Representative and Deputy Associate Representative.

It is emphasized that certifying action is based primarily on the recom-

mentation submitted by the Department officials. A copy of the certifying letter to the Medical Center Director will be sent to the Department. VA medical facilities, by VA regulations, are authorized to accept Legionnaires to serve on the VAVS Committee from certification emanating only from the Legion's Authorized Certifying Official.

If a Representative becomes ill, moves out of State or wishes to resign, he must forward his/her letter of resignation first to the Department concerned. Correspondence should not be sent directly to the Legion Authorized Certifying Official who is located in The American Legion Headquarters in Washington, DC. This will only delay the processing procedure.

In order to facilitate implementation of the certification program, the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission periodically circulates a Memorandum to Department Adjutants, and Department Service Officers/Rehabilitation Directors, which describes the procedures as outlined above. Sample forms for use by Department officials recommending the certification of VAVS representatives, and a list of qualifications are attached. The forms include a request for the minimum information needed by the Certifying Official. A copy of this form is included in the Appendix of this Handbook. The appointment of VAVS representatives by the Department and certification by the National Certifying Official remain in effect until a request from the Department requesting termination of certification is received by the Certifying Official.

POST COMMANDER

RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) While overseeing the many programs at the Post level, the Commander designates a Post VAVS Chairman to assist in the coordination all VAVS activity.
- (2) The Commander supports and promotes the VAVS activities at meetings and in newsletters. The Post Commander will provide activity reports to the Hospital VAVS Representative on the activities of his Post.

POST VAVS CHAIRMAN

- (1) The Post VAVS Chairman will recommend ways for the Post to support the veterans based on the information provided by the VAVS Representative.
- (2) The Post VAVS Chairman coordinates all activities with the VAVS Representative.
- (3) The Post VAVS Chairman presents the VAVS Program to the Post and provides status reports to the members and the VAVS Representative.
- (4) The Post VAVS Chairman provides newsletter articles regarding the activities of the Post

THE VOLUNTEER WORKER

THE VALUE OF THE VOLUNTEER

The key individual in the VAVS Program is the volunteer worker. The coordination of all available community volunteer workers at the national and the community level to bring this volunteer effort together, and apply it effectively under the supervision of VA staff in medical facility programs to aid in the motivation and early recovery of veteran patients, is the objective of the VAVS plan. Without individual men, women and youthful members of the community who have a sincere interest, and the time to be of service

to others, and for which no monetary payment is expected, there would be no VA Voluntary Service program.

The volunteer worker brings a unique interpersonal contribution to the VA medical care program, which cannot be provided by the other members of the medical facility team. Most significantly, the volunteer reflects the atmosphere of the world outside of the medical facility. He/she represents community interest and happenings, and surrounds the patient with a normal, rather than a medical facility, environment. The volunteer worker creates a bridge between the medical facility and the community. A special closeness tends to develop between the patient and the volunteer, especially where there are similarities in their background.

NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

With the influx of severely wounded Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) active duty military into the VA healthcare system for long-term rehabilitation, and the operation of the four regional Poly Trauma Centers and additional 17 Network Poly Trauma Centers, the need for volunteers is growing dramatically across the system.

In addition, the ever expanding role of the volunteer in the VA medical care program has added to the need for effective programs of recruitment and retention of volunteer workers from the total volunteer resources of our communities.

RECRUITMENT GUIDELINES

The most successful recruitment technique has been personal contact by VAVS Representatives and medical facility staff members, with potential volunteers at organizational meetings where medical facility needs for volunteers can be pointed out. Concentrated programs for the recruitment of volunteers require increased personal contacts with high schools, churches, senior citizen and youth groups, and radio and television spoken appeals. The programs should stress personal appeals by VAVS Representatives at meetings of non-VA affiliated organizations. These presentations should emphasize that the medical facility staff really wants the services of volunteers; that the VAVS volunteer worker is making a sorely needed contribution; that the volunteer's association with VA staff are pleasant, and that the volunteer will receive valuable training, careful placement, and good supervision. Above all, in most instances, the volunteer has a need to be wanted and appreciated. Volunteer participation furnishes opportunities to fill those needs.

RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE

VA staff members can be enlisted to speak at meetings, conduct orientation programs, and special medical facilities programs and medical facility tours.

The fundamental purpose of programs for recruitment of volunteers is to fill the requests for assistance of the Using Services of the medical facility. Recruitment procedures should stress the nature of the work to be done by volunteers in supplementing the work of the VA full-time staff, in direct and indirect patient care programs. Volunteers are needed in practically every category of medical facility, and in almost every level. Volunteer assignments include satisfying assignment opportunities for men, women, youth, senior citizens, family teams (husband-wife, father-son, mother-daughter, etc.), and assignment opportunities for medical facility-based volunteers and community-based volunteers.

One of the major factors, which influenced VA Central Office in its approval of additional Deputy Medical Center VAVS Representatives was the need for assistance for VAVS Representatives in fulfilling their responsibilities in special aspects of the volunteer activities of the voluntary organizations, such as youth volunteers and community care programs. Deputy Representatives provide improved leadership and representation at VAVS Committee meetings, and meaningful participation in the VAVS program.

RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer, having been recruited, has indicated a genuine interest in participating in programs for the betterment of the morale and welfare of veteran patients. The retention of the volunteer, therefore, is of prime importance. The volunteer is dependent on the continuance of his/her feelings of being needed and appreciated by the patients, the medical facility staff and the other volunteers. Evidence that the volunteer is making a needed contribution and that their efforts are being well utilized, is dependent upon his/her correct assignment, proper supervision by VA staff, satisfactory training, and adequate recognition. These factors are primarily under the control of the medical facility, but they should be subjected to continuing evaluations and critical review of the VAVS Representative, if the voluntary assistance program is to be successful.

INITIAL SCREENING AND TRAINING

The VAVS Representative of The American Legion on the Medical Center VAVS Committee will screen out any of the individuals recruited who appear obviously unsuited to medical facility volunteer work, and will

provide a general VAVS orientation for the individual men and women who are initially selected as potential VAVS volunteer workers. Further screening is accomplished by the medical facility staff during the initial interviews, their orientation and indoctrination.

Prospective volunteers are required to participate in orientation and indoctrination by the medical facility staff, as arranged by the Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager. The orientation includes the medical facility organization, policies bearing directly on the volunteer program, and the volunteer's role in patient care.

Depending on the volunteer's assignment, prospective volunteers must meet all VAVS requirements established by national and local policy. This includes successful completion of any requirements, training and orientation, which may include the following: fire and safety, infection control, TB testing (PPD), Identification, Confidentiality/Patient Rights, Patient Abuse/Sexual Harassment, Hazardous Materials, Suspicious/Threatening Individuals, Personal Suitability and Investigations Determinations (VA Form 2280), Inventory of Background Investigations, Cyber Security Training Tracking and Statement of Commitment and Understanding, HIPDB Privacy Act Training/Tracking, Varying levels of background checks based on local facility, WOC Appointment documentation and PIV card.

CLASSIFICATION OF VOLUNTEERS

The volunteers are interviewed by the Voluntary Service Program Manager and the supervisor of the medical facility service where the volunteer is most interested and will be assigned to a mutually agreeable assignment. Based on the interview, the individual volunteers are divided into two general groups, "Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers, also under VA supervision." and "Occasional Volunteers." RS Volunteers have a regularly scheduled assignment, which they carry out under VA supervision - all others are "Occasional Volunteers."

REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS

Regularly scheduled (RS) volunteers are individuals who participate in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled assignment under VA supervision. Frequency of participation is determined locally. Volunteers will be officially authorized to serve on a "without compensation" (WOC) basis as RS volunteers when they:

- (1) Sign the "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement" as contained in VA Form 10-7055, Application for Voluntary Service.

Volunteers accepted in the VAVS Program are considered WOC employees. WOC precludes monetary payments or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy;

- (2) Have been approved for assignment by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, or designee;
- (3) Have participated in required interviews and orientations prescribed by the VA facility; and
- (4) Have met all of the necessary volunteer requirements; and
- (5) Completed a trial period as established by the VA Facility

OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS

Occasional volunteers are those individuals serving under the VAVS Program who do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers. They must sign a “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement.”

NOTE: Determination of minimum age for regularly scheduled and occasional volunteers is at the discretion of the facility management.

ASSIGNMENT OF VOLUNTEERS:

The final selection or rejection, and the assignment of volunteers is made by the VA facility staff, based on the medical facility’s greatest need for volunteer assistance, the best use of the volunteer’s capability and time and the volunteer’s area of interest. Changes in assignment are normally made only by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, after thorough coordination with the volunteer and the VA staff supervisor concerned.

Volunteers should understand their assignment and should receive individual supervision from the VA employee responsible. The supervisor is responsible for providing detailed guidance, continuing on-the-job instruction and task assignments.

The volunteer is responsible to report regularly at the time directed, seek the advice of the supervisor whenever in doubt concerning what is to be done, discuss any problems with the supervisor, and keep the supervisor and the Voluntary Service Program Manager informed as to his/her inability to meet a scheduled assignment, if such a situation should arise.

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

In order to provide guidance to the voluntary organizations in the re-

cruitment of volunteers, to aid VA staff members in their orientation and supervision of volunteer workers and to guide volunteers working with patients, the chiefs of the medical facility divisions and services utilizing volunteers prepare volunteer assignment guides which are coordinated with the Voluntary Service Program Manager. These guides contain a description of each “volunteer position” in each Using Division and Service in the medical facility which, includes the title of the position, designation of the VA supervisor by title and service, the duties and responsibilities of the volunteers, the days and hours of duty, any special skills necessary, and the training requirements of the position.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Volunteer assistance is rendered to meet the needs of the medical facility as specifically expressed and supervised by the Using Services of the medical facility. That assistance is considered generally to be provided by individual volunteers. However, much of the volunteer effort is expended by groups of trained volunteers sponsored by the voluntary organizations.

Group activities are supervised by the Using Services of the medical facility and are planned, scheduled, and carefully coordinated by Voluntary Service to avoid conflict with other activities of the patient care and treatment program such as bathing, shaving, medications, X-ray, and physical medicine and recreation therapy clinics. Group programs, which are arranged as requested by the treatment staff to meet the patients’ needs, must conform to all of the patients as approved by the ward physicians. Activities sponsored by groups include picnics, bingo games, card parties, bowling, dancing, birthday parties, coffee hour, off-station trips, and Holiday parties.

COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER

The Department of Veterans Affairs has extended its programs of care beyond the medical facility to the community. Opportunities to serve veterans in the community include volunteering in Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS), Vet Centers, Fisher Houses, State Veterans Homes and Community Nursing Homes. Some older veterans cannot drive to and from medical appointments, live alone and need assistance and companionship and volunteers can visit and assist them from their homes.

SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER LOCATIONS

VA Poly Trauma Centers: The VA has four regional Poly Trauma Centers and 17 Network Poly Trauma Centers. These centers are receiving an influx of OEF/OIF wounded warriors that are treated for traumatic brain injury,

amputation, blindness, or other visual impairment, complex orthopedic injuries and mental health concerns. There are many needs these wounded soldiers and their family members have and you can ask your local VAVS Program Manager how to help. (<http://www.polytrauma.va.gov/>)

VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC): Community Based-Outpatient Clinics were designed to improve veterans' access to care by offering primary care in local communities. Volunteer opportunities include: making coffee, answering phones and scheduling appointments. Each CBOC has a VA Administrative officer that can certify your volunteer hours.

Fisher Houses: The Fisher House Foundation offers support and provides lodging for families while they are visiting the hospital for extended periods of time due to patients receiving care. Assistance is needed in donations of paper goods, linens, food, books and videos, assisting in fund raising efforts to support existing houses and to promote development of new Fisher Houses. Please confer with the local VAVS Program Manager. (<http://www.fisherhouse.org/>)

State Veterans Homes: Volunteers at State Veterans Homes can help plan social events, assist with transportation, direct patient care, food and beverage services and answering phones. State Veterans Homes' volunteers receive the same recognition and credit for volunteer hours as VAVS volunteers. (<http://www.nasvh.org/home/index.cfm>)

Vet Center: Vet Centers serve veterans and their families including professional readjustment counseling, community education, outreach to special populations, work with community organizations and are a key link between the veteran and other services available within VA. Opportunities to serve veterans include answering phones, making coffee, transportation and planning holiday and social activities. (<http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>)

VA Special Events

VA has many major events that volunteer support is needed. Some of these include: National Wheelchair Games, National Golden Age Games, National Creative Arts Festival, National Winter Sports Clinic, Homeless Stand Downs, Annual Red Cross Blood Drive and the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom Welcome Home Event Celebrations.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS (VolunTeens):

The ever increasing need for both senior and youth volunteers in the care and treatment programs for veteran patients has caused the voluntary orga-

nizations to seek greater numbers of potential volunteers in youth groups.

The concerted and joint action of the members of senior citizen groups and garden clubs as well as church, civic, ethnic, social and high school groups and scouting organizations is of significant assistance to the medical facility medical team in providing the human warmth and understanding needed by the veteran patient. It promotes his/her hope during the long and lonely hours of their rehabilitation. The VAVS program provides an opportunity for youth to unite with senior citizens and the handicapped as well as the able-bodied men and women of the community in one integrated program which conveys to the veteran patient the love of the community and its interest in his/her early rehabilitation and return to his/her family and community.

The combination of enthusiasm and ambition of young people with the wisdom of age is of significant benefit in the development of new and effective programs capable of meeting today's challenge in our medical facilities, Posts, and communities.

VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIPS WITH VA STAFF

The VAVS volunteer, as a participating member of the medical facility team, must abide by all of the rules of the medical facility. These have been established for the welfare of the veteran patient and the enhancement of relationships among the staff. Volunteer workers must seek the advice and direction of the medical facility staff and cooperate fully in the implementation of policies, procedures, and regulations prescribed by the Medical Center Director. It is essential that the confidence of the patients and the staff be respected and that all aspects of the prescribed treatment programs and individual patient's problems be treated as matters which are strictly within the purview of the professional staff. Volunteers as "without compensation" workers are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (38 U.S.C., Section 513), and VA regulations that implement that statute. Unlawful release of such information could result in prosecution in a court of law and the imposition of a substantial fine.

As a co-worker the volunteer has the right to be assigned a work task reasonably suited to his/her preference, experience, and education; to receive needed training and direction in the task to be accomplished and periodic refresher in-service training; to be given opportunities for training for greater responsibilities and challenges; to participate in planning pertinent to volunteer programs; and, to be given recognition for work well done.

The relationship between the medical facility staff and the volunteers is one

of full partnership. Operational leadership is provided by the staff. However, the frequent turnover of the staff and changes caused by the up-grading of patient treatment and management programs and the responsibility of the staff in directing volunteers and effectively utilizing their services require a continuing program of evaluation and education.

VA SERVICES AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEERS

In order to facilitate the services of VA volunteers and to provide them the health services and other benefits afforded VA employees, the Medical Center Director, if he administratively determines that the presence of the volunteers at the medical facility is necessary for a complete medical and hospital service, is authorized to provide the benefits and services indicated below:

MEALS

Meals may be furnished without charge to RS volunteers provided their scheduled assignment is at least 4 hours and/or the value of the service is commensurate with the value of the meal. Meals may be provided to others at the discretion of the facility Director if the facility Director determines that the individuals render a service which will benefit VA in discharging its responsibilities to patients.

PARKING

Facilities will make every effort to provide parking for RS volunteers without charge.

TRANSPORTATION

The VA facility may furnish transportation to those volunteers whose presence at the VA facility is necessary for complete medical and hospital service. Necessary transportation can be furnished by means of commercial or government transportation.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

Volunteers are considered “without compensation” (WOC) employees and are provided health services and medical benefits in accordance with established policy for employees as outlined in MP-5, Part I, Chapter 792. Specifically this means that:

New volunteers, not normally required to have a physical examination, when deemed necessary for the protection of VA patients or volunteers,

will be provided a physical examination without charge. A physical examination may be required based on the requirements of the volunteer position or to determine fitness for duty. Emergency outpatient treatment for injuries sustained while performing assigned volunteer service will be provided to volunteers. Voluntary Service, in cooperation with the facility's Infection Control Committee, will determine the need for tuberculin tests and examinations, including chest X-rays, for RS volunteers. These procedures will be provided without cost to the volunteer. Volunteers will receive other employee benefits and/or services as determined locally, including cholesterol testing, blood pressure screening, and influenza vaccinations.

COMPENSATION BENEFITS

All volunteers serving in the medical facility VAVS Program are considered employees and are eligible for compensation benefits as provided under the Injury Compensation Laws (5 USC, Chapter 81). All volunteers who are injured in the course of their assigned duties are authorized medical services by the Office of Workers' Compensation.

IDENTIFICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

All VA facilities will issue identification to RS volunteers. Facilities are encouraged to provide smocks and/or jackets to aid in the identification of volunteers.

USE OF VA FACILITY SERVICES

As determined locally, volunteers may use facilities authorized for employee use.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

All VAVS Volunteers will be provided orientation and pertinent information about their VA facility and assignment; additionally, volunteers will receive training for their assignment and may be able to participate in other ongoing training/educational programs as determined by the local facility

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEERS

VA AWARDS IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

It is VAVS policy to provide appropriate recognition for contributions of the VAVS volunteers and their organizations to the VAVS Program. Volunteers have a significant impact on VA healthcare and should be recognized for their contributions. Recognition is the responsibility of all staff and may consist of tangible awards, such as certificates, pins, plaques, etc. “Without compensation” (WOC) employees under 38 U.S.C. 513 and 7405 may participate in the VA Employee Recognition and Awards Program. Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgement and the sense of belonging to the health care team (see Office of General Counsel (OGC) Opinion dated, April 5, 1999, and Office of Finance Bulletin 00GA2.05).

Awards

Individual: VAVS awards will be presented to volunteers who have met the eligibility standards. Awards are typically presented based on the previous fiscal year. They include:

VAVS Pins for Adult and Student Volunteers

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. 50 hours | 14. 8,750 hours |
| 2. 100 hours | 15. 10,000 hours |
| 3. 150 hours | 16. 12,500 hours |
| 4. 300 hours | 17. 15,000 hours |
| 5. 500 hours | 18. 17,500 hours |
| 6. 750 hours | 19. 20,000 hours |
| 7. 1,000 hours | 20. 22,500 hours |
| 8. 1,750 hours | 21. 25,000 hours |
| 9. 2,500 hours | 22. 30,000 hours |
| 10. 3,750 hours | 23. 35,000 hours |
| 11. 5,000 hours | 24. 40,000 hours |
| 12. 6,250 hours | 25. 45,000 hours |
| 13. 7,500 hours | 26. 50,000 hours |

Certificates: VA Form 10-7031d, Voluntary Service Award for Hours and Years of Service, is presented to volunteers who have previously earned the 1000 hour pin and who have served at least 100 hours during the previous calendar year. This award will NOT be given during the years in which the volunteer qualifies for another award.

Other Awards:

Dedicated Service Award Plaque	7,500
Outstanding Merit Award Plaque	8,750
Honor Award Bowl	10,000
Outstanding Service Award Pyramid	12,500
Exceptional Honor Award Medallion	15,000
Superior Service Award Plate	17,500
James H. Parke Achievement Award Tray	20,000
Mantle Clock	22,500
Angular, 6" x 8" Jade Crystal	25,000
Angular, 7" x 9" Jade Crystal	30,000
Angular, 8" x 10" Jade Crystal	35,000
Octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with wood base	40,000
Octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with crystal base	45,000
7" x 10" Jade Crystal Tower	50,000

NOTE: VA pins denoting equivalent hours of service will be awarded in conjunction with the preceding items listed.

Group: VA awards may be presented by the facility Director, or Voluntary Service Program Manager, to individuals and groups in recognition of exceptional service, special contributions, or continued outstanding service in VAWS. These awards need to be processed through the facility Voluntary Service for coordination and verification.

- (a) VA Form 14780C, Certificate of Appreciation, may be given in support of outstanding participation during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

(b) VA Form 10-7042, Outstanding Service Award, may be presented on a selective basis.

Note: Locally developed awards may be presented to augment national awards.

SECRETARY'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD: The Secretary's Volunteer Service Award is an 11" x 14" embossed certificate, signed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, presented with a blue and gold diamond enamel pin. This award may be issued only once and should not be given indiscriminately or during the year in which the volunteer qualifies for another award. Nomination for the Secretary's Volunteer Service Award should be submitted at least 3 months in advance of the anticipated presentation. For additional criteria, see "VHA Handbook 1620.1."

VOLUNTARY SERVICE LEADERSHIP AWARD: VA Form 10-1208, The Voluntary Service Leadership Award and associated pin may be presented to any member of the local VAVS committee who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and abilities, benefiting VA and/or its beneficiaries. For more details, see "VHA Handbook 1620.1."

AWARDS BY THE AMERICAN LEGION IN RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE: Resolution 323, To Clarify the Conditions and Issuance of National Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Awards, approved at the 2008 National Convention, provides volunteer award information.

Department Adjutants submit the request of VAVS awards after the Chief of Voluntary Service of the VA hospital facility has certified with his/her signature the number of hours accrued by the volunteer and both request and certification are forwarded to the National Headquarters at 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, to the attention of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division.

The National Headquarters will send bars that represent the highest number of hours earned if the Departments request said awards. The request for those awards for which the VA is responsible is done directly to VA from Department Headquarters.

VolunTeens are awarded a 8' 11 ½" certificate, pin and bars once they have met the conditions set forth in the Voluntary Service Handbook.

Volunteers in VA Medical Centers receive 100 hour 8' 11 ½" certificates; 300 hour 8' 11 ½" certificates, pins and bars; 500 hour 8' 11 ½" certificates and bars; and, after this, a Volunteer Hospital Worker pin when they meet 1,000 hours, with a corresponding bar, and thereafter, bars in increments

of 1,000 up to a maximum of 20,000 hours.

The 100, 300, and 500 hour certificates are signed by the Chairman of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and then mailed to the respective volunteers local VA Medical Center for signature by the VAVS Program Manager (Chief of Voluntary Service) and presentation to the volunteer.

Service Stars are to be ordered directly from Emblem Sales by the Department Headquarters.

If you have any questions, please contact The American Legion National Headquarters VA&R Division at (202) 861-2700 x 1404.

Resolution 272 (MO), approved by the 1959 National Convention of The American Legion, resolved that the National Rehabilitation Commission be instructed to honor Legionnaires who have devoted 1,000 hours in the care of veteran patients in veterans hospitals by awarding them an appropriate pin which is now called the "Volunteer Hospital Worker" pin. Some time after, the National Executive Committee of The American Legion at its October 1981 meeting approved Resolutions Nos. 14 (Origin: Res. 347 (MI) of the 1981 National Convention) and 16 (Origin: Res. No. 349 (MI) of the 1981 National Convention). The first provided for a new award to be presented to American Legion volunteers in VA medical centers, to be given at the completion of 300 voluntary service hours. It further explained that at the completion of 1,000 voluntary hours, a 1,000 hour bar be awarded along with the "Volunteer Hospital Worker" pin and that for each additional 1,000 hours of volunteer service in the VAVS program, the volunteer should be awarded a bar, attachable to the Volunteer Hospital Worker pin. The bars were to be in denominations of 1,000 hours, and available to cover from 1,000 to 20,000 hours. The second resolution specified that the National Organization design a suitable pin to recognize volunteers at State Veterans Homes and community nursing homes; two years later, at the October NEC, Resolution 3 (Origin: Res. 394 (WI) of the 83rd National Convention) widened recognition of volunteers by the decision to approve giving Legionnaires who perform voluntary service in non-referral nursing homes, day centers, foster homes and halfway houses The American Legion voluntary service awards. At that point, additional bars of 500 and 1,000 voluntary service hours had been designated for volunteers in State Veterans Homes and Community Nursing Homes; the 500 hour bars were to be also available to volunteers in VA medical centers (Res. 1 from the Spring 1983 NEC). The NEC in its October 1984 meeting

approved the recommendation of the VA&R Commission to provide for the issuance of hour bars to those volunteers in State Veterans Homes having 1,000 hours or more to their credit. Finally, the most recent in this line of policy statements is Resolution 11 from the May 1998 NEC: "To Clarify the Conditions and Issuance of National Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Awards." Pins and bars are awarded by the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission through Department Headquarters, based on a written request from the Department which states the name of the volunteer worker, the total number of hours served and the signature of the Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager who has certified to the Department the number of hours served by the Volunteer Hospital Worker.

This is a national program. The Volunteer Hospital Worker pins and bars are not available for sale to individual Legionnaires or Departments. Replacement of a pin or hour bar that has become lost or broken will be made in the same manner as described above. The Department's request should indicate that the item requested is a "replacement" item in order to avoid confusion in pertinent records or interpretation of request as a duplication.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEENS

NOTE: “VolunTeen” is an American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion term. It was coined by the Auxiliary in 1960.

VA MEDICAL CENTER MEMBERS

VolunTeens are recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs and The American Legion as full-fledged members of the VA “Medical Center Team.” Although they are given special orientation and training, they are subject to the same medical facility restrictions and ethical requirements, and are entitled to the same benefits and services, as are the senior volunteers.

VolunTeens approach their duties as volunteer workers with much the same attitude as do senior volunteers. The VolunTeen is assigned to fill a specific vacancy for volunteer assistance as determined by one of the Using Services of the medical facility, and approved by the medical facility VA Staff Advisory Committee. Whenever feasible, VolunTeen assignments are geared to the interests and abilities of the individual VolunTeen. In general they have been fully integrated into the voluntary service program, and participate successfully with the senior volunteers in the accomplishment of meaningful work, under the supervision of VA staff members, to aid in the recovery and rehabilitation of sick and disabled veterans.

PREREQUISITES FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE VOLUNTEEN PROGRAM

The following listed requirements must be fulfilled in order for an 18 year old or younger teenager to become enrolled in the program:

1. Initial interview, screening, and acceptance by the Medical Center VAVS Representative of The American Legion, to eliminate those who appear obviously unsuited to hospital volunteer work.
2. Completion of required signatures on VA Form 10-7055.
3. Satisfactory completion of the VA medical facility orientation and indoctrination course conducted by VA staff. This orientation normally includes an introduction to VA Voluntary Service; organization and function of the medical facility; the role of the VolunTeen in the care of the patient; policies of the medical facility concerning the dress and conduct of patients, staff, and volunteers; what to do in case of fire; privileges and benefits available to VolunTeens; and relationships with the medical facility staff, patients, and visitors.

4. Satisfactory performance of at least 5 hours of probationary volunteer service in the VA medical facility.

IDENTIFYING INSIGNIA

Except in special cases when it has been deemed medically inadvisable by the medical facility treatment staff, and so announced by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, VolunTeens are expected to wear an insignia which identifies their organizational affiliation. Upon selection and enrollment of the VolunTeen, the Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager furnishes the VolunTeen a VA Medical Center volunteer name tag for wear during periods of volunteer service in the medical facility or other place of official volunteer service. The tag is usually of a color or design which is different from that of the regular medical facility staff members.

THE AMERICAN LEGION VOLUNTEEN CERTIFICATE AND PIN AWARD

On completion of the medical facility prescribed course of instruction and 5 hour probationary period of volunteer service, and having served satisfactorily for 25 hours as a medical facility volunteer under VA staff supervision, the VolunTeen is entitled to receive The American Legion VolunTeen Certificate and to wear the VolunTeen Pin. The certificate and pin are available without charge from the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion, 1608 K Street, NW Washington, DC 20006, and are issued to the Department Adjutant in response to his/her request and certification of the Medical Center VAVS Representative and the Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager that the named individual is entitled to the certificate and to wear the VolunTeen pin, having successfully completed the medical facility prescribed course of instruction, the required probationary volunteer service and having served reliably for 25 hours as a volunteer worker at the medical facility. Sample of The American Legion VolunTeen Certificate and design of VolunTeen Pin are at Appendix ???.

The American Legion 50-hour bar, the 100-hour bar, 500-hour bar, and a bar for each 500 hours of service thereafter will be issued as a gift through the Department Adjutant and the Medical Center VAVS Representative to any VolunTeen who has earned such volunteer service award and whose service is certified by the Medical Center VAVS Representative and Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS "JAMES H. PARKE MEMORIAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP AWARD"

James H. Parke was the founder of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service. The James H. Parke Memorial Fund was created in 1976 as a non-profit source of funds for a VAVS Youth Scholarship. Organizations, volunteers, VA staff and others contribute to it. Said annual youth award consists of a certificate and scholarship. The James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board yearly sets the amount of the primary award and any secondary scholarships. The nomination form is to be sent to the President of the Fund. Each medical center may nominate one VAVS student volunteer for receipt of the award. The VA medical facilities will incorporate the following guidelines in selecting the candidate to be nominated:

1. The youth volunteer is outstanding (for example, leadership ability, dependability, inspiration to patients), and is recommended by the Medical Center Service in which he/she is serving; and
2. The youth has completed 100 hours of regularly scheduled service during the calendar year prior to September 1; be a student in the 10th grade or above and has not reached his/her 19th birthday.

PROGRAM EVALUATION: THE ANNUAL JOINT REVIEW

The VAVS Annual Joint Review is the mechanism by which the National VAVS Representative of The American Legion is informed annually of the effectiveness of Legionnaire participation in the VA Voluntary Service Program at each VA medical facility. It indicates the major problems encountered and meaningful plans developed for the utilization of The American Legion volunteer resources. The Summary of the VAVS Annual Joint Review is prepared jointly by the Medical Center VAVS Representative, the Deputy (ies), and the Voluntary Service Program Manager. It covers all aspects of Legion Department volunteer service and all Posts of The American Legion participating in the medical facility VAVS Program. The Associate Representative is entitled to a separate Annual Joint Review.

The specific items to be reviewed and reported on in the VAVS Summary of the Annual Joint Review are coordinated with the members of the VAVS National Advisory Committee and are then promulgated by the Director, Voluntary Service, VA Central Office, in Washington, DC, to VAVS Representatives on the Medical Center VAVS Committee.

In order to participate effectively in program development and planning of the VAVS National Advisory Committee, the National VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representative(s) of The American Legion need reliable information from the Medical Center VAVS Representatives concerning the specific goals established for the year, whether the goals were met, and the major problems encountered. It is essential for the National VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representative(s) to know what national action is felt to be necessary to strengthen The American Legion volunteer participation and what policies and procedures should be revised to promote increased participation.

Although this Annual Joint Review procedure has been established to provide a recurring annual constructive analysis of the voluntary assistance program of The American Legion and other voluntary organizations, this is a mutual effort which will yield greater results by the free flow of information between Medical Center VAVS Representatives, the Posts and Department officials, and the National VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representative(s).

It is the primary objective of all voluntary assistance programs of The American Legion to assist the VA team, in accordance with the instruction of the VA Staff Supervisors, in programs of welfare and service to our sick and disabled veteran patients.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A MEDICAL CENTER VAVS REPRESENTATIVE

To medical facility staff and to the representatives on the VAVS Committee from the other organizations, your VAVS representative is your organization. These individuals will judge the caliber of your organization by the caliber of your VAVS representative.

The following qualifications for a capable and effective VAVS representative are based on experience gained over a period of more than 56 years of operation of VA Voluntary Service. The qualifications have been selected from suggestions by both VA medical facility staff and Medical Center VAVS Representatives themselves.

Sincere Interest In The Welfare Of The Veteran: The VAVS Representative must have a sincere interest in the welfare of the patients and a desire to be of help.

Ability To Work With Others: They must be able to cooperate with members of their own organization, with fellow representatives from the other organizations on the VAVS Committee, and with VA staff to the end that the best interests of the patients are served.

Leadership: They must be a leader in their own organization and have the organization's full support and respect. They must be able to organize, promote and coordinate the program within their own organization and recruit volunteers to serve as needed in the medical facility's programs.

Ability To Attend Meetings Of The VAVS Committee Regularly: They must be able to attend committee meetings regularly. Regular attendance cannot be expected from a representative who does not live within commuting distance of the medical facility.

Knowledge Of His/her Own Organization: They must know the purpose, policies, operating procedures, resources and capabilities of their own organization; and they must be able to interpret them to VA staff and to their fellow representatives on the committee.

Ability To Interpret the VAVS Program To Their Organization: They must be able to interpret the purpose of VA Voluntary Service and the role of their organization and its members in helping to carry out that purpose.

Time To Accomplish Required Work: Without sufficient time to devote to his/her share of committee work, even the most capable representative cannot do an effective job.

Authority To Represent Their Organization: They must be recognized by his/her organization as its liaison with the medical facility in all aspects of the VAVS program. Whether there is only one local unit of the organization in the medical facility, or there are several units serving, the VAVS Representative represents all the organization's units serving that medical facility.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

**RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF
VAVS REPRESENTATIVE, DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE(S),
ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE, AND ASSOCIATE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE
THE AMERICAN LEGION**

Mr. Barry A. Searle
National VAVS Representative
The American Legion
1608 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Sir:

We are recommending to you our Department VAVS Representative, Deputy Representative(s), Associate Representative, and Associate Deputy Representative:

VA Medical Facility

REPRESENTATIVE: (new or replacing)

Name

Mailing Address

Date/Length of Appointment

DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE: (new or replacing)

NAME OF 1ST RECOMMENDED

Name 1

Mailing Address

Date/Length of Appointment

DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE: (new or replacing) (cont'd)

NAME OF 2ND RECOMMENDED

Name 2

Mailing Address

Date/Length of Appointment

ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE: (new or replacing)

Name

Mailing Address

Date/Length of Appointment

ASSOCIATE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE: (new or replacing)

Name

Mailing Address

Date/Length of Appointment



THE AMERICAN LEGION
VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

1608 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

 www.legion.org