

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED?

Lennie Enzel RN,C-BC, MS, NE-BC, CLNC

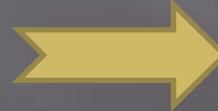
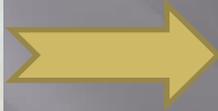
Associate Director Patient Care Services

El Paso VA Health Care System

Colonel (Retired), United States Army



About me



American Academy of Nursing (AAN)

Developed the “Have You Ever Served?” initiative in response to First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden’s ‘Joining Forces Campaign’ to improve the Nation’s support of servicemembers and Veterans.



JOINING FORCES

TAKING ACTION TO SERVE
AMERICA'S MILITARY FAMILIES

JOININGFORCES.GOV

Joining Forces Campaign

Joining Forces focuses on three key priority areas – employment, education, and wellness, while engaging in a comprehensive effort to raise awareness about the service, sacrifice, and needs of military families.



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The nation's medical and nursing schools have pledged to support this initiative by including curricular content that includes military-related occupational hazards and exposures

Initial and active partners in this collaborative venture were the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National League for Nursing, the American Organization of Nurse Executives, American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, American Psychiatric Nurses Association, American Association of Neuroscience Nurses, Association of Rehabilitation Nurses, and the federal nurses of the military and public health services. ANA joined later.

“Have you ever served?”

- ▣ Military service, whether in peace time or during war in and of itself is an occupation fraught with stressors, toxic exposures, hazards, and safety risks not commonly encountered by the civilian population. (Government Printing Office, 2013)
- ▣ There are 23 million Veterans living in America and 1.4 million serving on active duty.
- ▣ 500,000 men and women serve in the National Guard and Reserve Components

“Have you ever served?”

- ▣ Currently, only 1% of our populace serves
- ▣ BUT, overall 1 in 8 Americans is a Veteran
- ▣ Even more are related to Veterans
- ▣ Over 2 million children have had one or both parents deployed since 9/11 – impact?)

Who are our Veterans?

- ▣ 60% of the nation's Veterans live in urban areas
- ▣ 3 million live in highly rural areas – PCTOC
 - Many prefer to be away from civilization
- ▣ Largest Veteran populations are in CA, FL, TX, PA, NY, and OH
- ▣ These 6 states account for 36% of total Vets

Who are our Veterans?

23.8 million Veterans

- ▣ 7.5% are women
- ▣ 37 million dependents of living Veterans and survivors of deceased Veterans
- ▣ Together they represent 20% of the U.S. population
- ▣ Median Age is 62 for men/47 for women
- ▣ Most served during times of war
 - Vietnam-era Vets – 7.9 million – largest segment

The Most Important Question

“Have you ever served in
the military?”

Where Do Veterans Get Healthcare?

- ▣ At the VA, clinicians more adept at detecting service-connected conditions and consequences
- ▣ On return to civilian life, activated National Guard and Reserve Components receive healthcare in the private sector
- ▣ 56% of healthcare providers do not ask about military service
- ▣ The challenge is in identifying service-related occupational and environmental hazards

“Have you ever served in the military?”

- ▣ Identifies links between military service and health problems
- ▣ Pocket card lists most common problems health problems and the questions to ask
- ▣ Overall, only 20-30% of Veterans get their care from the Veterans Health Administration
- ▣ In El Paso, this number is closer to 41%
- ▣ Across the nation, 40% of Veterans receiving VA disability compensation did not use the VA for their healthcare

Are You Seeing Veterans In Your Practice?

- ▣ Military service is a central part of one's background
- ▣ The military has its own culture
- ▣ Each Service has its own culture
- ▣ Even after separating from the service, one feels a close affiliation with this culture
- ▣ Resources are available once service affiliation is identified
- ▣ Family members of those who served

“Have you or someone close to you ever served in the military?”

If the answer is “yes”, find out:

- ▣ When did you serve?
- ▣ Where did you serve?
- ▣ What branch and rank?
- ▣ What was your job?
- ▣ Did you deploy? – Where? When?
- ▣ Did you experience enemy fire, see combat, witness casualties?
- ▣ Were you wounded, injured, hospitalized?
- ▣ Did you participate in any experimental tests?
- ▣ Were you exposed to noise, chemicals, gases, demolition of munitions, pesticides, or other hazardous substances
- ▣ How were you affected by those experiences?
- ▣ Have time for their stories
- ▣ Understand they may not want to discuss – leave the door open for future discussions

“Have you ever used the VA for healthcare”?

If the answer is “yes”, find out:

- ❑ When was your last visit to the VA?
- ❑ Do you have a service-connected disability or condition?
- ❑ Do you have a VA primary care provider?

Uniqueness of Military Service

- ▣ Travel – we're in hundreds of countries
- ▣ Exposure to Toxins - Burn Pits, Agent Orange, Nuclear, Chemical, Biological
- ▣ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) – explosions, MVAs, heavy artillery fire
- ▣ PTSD
- ▣ Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
- ▣ Depression/Suicide Risk – 22 Veterans/day
- ▣ Other stressors

Common Military Health Risks

Radiation Exposure/Nuclear Weapons

High Risk for Cancer

- ▣ **WWII Vets**
 - Served in Alaska, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Korea
 - Was a POW in Japan
 - Was a submariner
 - Nuclear testing

- ▣ **Gulf War, Bosnia, Afghanistan**
 - Depleted Uranium in Tank Armor

Common Military Health Risks

Agent Orange Exposure

Herbicide Used to Kill Foliage

- ▣ Korea and Vietnam Vets
- ▣ High Risk for:
 - Cancers – respiratory and prostate
 - Chloracne – an eruption of blackheads, cysts, pustules
 - Type 2 Diabetes
 - Ischemic Heart Disease
 - Soft Tissue Sarcoma
 - Peripheral Neuropathy
 - Spinal Bifida in children

Common Military Health Risks

Camp Lejume Water Contamination

Veterans & families stationed at Camp Lejune, NC
1/1/57-12/31/87

▣ High Risk for:

- Cancers – bladder, blood, breast, esophageal, kidney, lung, multiple myeloma, respiratory and prostate
- Female Infertility
- Miscarriages
- Scleroderma – hardening of skin and organs
- Hepatic Steatosis (fatty liver)
- Renal toxicity

Common Military Health Risks

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

- ▣ 63% of VA enrolled Vietnam Vets tested +
- ▣ Transfusions prior to 1992
- ▣ Battlefield exposure to blood/body fluids
- ▣ Group use of razors, toothbrushes, needles

Common Military Health Risks

Exposure to Open Air Burn Pits

Every type of waste was burned: plastics, batteries, appliances, medicine, dead animals, with jet fuel used as an accelerant - clouds of black smoke result

- ▣ **Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan Vets – 31 CSH Balad**
- ▣ High Risk for:
 - Cancers – a variety including leukemia
 - Respiratory Illnesses

Common Military Health Risks

Gulf War Syndrome

- ▣ Gulf War Vets
- ▣ High Risk for:
 - Cancers – brain and testicular
 - ALS
 - MS
 - Fibromyalgia
 - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
 - Headaches
 - GI problems

Common Military Health Risks

Depleted Uranium

- ▣ Gulf War, Bosnia, Afghanistan Vets
- ▣ High Risk for:
 - Cancers – brain and testicular
 - ALS
 - MS
 - Fibromyalgia
 - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
 - Headaches
 - GI problems

Common Military Health Risks

Infectious Diseases

- ▣ Iraq and Afghanistan Vets
 - Malaria
 - Typhoid Fever
 - Viral Hepatitis
 - Leishmaniasis – parasite from sand flea bite – skin ulcers, anemia, spleen/liver enlargement
 - TB
 - Rabies from animal bites
 - Now Ebola from Africa deployments?

Cold Injuries

- ▣ Korean War Vets
- ▣ Frostbite and immersion (trench) foot
 - Cold accounted for 16% of Army non-battle injuries requiring admission
 - 1950-1951 >5,000 U.S. cold injury casualties required evacuation from Korea
- ▣ In later life, they develop diabetes and peripheral vascular disease (higher rate for amputations), arthritis, skin cancer in frostbite areas

Post Traumatic Stress

- ▣ **New name(s)**
 - Post Traumatic Stress Injury (PTSI)
 - Post Traumatic Stress (PTS)
 - ▣ Reduces stigma
 - ▣ Just as honorable as any other injury
 - ▣ Normal reaction to an abnormal situation

Some Screening Questions cont'd.

Post Traumatic Stress - ALL Vets

- ▣ Have you ever experienced a traumatic or stressful event which caused you to believe your life or the lives of those around you were in danger?
- ▣ Experiencing trauma-related thoughts or feelings?
- ▣ Having nightmares, vivid memories or flashbacks of the event?

Some Screening Questions cont'd.

Post Traumatic Stress - ALL Vets

- ▣ Feeling anxious, jittery?
- ▣ Experiencing a sense of panic that something bad is about to happen?
- ▣ Having difficulty sleeping or concentrating?

Post Traumatic Stress cont'd.

- ▣ At least 500,000 active duty and Veterans have this diagnosis
- ▣ Most of the behaviors served them well in the combat zone –hypervigilance, numbness
- ▣ Nurses are often the first point of contact for Veterans seeking care
- ▣ American Nurses Foundation developed an interactive website to help better assess and treat PTSD <http://www.nurseptsdtoolkit.org>

Post Traumatic Stress cont'd.

Many Veterans who did not experience combat did have traumatic assignments:

- ▣ The person who transports body bags
- ▣ The clerk who enters names of service members killed in action
- ▣ Medical personnel doing AirEvac or stateside care

Some Screening Questions

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

BOTH Male and Female

- ▣ During military service did you receive uninvited or unwanted sexual attention, such as touching, pressure for sexual favors or sexual remarks?
- ▣ Did anyone ever use force or threat of force to have sexual contact with you against your will?
- ▣ Did you report the incidents to your command and/or military or civilian authorities?

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

- ▣ Generally exhibit PTS symptoms
- ▣ VA provides free confidential counseling for MST
- ▣ Every VA facility has a designator MST Coordinator
 - Advocates for Veterans
 - Coordinates services
- ▣ Most VAs have specialized outpatient mental health services focusing on sexual trauma
- ▣ Some VAs have residential or inpatient treatment centers

Some Screening Questions

Traumatic Brain Injury

- ▣ During your service, did you experience . . . heavy artillery fire, vehicular or aircraft accidents, explosions (improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades, land mines, grenades), or fragment or bullet wounds above the shoulders?
- ▣ Did you have any of these symptoms immediately afterwards . . . loss of consciousness or being knocked out, being dazed or seeing stars, not remembering the event, or diagnosis of concussion or head injury?

Some Screening Questions

Suicide Risk – 22 Vets/day

- ▣ shame
- ▣ humiliation
- ▣ irrational thinking
- ▣ paranoia
- ▣ agitation
- ▣ anxiety
- ▣ insomnia
- ▣ irritability
- ▣ despair
- ▣ profound social withdrawal
- ▣ neglecting personal welfare
- ▣ deteriorating physical appearance
- ▣ feeling trapped
- ▣ feeling like there's no way out
- ▣ feeling that life is not worth living
- ▣ feeling like there is no purpose in life
- ▣ feelings of failure or decreased performance
- ▣ sense of hopelessness or desperation



IT'S YOUR CALL

Confidential help for Veterans and their families



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net)

What is the VA?



Department of
Veterans Affairs



Department of Veterans Affairs

- ▣ Headed by a Cabinet Secretary who is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate - now Robert (Bob) McDonald formerly CEO of Proctor and Gamble
- ▣ 3 main subdivisions, each headed by an Undersecretary

Department of Veterans Affairs

- ▣ Veterans Health Administration (VHA): responsible for providing health care in all its forms, as well as for biomedical research
- ▣ Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA): responsible for initial Veteran registration, eligibility determination, and five key lines of business (benefits and entitlements): Home Loan Guarantee, Insurance, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Education (GI Bill), and Compensation & Pension
- ▣ National Cemetery Administration (NCA): responsible for burial/memorial benefits and maintenance of VA cemeteries¹

Vet Centers

- ▣ Part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- ▣ Offer a wide range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to Veterans and their families at 300 community-based locations
- ▣ **Requires service in any combat zone**
- ▣ Established by Congress in 1979 out of the recognition that a significant number of Vietnam-era Vets were experiencing readjustment problems often preferred to VHA facilities

Vet Centers cont'd

- ▣ Goal is helping post-war Veterans readjust to civilian life.
- ▣ Bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children & siblings of service members who die of any cause on active duty
- ▣ After hours appointments to accommodate the schedules of Veterans and their family members
- ▣ Staff available 24/7 at 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387).

Service Connected Disability

VA pays disability compensation to Veterans with injuries/illnesses incurred during or aggravated by their military service

- ▣ The VA must determine that the disability is service-connected
- ▣ A Veteran Services Representative is at all VA health care facilities to assist those applying for disability benefits.

VA Presumptive Disability

Significant scientific evidence of the association of chronic and tropical diseases with military service

- served during that era
- have the qualifying disability
- disability arose while in the service or after discharged and is rated 10% or more
- ▣ **Exceptions**
 - An event/condition occurred after service that caused the disability
 - There is evidence that the disability wasn't caused during service
 - The disability was caused by willful misconduct, drugs, alcohol

VA Presumptive Disability

For more info on Presumptive Service Connection:

- ▣ www.publichealth.va.gov – list of conditions
- ▣ www.military.com – easily understood
- ▣ www.law.cornell.edu – very extensive list of conditions

- ▣ If VA benefits denied, may qualify for Social Security Disability Benefits

Applying for VA Benefits

Who can help a Veteran apply for VA benefits?

- The Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA)

- The Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)
 - American Legion
 - Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
 - Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)

Military History Checklist

- ▣ http://www.wehonorveterans.org/sites/default/files/public/Veterans_Military_History_Checklist.pdf
- ▣ See the handout

Homeless Veterans

- ▣ 1/3 of adult homeless are Veterans
 - 97% male/3% female
 - 56% minorities
- ▣ 107,000 Vets homeless on any given night
- ▣ Twice that many were homeless at some point in a year
- ▣ 89% received an honorable discharge
- ▣ 46% are age 45 or older compared to 20% of non-Veteran homeless citizens

Homeless Veterans cont'd.

- ▣ Although not homeless, many Veterans live in cheap motels, substandard housing
- ▣ Every VA Medical Center has a Homeless Veteran Services Coordinator doing outreach
- ▣ Only 8% of the general population are Veterans, but nearly 1/5 of the homeless are Veterans.
- ▣ About 1.5 million Veterans are considered at risk of homelessness
- ▣ National Call Center for Homeless Veterans
 - 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838) www.nchv.org

Homeless Veterans cont'd.

▣ Causes:

- 46% have mental illness
- 70% have substance abuse problems
- PTS
- Substance Abuse
- Lack of family/social support
- Poor or disadvantaged backgrounds
- Limited income
- Lack of affordable housing

We Honor Veterans Campaign

Conducted by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)

www.WeHonorVeterans.org

Hospices can promote their level of commitment to Veterans by displaying the *We Honor Veterans* logo on their website and educational materials

We Honor Veterans Campaign

We Honor Veterans Partner Hospices will:

- ▣ Provide better quality care to Veterans
- ▣ Develop/strengthen partnerships with the VA and VSOs
- ▣ Increase Veteran access to hospice and palliative care
- ▣ Network with other hospices to learn best practices

We Honor Veterans Campaign cont'd

To Join We Honor Veterans campaign:

- ▣ Submit the Partner Commitment form—on website
- ▣ Earn stars and matching logo by completing activities at each of the 4 levels of commitment
- ▣ This allows VA staff and Veterans to identify hospices who have made a commitment to offer Veteran-specific care delivered by a trained workforce

We Honor Veterans Program

▣ Level 1/1 Star

- ▣ Veteran-centric education for staff and volunteers
- ▣ Identify patients with military service

▣ Level 2/2 Stars

- ▣ Build organizational capacity to provide quality care for Veterans

▣ Level 3/3 Stars

- ▣ Develop and strengthen ties to VAMCs & VSOs

▣ Level 4/4 Stars

- ▣ Increase access/improve quality of care for Vets in the community



WE HONOR VETERANS



Selected Campaign Logo and Variations

Veteran Demographics

23+ Million Veterans

- ▣ >6.3 million Vets receive VA care annually
- ▣ >1.4 million Veterans are age 85 or older
- ▣ Of the Veterans who receive VA care:
 - >44% are over age 65
 - >21% are over age 75

Veteran Deaths

- ▣ >50,000 Veteran die every month (600,000/year)
- ▣ Each day, at least 400 WWII Vets die
- ▣ Veterans account for 1 in 4 of all U.S. deaths
- ▣ <3.5% Veterans die in VA inpatient settings (20,000/year)

VA Hospice Services

- ▣ All enrolled Veterans are eligible
- ▣ If not enrolled, efforts will be made to expedite
- ▣ Benefits and Decedent Affairs Counselors are available for Veterans and their families

Honoring Veterans

Tips to engage, honor & recognize Veterans:

- ▣ Give Veterans an opportunity to tell their stories
 - Stories are where history and truth reside
 - We honor their stories by listening and affirming
- ▣ Respect Veterans' service, their feelings, and any suggestions they might offer.
- ▣ Thank Veterans for their service to our country
- ▣ It might take longer for some Veterans to trust you - be patient and listen.

What are their stories?



Veterans History Project

A Project of the Library of Congress

- ▣ Collects, preserves, makes accessible the personal accounts of Veterans
- ▣ Allows future generations to hear directly from Veterans and better understand the realities of war

War Wounds Go Undetected

How you can help:

- ▣ ASK about military service!!!!!!!
- ▣ Place 'Have You Ever Served?' posters in your offices
- ▣ Create that connection between the military/veteran and civilian communities

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED?

Tell your healthcare provider.

WWW.HAVEYOUEVERSERVED.COM

WANT MORE INFO?

Lennie Enzel

Lenore.Enzel@va.gov

915.564.7903

