

THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN
VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION
2009-2010 GUIDE

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DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN GOAL

National has set objectives for the year and, in keeping with their established objectives the Department of Michigan goal for 2009-2010 is to increase our overall volunteer numbers by 25.

Twenty five new volunteers may sound like a lot but this number includes volunteers at our Veteran's Homes, VA Hospitals, as well as field service volunteers. With this in mind there are five VA Hospitals, two Veterans Homes, the Hamilton Nursing Home, plus all of the endless sources of becoming a field service volunteer. If each hospital, Home for Veterans and the Hamilton Nursing Home were to recruit two new volunteers, that would mean only nine new field service volunteers to reach our goal of 25.

This is not impossible. What I do need is for those new volunteers to be sure that our Field Service and Hospital directors be made aware. Don't forget that all Field and Home Service volunteers must complete a Field Service Orientation Course that the Field Service Director can provide.

Below you will find some helpful tips for recruiting volunteers.

I. Volunteer Services

A. VA Medical Center (VAMC) & Outpatient Facilities

Volunteer service provided for a veteran within a VAMC or outpatient clinic. The ALA fills a vital role at VA facilities across the country; enabling facility and program administrators to stretch their resources with our guaranteed aid and assistance so they can concentrate on the delivery of core services.

Tactics:

1. Create meaningful assignments for every volunteer. For present volunteers please be willing to share the assignments that you currently do and encourage others to want to volunteer.
2. Promote special emphasis on methods of recruiting, retaining, motivating and recognizing volunteers.
3. Encourage widespread hospital orientations in all Auxiliary units and communities by assigning experienced, qualified volunteers to give regularly scheduled orientations.
4. Promote participation by the assigned VAVS Representative in the VAVS system.
5. Promote Veteran-related activities that fulfill volunteer service requirements for high school students by offering them volunteer opportunities through the ALA. Assist VAVS Representatives and Deputies to work with VAVS Chief in establishing a Youth Service Project for student volunteers.
6. Recognize new VA&R volunteers with a certificate of participation signed by the National President and National VA&R Chairman.
7. Solicit nominations for the best Junior Volunteer program to be submitted to the VAVS as the ALA nominee for American Spirit Award - Junior Recruitment Category.

Best Practices:

1. Set up Volunteer Recruitment tables at all activities participated in by the ALA during VAMC and ALA sponsored community wide activities; ALA Department meetings, Post and Unit functions, and other activities in the community.
2. Offer volunteer opportunities on Department and Unit websites, newsletters and other types of communication.
3. Sponsor "Bring A Friend To Volunteer Day" all across your state.
4. Encourage Representatives and Deputies to involve their local Units in the activities of their facility by inviting them to participate in ward parties, domiciliary care visits, special holiday activities and Welcome Home Celebrations.

B. Field & Home Service

Field Service volunteers provide service to veterans outside a VAMC. Volunteers complete a Field Service Orientation Course initiated by the ALA. Field Service volunteers maintain their own record keeping and dollars spent. Home Service volunteers do projects and work for active duty military/veterans and/or their families from the home.

Tactics:

1. Seek out veterans living in your community through assistance from your VAMC's, VA Clinics, local nursing homes, local American Legion Post and other veteran's organizations.
2. Promote an aggressive program to give Field Service-Home Service orientations to all Unit members as outlined in The Guide for Volunteers, and assist the Units in recording hours worked.
3. Encourage recognition at all levels.

Best Practices:

1. Volunteer to provide companionship for veterans in big and small communities and rural areas. Make weekly home visits, phone calls.
2. Adult Foster Care for those veterans who do not have family. VA provides medical care and homecare teams to assist.
3. Volunteer Support Caregiver - provide assistance to the veteran care recipient, their caregivers and their families in their home. Assist the caregiver by performing tasks that help reduce their workload. Many assignments may be available such as friendly visitor volunteer, reading, letter writing, spiritual support and telephone reassurance volunteer. Contact the Voluntary Service Department at a VA facility to volunteer.
4. Volunteer to answer phones, greet, other volunteer opportunities at Vet Center Outreach Centers set up to assist veterans in the community with jobs, counseling, non-medical assistance.

II. Collaborative Program Efforts

A. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)

Tactics:

1. Issue News Release announcing the event.
2. Publicize the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards presented to the top three Departments with the highest per capita contributions made to the NVCAF during period of September 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.
3. Sponsor an ALA booth at the annual festival with carefully selected participants. Work with PR committee to determine how the ALA will best represent itself by providing materials to publicize our organization's role.
4. Encourage VAVS Representatives to publicize and promote getting volunteers for local events in their respective centers.

Best Practices:

1. Encourage Departments to provide information to Units requesting them to seek out information about local events and encourage them to sponsor participants on the local level.
2. Encourage Departments to offer award incentives to Units who contribute to their Department's fundraising goal.

B. Homeless Veteran Initiatives

Tactics:

1. Work with the VA Homeless Veterans Program (HVP) Office to disseminate information related to Homeless Veterans.
2. Promote attendance to the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans Annual Conference to increase education and raise awareness for additional collaborative efforts.
3. Seek out and support Homeless Veterans Shelters

Best Practices:

1. Adopt a Homeless Veteran's Shelter in your community, or someone else's.
2. Support them with toiletry items, clothing, books, cleaning goods.
3. Visit your local airport and ask TSA to donate all the confiscated items such as shampoo, lotions and other care items to the local homeless veteran's shelter.
4. Volunteer for local Stand Downs sponsored by your VAMC.

C. Welcome Home Celebrations

Tactic: Welcome Home Celebrations are similar to StandDowns, except the entire family is invited to attend. Volunteers are encouraged to contact their VAMC and offer their services to help in these celebrations.

Best Practices:

1. Local Units/volunteers can provide games and activities for children during the celebration.
2. Provide refreshments and home baked goods.
3. Solicit local businesses to donate door prizes and other gifts to be given

throughout the day.

D. Fisher House

Tactics:

1. Continue to financially support the Fisher House program through Department and Unit donations.
2. Encourage Unit members to volunteer at facilities in their areas.

Best Practices:

1. Units can provide support to the families by furnishing gas cards, or gift cards, to enable them to have some sense of individuality while living in the facility.
2. Provide home baked goods and other grocery items.
3. Volunteer to baby sit, run errands, take the family for outings to give them some personal time.

E. Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services National Advisory Committee

Tactics:

1. Promote the VAVS Program more aggressively in Departments by engaging local Representatives and Deputies in a broader way through increased communication on a more personal level.
2. Develop a structure to engage the Representatives and Deputies in open lines of communication to share ideas, projects and other activities through avenues of advanced technology.
3. Provide comprehensive resources to Representatives and Deputies of how to attract, motivate and retain more volunteers.
4. Support the involvement of the National ALA Representative and Deputy in VAVS meetings to keep the ALA informed of all activities in the VA system involving volunteers.

Best Practices:

1. Initiate an information site on the National ALA website to allow sharing of ideas and other information.
2. Encourage Hospital Representatives and Deputies to share their success stories in recruiting new volunteers through communication outlets provided by personal contact with the Divisional Chairmen on the VA&R Committee.

III. Support American Legion Programs

A. American Legion VA&R Legislative Efforts

Tactics:

1. Communicate to members the key VA&R legislative issues.
2. Educate local Representatives and Deputies on Heroes to Hometown Program, now headquartered at local VA Medical Center facilities, and encourage active volunteer participation in the program.

Best Practices:

1. Provide resource information, either electronically or by bulletin, to all VAVS Representatives and Deputies of key legislative issues sponsored by The American Legion.
2. Distribute literature and brochures to all Representatives and Deputies to familiarize them with the programs available to our veterans that are provided or supported by The American Legion.

IV. National Recognition Programs

A. National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans

Tactics:

1. Promote and publicize through all channels of communication available awareness of the variety of activities at VA Medical Centers during the week of February 14 each year.
2. Encourage Representatives and Deputies to invite local Units and community friends to join in honoring our veterans on this special occasion. Be sure to include Junior members in your celebrations.

Best Practices:

1. VAVS Representatives and Deputies should invite local Units and volunteers to furnish refreshments for ward parties, and other activities.
2. Volunteers can provide escort service to those patients who cannot navigate on their own to participate in activities.
3. Junior members can make valentines to present to those patients unable to actively participate in celebrations, such as those in spinal cord injury wards, or major trauma centers.

B. National Volunteer Month (April)

Tactics:

1. Celebrate the spirit of service in America.
2. Promote local and state Proclamations for National Volunteer Week.
3. Participate in local events at all VA Medical Centers and other facilities where members volunteer.

Best Practices:

1. Recognize volunteers at every meeting or activity.
2. Initiate special recognition programs, and other activities to give tribute to regularly scheduled volunteers.

V. **Department Awards**

A. **Nan Shepard Plaque:**

A citation will be given to the Unit for the most referrals to The American Legion, personal contacts, and contributions to all Rehabilitation funds and the most outstanding activities during the year. Winner will be chosen from the annual VA & R reports received by the District Chairman and judged on the District level. All Unit entries must be sent to the District Chairman by March 30, 2010. District Chairmen must send the winning entry, with a **Green Sheet** attached, to the Department Chairman by April 30, 2010. District entries that arrive without a **Green Sheet** will be disqualified.

B. **Dorothy Pearl Rehabilitation Plaque:**

A citation will be given to the Unit reporting the greatest participation in the Department Rehabilitation program. **Entries must be in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. All reports and entries must be sent to your District Chairman by March 30, 2010.** District Chairmen must send the annual report and winning entry, with **Green Sheet** attached, to the Department Chairman by April 30, 2010. District entries that arrive without a Green Sheet will be disqualified.

Both the narrative and Unit report must be received.

C. **Jackie Skinner Citation:**

A citation will be presented to the Unit reporting the greatest participation in Homeless Veterans initiatives. **Entries must be in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. All reports and entries must be sent to your District Chairman by March 30, 2010.** District Chairmen must send the annual report and winning entry, with **Green Sheet** attached, to the Department Chairman by April 30, 2010. District entries that arrive without a Green Sheet will be disqualified.

Both the narrative and Unit report must be received.

VI. **National VA&R Recognition & Awards**

A. **Operation H.O.P.E. Award**

A Citation Plaque will be presented to the Unit that implements and carries out the Most Outstanding Event that brings honor and recognition to our veterans and/or servicemembers at any VAMC or VA Facility, Veteran's Home, Fisher House, VetCenter, Homeless Veteran's Shelter or any facility where more than 60% of the residents are veterans. **Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words.** Pictures and newspaper articles may be included but not to exceed six pages. Entry cannot be in bound book or hard cover. Cover sheet must include Unit name and number, address, Unit chairman's name, address and phone number, date and location where the event was held. Submit to the Department Chairman by March 30, 2010. National must have by June 1, 2010.

B. Department VA&R Program Awards

A citation plaque will be presented to the Department Chairman in each Division that reports the Most Outstanding Overall VA&R program as per the goals stated in this Plan of Work. **Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words.** All entries must be post-marked by June 1, 2009 and sent by the Department Chairman to the Division Chairman.

C. Field Service Volunteer Hours Award

A citation plaque will be presented to a Field Service volunteer serving the greatest number of hours from April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010 in each Division for Junior and Senior members. Units should send their nominees to the Department Chairman by April 30, 2010. Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee – the Department Chairman may ask for this information. The Department Chairman will then send the top hour volunteer Junior and Senior volunteer, to the Division Chairman by June 1, 2010.

D. Home Service Volunteer Hours Award

A citation plaque will be presented to a Home Service volunteer serving the greatest number of hours from April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010 in each Division for Junior or Senior members. Units should send their nominees to the Department Chairman by April 30, 2010. Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee – the Department Chairman may ask for this information. The Department Chairman will then send the top hour volunteer Junior and Senior volunteer, to the Division Chairman by June 1, 2010.

E. Junior Volunteer Scholarship

A \$1,000 scholarship and certificate will be awarded to a Junior Member who also serves in a volunteer capacity and is a High School senior, in each Division. Candidates should be chosen based on the cumulative total of hours served in a VA facility, and/or in combination with Field or Home Service hours. **Unit Chairman or President may submit an introduction of the nominee that should not exceed 500 words.** Units should send their nominees to the Department Chairman by April 30, 2010. Unit is required to certify hours of any nominee – the Department Chairman may ask for this information. The Department Chairman will then send the top Junior volunteer to Committee Member Rosemarie Hauck by June 1, 2010.

F. National Creative Arts Festival Contribution Recognition

The NCAF will recognize departments who contribute at the Bronze, Silver and Gold level. This recognition will be made at the 2009 Festival. ALA Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to the NCAF staff in July – donations considered are those received in the National Office September 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

G. Unit VA&R Program Awards

A citation plaque will be presented to a Unit Chairman in each Division reporting the Most Outstanding Overall VA&R program as per the goals

stated in this Plan of Work. **Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words.** Units will submit entries to the Department Chairman by March 30, 2010. All entries must be postmarked by June 1, 2010 and sent by the Department Chairman to the National Chairman.

H. VAVS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD/ALA NAC NOMINEE

The Department VA&R Chairman or ALA Department Director of Hospital Volunteers will make nominations for consideration. **A Department nomination must be prepared in a narrative format not to exceed 500 words and may include up to two letters of recommendation.** This nomination is due to the National VAVS Deputy, by June 1, 2010. This award will be made to the nominee who has given extraordinary service to our nations veterans through the ALA VA&R program and the VAVS program. Specifically this nominee must serve in an established VA assignment and be defined as a regularly scheduled volunteer. In addition, we are looking for an individual who is actively involved working with veterans in any one of the following areas:

Outpatient Clinics

Nursing Homes

Homeless Veteran Programs

Hosted veteran related functions outside the VA

Visiting veterans confined to their homes (as assigned by VAVS)

The National winner will receive \$500 to be donated to the VAVS facility of her choice and in recipient's name and will be profiled in National News Magazine. In addition, the ALA will forward her name as our candidate for the VAVS National Advisory Committee Volunteer of the Year.

I. Volunteer Recruitment & Service Department Award

A citation plaque will be presented to the Department in each Division with the largest increase of Regularly Scheduled Volunteers and Regularly Scheduled volunteer hours at a VA Medical Center from April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010. The award winner will be determined by the National VAVS Rep through verification of Department hours and number of volunteers as recorded by VAVS.

J. 100% VAVS MEETING ATTENDANCE

An 'Attendance Card' will be awarded to each Representative and Deputy who has 100% attendance to VAVS Committee meetings at her assigned facility. The National VAVS Representative will verify the winners from VA records.

K. 10,000 – Hour Volunteer Service Award

A special Volunteer Citation and a gift card for \$100 will be awarded to eligible volunteers. Volunteer must have accrued 10,000 hours of volunteer service in a VA Facility. This is a one-time presentation and will be made at convention if verification of hours is received at the DC Office by June 1, 2010.

L. 20,000 – Hour Volunteer Service Award

A special Volunteer Citation and a Gift Card for \$200 will be awarded to eligible volunteers. Volunteer who provided 20,000 hours of volunteer service

to the veteran. This is a one-time presentation and will be made at convention if verification of hours is received at the DC Office by June 1, 2010.

M. Homeless Veterans Outreach Award

The ALA, TAL and SAL come together annually to select a Department who has done an outstanding job in the area of Homeless Veterans Outreach. Award nominations are solicited each fall and the winners are recognized at the National Convention and the National NCHV Conference held each June in Washington, D.C. For more information go to: www.legion-aux.org/MO-Programs/VeteransAffairsandRehabilitation/index.aspx

VII. Resources

These resources direct you to programs and services related to the objectives of the National VA&R Committee as related in this Plan of Work.

Resources Provided through the Auxiliary:

VA&R Guide (Formally Guide for Volunteers)

Explains the importance of volunteers to the VA Medical Center Program and summarizes additional volunteer opportunities through Field and Home Service. Available for free download at www.legion-aux/var/gfv, or call your Department Secretary.

Resources Provided through The American Legion:

A System Worth Saving

Initiated by TAL through resolution 206, the SWS Task Force visits VA Medical Center facilities; Vet Centers and other VA managed facilities recording first-hand observations and responses to pre-determined evaluation criteria. This information is compiled into an annual report for congress and the administration and supports TAL position for a number of related topics including mandatory funding for the System. For more information contact your Division VA&R Chairman.

Brochures Available from TAL:

- Gulf War Benefits and Programs
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Vietnam Veterans – Guide to Agent Orange Benefits
- What to do Before a Veteran Dies
- Women Veterans – Identifying Risk, Services and Prevention

Heroes to Hometowns

TAL is an active participant in this program that matches severely injured members of the military with individuals in their community that can provide the injured soldier and his/her family with a support network to assist with their

everyday needs. For more information go to <http://www.legion.org/veterans> or call (703) 908-6250.

TAL VA&R Commission

Contact the commission at var@legion.org or call (202) 861-2700

Resources Presented By Topic (in Alpha Order):

Cold War Certificate Program

In accordance with section 1084 of the Fiscal Year 1998 National Defense Authorization Act, the Secretary of Defense approved awarding Cold War Recognition Certificates to all members of the armed forces and qualified Federal Government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the United States anytime during the Cold War era, which is defined as Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991. For more information call (703)325-5864 or go to <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/coldwar/default.htm>.

Fisher House

The Fisher House™ program is a unique private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. Fisher House™ Foundation donates "comfort homes," built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful times - during the hospitalization for an unexpected illness, disease, or injury. Go to www.fisherhouse.org for more information or call (888) 294-8560.

Homeless Initiatives

- 1. VA Homeless Veterans Program Office.** Peter Dougherty Director, <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>, (202) 273-5774
- 2. National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV).** A non-profit organization dedicated to helping homeless veterans gain control of their lives and return to society as productive citizens. NCHV hosts a national conference each June. Sign up for their *free* online newsletter. www.nchv.org, (800) VET-HELP
- 3. Stand Downs** are one part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to provide services to homeless veterans. Stand Downs are typically one to three day events providing services to homeless veterans such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, VA and Social Security benefits counseling, and referrals to a variety of other necessary services, such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment. Go to www.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=6 for a list of dates and locations.
- 4. Project CHALENG** was first initiated in 1994 when the VA launched Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) for Veterans, an innovative program designed to enhance the continuum of care for homeless veterans provided by the local VA and its surrounding community service agencies. For more information go to: www.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=17
- 5. Maryland Center for Veterans Education & Training (McVet).** A non-profit

organization in Baltimore, Maryland, McVet offers drop-in and live-in programs designed to provide homeless veterans with comprehensive services and programs. Held as a model and standard for residential programs. www.mcvet.org, (410) 576-9626.

6. National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH). Founded in 1984, is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission. www.nationalhomeless.org. (202) 462-4823.

7. US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). This inter-agency task force comprised of Federal Government departments is working on the development of a comprehensive approach to end homelessness. Sign up for their *free* online newsletter. www.usich.gov, (202) 708-4663.

National Cemetery Program.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) National Cemetery Administration maintains 123 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldier's lots and monument sites. This website is the most comprehensive listing of facilities and services: <http://www.cem.va.gov/>

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

Scheduled each year for the week of Valentines Day, the purpose of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program is to pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans; increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center; and encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers. Check with your medical center for event details.

Presidential Memorial Certificates.

A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate signed by the current President to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased veterans. www.cem.va.gov/cem/pmc.asp or call (202) 565-4964.

Related Web Sites:

1. Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents: www.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben/pdf
2. National Center for PTSD: <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp>
3. History of Veterans Day: www.va.gov/vetsday
4. Enrollment in VA's Health Care System: www.va.gov/elig
5. VBA Regional Offices:
<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>
6. Survivor Benefits: www.vba.va.gov/survivors
7. Tricare Fact Information: www.tricare.osd.mil
8. VA Center Facilities: <http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>

VAVS Scholarship

James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship is awarded annually to a deserving student at the annual VAVS Spring Meeting. The ALA contributes \$2,000 annually to help preserve the scholarship. Eligibility and application information

can be found at: http://www.va.gov/visn18/VAVS/Parke_scholarship.htm or by contacting a VANC VAVS office.

VA Nationally Sponsored Events

National Creative Arts Festival

ALA is a proud sponsor of the NCAF. This program is a celebration and grand finale stage and art show that is the culmination of talent competitions in music, drama, dance, creative writing, and art for veterans treated in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national health care system. Approximately 130 veterans will exhibit their artwork or perform musical, dance, dramatic or original writing selections in a gala variety show.

2008 Host City & Dates: Loma Linda, CA, October 20-27, 2008

2009 Host City & Dates: San Antonio, TX October 4-11, 2009

Go to www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov for coverage on the 2007 program.

23rd Annual Golden Age Games

The premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. It is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world. Go to www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov for coverage on the 2008 games.

2009 Host City & Dates: Birmingham, AL, June 1-5, 2009

23rd Annual Winter Sports Clinic

Each year, the clinic brings together veterans with a wide range of disabilities, to challenge themselves both physically and mentally. During the course of the six-day event, participants are introduced to a number of activities such as adaptive skiing, rock climbing, scuba diving, snowmobiling, and sled hockey. Go to www.wintersportsclinic.va.gov for coverage on the 2008 clinic.

2009 Host City & Dates: Snowmass, CO, March 29-April 3, 2009

23rd Annual Wheelchair Games

This is a multi-event sports and rehabilitation program for military service veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, amputations, or certain neurological problems. Attracting more than 500 athletes each year, this is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. Go to www.wheelchairgames.va.gov for coverage on the 2008 games.

2009 Host City & Dates: Richmond, VA July 7-11

Vet Centers

With Centers in all 50 states, the VetCenter mission is to provide veterans and their families with a continuum of professional readjustment counseling, community education and outreach programs. www.va.gov/rcs, (202) 273-8968

Veterans History Project

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000. The Veterans History Project relies on volunteers to collect and preserve stories of wartime service. www.loc.gov/vets

Women & Families

1. **Military Family Network.** *The Military Family Network* connects military families with community organizations, local government and businesses that can meet their needs. www.eMilitary.org, (866) 205-2850
2. **National Coalition of Child Care Resources & Referral Services** (NACCRRRA). Contracted by the DOD and Army Reserve to assist non-traditional military families, with no Base connections, find accredited childcare. www.naccrra.org, (703) 341-4153
3. **National Military Family Association** (NMFA). Their objective is to promote and protect the interests of military families by influencing the development and implementation of legislation and policies affecting them. www.nmfa.org, (800) 260-0218
4. **Military.com.** This site is full of information pertinent to military families. A variety of *free* online newsletters are offered. www.military.com
5. **Additional Resource Websites:**
 - a. Women Veterans Health Program: www.va.gov/wvhp
 - b. Center for Women Veterans: www.va.gov/womenvet
 - c. www.legion-aux.org

DEPARTMENT AWARDS 2009-2010

NAN SHEPARD PLAQUE: A citation will be given to the Unit for the most referrals to The American Legion, personal contacts, and contributions to all Rehabilitation funds and the most outstanding activities during the year. Winner is chosen from the annual VA & R reports received from the Units and judged on the District level. All Unit entries must be sent to the District Chairman by **March 30, 2010**. Your District Chairman must send the winning entry, with the **GREEN SHEET** attached, to the Department Chairman by **April 15, 2010**. Any entry without a **GREEN SHEET** attached will be disqualified.

DOROTHY PEARL REHABILITATION PLAQUE: A citation will be given to the Unit reporting the greatest participation in the Department Rehabilitation program. Entries must be in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. All reports and entries must be sent to your District Chairman by **March 30, 2010**. District Chairman must send the Annual Report and winning entry, with **GREEN SHEET** attached, to the Department Chairman by **April 15, 2010**. District entries that arrive without a **GREEN SHEET** will be disqualified.

JACKIE SKINNER HOMELESS VETERANS CITATION: A citation will be presented to the Unit reporting the greatest participation in Homeless Veterans initiatives. Entries must be in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. All reports and entries must be sent to the District Chairman for judging by **March 30, 2010**. The District Chairman must send the winning District entry, with the **GREEN SHEET** attached to the Department Chairman by **April 15, 2010**. Any entry without an Annual Report and a **GREEN SHEET** properly filled out will be disqualified.