



"PROUDLY SERVING AMERICA'S VETERANS"

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Issue 5

May 2012

Joe Battle Named Director at Jackson VA



*Joe Battle
Medical Center Director*

Joe D. Battle was appointed as the Center Director of the VA Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi, on April 8, 2012. Prior to his appointment, he served as the Associate Director of the VA Medical Centers in Orlando, Florida, and Dayton, Ohio.

He is a 1981 graduate of the University of Alabama with a degree in The Civil Engineering Field. He joined the VA in 1983 as a General Engineer at the VA Medical Center in Dublin, Georgia. He transferred to the Indianapolis VA Medical Center as Assistant Chief, Engineer Service in March 1985 and was appointed as Chief in March 1988.

He is a graduate of the 2003 Leadership VA class, 2002 class of the Executive Career Field training program and the Healthcare Leadership Institute. In 1997, he received the VA Federal Engineer of the Year Award presented by the National Society of Professional Engineers. In that same year, he also received the VA Chief Engineer of the Year Award.

Mr. Battle is a certified mentor. He has mentored ECF candidates/members and Leadership Development Candidates. He has been a preceptor for Trainees and TCF interns.

Mr. Battle recently served on The Veterans Health Administration Activations Task Force and had been a long time member of the VHA Capital Asset Board; He has served on the VA Office of Information and Technology Region 3 Governance Board. He has been Chair of the Network 8 Information and Data Management Committee, Capital Asset Management Committee and Finance Committee. He currently serves on Network 16 Executive Leadership Board.

He has previously served on several national committees and task forces such as Chair of the Chief Engineer Advisory Board, the Violence in the Workplace TAG, Technical Career Field development group, Facility Management mission reviews, and Capital Asset Management reviews.

He has been a member of the American Society of Healthcare Engineers, Indiana Society of Healthcare Engineers and served on the Executive Steering Committee for the Midwest Healthcare Engineering Conference and Trade Show. Mr. Battle is a current member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the LVAAA.

"I am very excited, as much as I have ever been in my 29 years with VA, to be your new Medical Center Director. I will look to you, to help me, foster an environment of innovation, teamwork and accountability. A caring community of healthcare professionals in which every employee embraces the same goal:

"Proudly Serving America's Veterans."

Teaching, Training and Spreading Cheer: Find it all here! By Sharon Tolbert



Front row (l to r): LaVerne Dedmond, Brenda Price, Ethel Cry
Back row: Marilyn Stewart, Billie Herbert

EVAL Class Set to Graduate June 15

The Emerging Veterans Affairs Leader (EVAL) is a comprehensive program designed to identify employees who have (1) an interest in career development within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and (2) have demonstrated leadership potential. Candidates selected for this program will participate in a broad spectrum of developmental experiences based on the High Performance Development Model (HPDM) Program over a six-month period. The ultimate goal of the program is to support the Network's Strategic Plan and to develop our employees. For more information about the Jackson VA EVAL program, please contact EVAL

Coordinators Sheila Jackson at 3964 or Juanita Gibson-Taylor at 6462.



Front row (l to r): James Mallet, Tina McKay, Pamela McGee, Tiffany Welch, Carolyn Willis
Back row (l to r): Kathryn Sheppard, Angela Amos, Mary Pickle, Ayana Smothers-Cole, Suzanna Paige, LaShunda Drain, Lasonji Laws

Getting ready for a surgery can be an unnerving thing. That's why at the Nurse Pre-Op Clinic (*located in the basement*), where Veterans go to get information about upcoming procedures or surgeries, the nurses there try to meet the needs of both the patients and the family members.

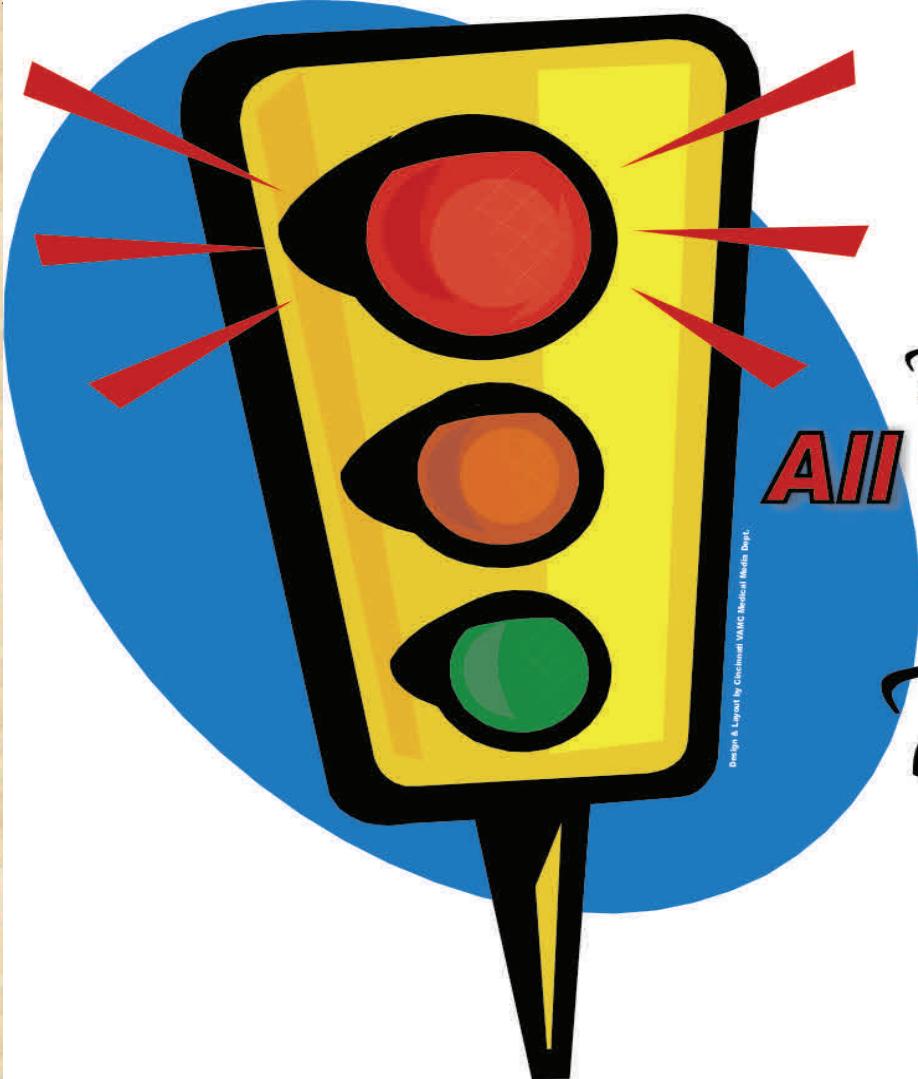
"We try to be informative and help relieve any anxiety a Veteran or family member may have," said LaVerne Dedmond, RN.

Veterans are given a Pre-Op Protocol Instruction sheet to let them know what medicines they can and cannot take, what to eat or drink and to be aware of any signs and symptoms the day before they arrive for surgery.

On the day of surgery, Veterans start to arrive at the clinic around 6:30 a.m. They are first seen by their Primary Care Provider. Then it's off to the medicine clinic so physician's there can get the Veteran's history and physical and order labs and x-rays. Then it's back to the Pre-Op Nurse Clinic to check in with the nurses one more time before their procedure.

"After surgery, we give the Veterans further instructions on how to take care of themselves and remind them to call if any complications occur," said Marilyn Stewart.

For the nurses in the Pre-Op Clinic, it's all about lifting the spirits of the Veterans and their families both before and after surgery. It's a motto they live by: **"Teaching, training, and spreading cheer, you can find it all here"**.



Design & Layout by Christopher VAMC Medical Media Dept.

*Take the
All Employee
Survey...
Today!*

It's a Big Deal

Three Ways to Take the Survey

BY WEB: <https://survey.sirota.com/va/survey2012>

BY TOUCH-TONE TELEPHONE: 1-877-671-6843

BY PAPER: Paper copies in the library or contact your key worker.

For more info, contact your key worker.



Nutrition and Food Services receives Gold Medal from VISN

Photo by Brandy Caston



A year ago, Nutrition and Food Services embarked on a mission to revolutionize the inpatient meal service experience. Their goal was to improve Veteran satisfaction and provide Veteran-centered meals. New carts were purchased, menus were changed, employees were trained, and an innovative meal delivery system was implemented. Now, Veterans select food preferences and directly participate in their health care. Freshly prepared food is delivered to Veterans. Meals are individualized and hot as they are plated at the site of care. This inventive food selection and delivery method makes Veterans' meal time an interactive, happy, social event. The Nutrition and Food Services staff worked together as a team to make this transformation happen. Food service workers, cooks, and supervisors were willing to change what they'd been doing for years. They exhibited determination and willpower in order to make this work. This Veteran-Centered Meals concept was submitted to the VISN for nomination as a best practice. This new system was selected as a Best Practice. In addition, the medical center was awarded a gold medal and \$50,000. This is the first Gold Medal ever awarded by the VISN.



← 2012 Voluntary Service Banquet

2012 Volunteer of the Year: Mr. Carroll Davis, Jr.

(l t r: Associate Director Shannon Novotny, Mr. Davis and Medical Center Director Joe D. Battle)





Meet some of America's Heroes

Monday, May 21, 2012
In the Atrium 9:00 a.m.

(Medal of Honor recipients, Tuskegee Airmen, Navajo Code Talkers and Ex-POWs)



The Medal of Honor
is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government.

It is bestowed by the president, in the name of Congress, upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguish themselves through "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States."

Total Recipients: **3,458**
Living Recipients: **81**



The Tuskegee Airmen
were the first African-American military aviators in the United States armed forces. During World War II, African Americans in many U.S. states were still subject to the Jim Crow laws. The American military was racially segregated, as was much of the federal government. The Tuskegee Airmen were subjected to racial discrimination, both within and outside the army. Despite these adversities, they trained and flew with distinction.



POW Medal
In the center of a bronze medallion one and three eighths inches in diameter, an eagle is shown with its wings displayed. Forming a circle around the eagle and following the contour of the medal, barbed wire and bayonet points may be seen. The eagle is the American bald eagle and represents the United States in general and the individual prisoner of war in particular. It is standing "with pride and dignity, continually on the alert for the opportunity to seize hold of beloved freedom."



Navajo Code Talkers
were young Navajo men who transmitted secret communications on the battlefields of WWII. They drew upon their proud warrior tradition to brave the dense jungles of Guadalcanal and the exposed beachheads of Iwo Jima. Serving with distinction in every major engagement of the Pacific theater from 1942-1945, their unbreakable code played a pivotal role in saving countless lives and hastening the war's end.

*Get Involved**Get Involved**Get Involved****It's a Big Month!***

- April 26** Volunteer Awards Luncheon
AG Museum
11:00 am
- April 28** Mississippi Health and Fitness Expo
Largest health fair in MS, Mobile clinic will be on-site
Mississippi Trade mart
9:00-4:00 p.m.
- May 8** 20th anniversary of Jackson VA
Fitness Center
Open House
11:30 am
- May 11** Jackson Zoo on the CLC Terrace
10:00 am
- May 14** 3rd Annual Veterans Affairs Police Memorial Service
Montgomery Hall
11:00 am
Guest Speaker: Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood
- May 21** Trail of Honor
Atrium
9-10 am
Military Heroes (Medal of Honor recipients, Tuskegee airmen, etc.) will visit the Jackson VA)

Hey,

Just wanted to remind everyone of the **2nd Annual VA2K Walk and Roll for Homeless Veterans on Wednesday, May 16, 2012**. The main event takes place at 11:30 out front by the big Flagpole. We'll have entertainment, "Big Earl from Pearl" and we'll be collecting donations (clothing and money) for our homeless Veterans. We'll also have collection points set up prior to the main event. Here are the collection dates and times:

Clothing Drop-off Dates and Times**Atrium**0730-10:30
11:30-1:00April 24 and April 27
May 1 and May 4
May 8 and May 11**East/West Entrances**

3:00-4:30 pm

April 24 and April 27
May 1 and May 4
May 8 and May 11

*Sincerely,
Don Breckinridge
VA2K Coordinator*

Congratulations Voluntary!

The G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center (VAMC) Voluntary Service Department recently received the 2011 American Spirit Award for Student Recruitment at the annual Department of Veterans Affairs (VAVS) Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee meeting. There are four award categories: Student Recruitment, Senior Recruitment, Corporate Recruitment and Recruitment from Military Groups. The purpose of the awards is to identify and recognize successful volunteer recruitment initiatives within VA Voluntary Service. Volunteers provide a valuable service to Veterans in all three administrations, Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

"The need to continually recruit volunteers of all ages is necessary for VA to continue its high quality of service to Veterans," said Jackson VA Voluntary Service Coordinator Deborah Thomas. "We've been very fortunate to have so many wonderful student volunteers in our program."

Selection for the 2011 American Spirit Award for Student Recruitment was based on several criterions to include: providing valuable volunteer service to Veterans, career-enhancing assignments and successful recruitment strategies, increasing the public understanding of student volunteers and developing an innovative recognition and reward program for student volunteers.

"Our students have an impact on every facet of our Veteran's lives here," stated Thomas, "and we have had an impact on their lives, too. We are proud that several of our student volunteers have gone on to receive high-profile scholarships such as the James H. Parke Award and the Jesse Brown Memorial Scholarship."

To learn more about volunteering at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center or about the Summer Volunteer Program, please contact Voluntary Service at (601) 364-1391.

IV TEAM "sticks" together to serve our Veterans



Front row: Tonya Lewis, LaVerne Watts, Andrian Gordon, LaToya McDonald
Back row: Leslie Lindsay, Ethel Rigsby, Marianne Blair, Jennifer Smith



Voluntary Service Chief Deborah Thomas (center) accepts the 2011 American Spirit Award for Student Recruitment from Under Secretary of Health, Dr. Robert Petzel and VA Voluntary Chief, Laura Balun.

It always starts with some type of resolve. Traditionally, right after the new year. Quit smoking, exercise more...you know, that stuff. For the IV Team at the Jackson VA, however, this year was different. They've been able to "stick" with their resolution: Lose some weight, dog gone it!! And lose weight they did...

"We were all doing our own thing, quietly," said Nurse Manager LaVerne Watts, "then one day I was looking around the room and everyone was looking skinnier."

Hey, how much did you lose? asked Watts. How about you, she said to another. By the time she made it around the room, Watts was astounded by the number: **125 lbs.** Quickly realizing that her team had made quite an accomplishment, she wanted to share it with Veterans and other employees.

"Not only are we concerned about our own health, but we want to be an example for our Veterans that we so proudly serve!"

Now that's sticking it to 'em!!

Proudly Serving America's Veterans

{the expert's corner}

Recently, I was asked, "What is Quality and what does Quality Management manage?" Wow! What a great question! For those of you that know me, you must also know that I love answering a question with a story. Okay, believe it or not, this is the story and yes it's true!!!



A couple of years ago, I dropped by the pharmacy to pick up a prescription. As I stood behind the red line - for privacy (Of course I could hear the conversation!), I observed the interaction of the pharmacy technician and the ONLY other customer besides me. As I waited patiently, he gave his prescription to the nice lady. After viewing it she said, "This should only take a minute. Please move down to the pick-up window (He was at the drop-off window) and I'll give it to you. Surprised as I was, he said, "Why can't you give it to me at this window." She politely replied, "Sir this is the drop-off window." He sighed and said, "Lady no one else is here but me and you said it would only take a minute." With that, she smartly (and loudly) replied, "Sir this is the drop-off window for drop-offs and that is the pick-up window for pick-ups. We've always done it this way."

Wow! "We've always done it this way." Does this sound familiar? This is what I refer to as blind allegiance to the status quo. "Who cares if the old way is no longer efficient?" "Who needs cutting-edge?" "Saving money; no way! We'd rather lose money than come out of our comfort zone."

Quality is simply looking what we do and discovering ways to do it better. It's asking the uncomfortable questions and engaging in crucial conversations to discover new and improved work systems and work processes. Quality is a mindset. It is not a department or service, but rather a way of thinking, being and behaving about how we provide the very best care to our nation's finest – the Veteran!

What does Quality Management manage? We really don't "manage" per say, but rather keep our ear to the ground and finger on the pulse of what is important to all our stakeholders. With that being the case, please allow me to let you in on a little secret. Every employee of our great facility is a member of the Quality Management Team – yep, all of us! Collectively, we all work to achieve a:

- Relentless pursuit of continuous improvement & data-based decision making
- Maniacal customer focus
- Employee engagement and empowerment
- Recognizing and overcoming barriers to innovation
- Fanatical leadership development
- Ongoing Performance Excellence

That's Quality, and that's what WE manage!!!!

Sincerely, Ava Abney

The Sonny G is a monthly publication produced by the Public Affairs Office of the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center and is intended for employees, Veterans, volunteers and friends.

THE S  NNY G

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