



# Because You Served



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century





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*This report is dedicated to the brave men and women of the United States military and the incredible employees of the Lebanon VA Medical Center who keep the nation's promise to its defenders through their service and commitment to every Veteran who receives care here.*

#### COVER PHOTO: HEROES AMONG US

World War II Veteran: Staff Sergeant Frank Lashinsky, United States Army Air Corps

Korean Veteran: Technical Corporal William H. Dangro, United States Army

Vietnam Veteran: Specialist 4 James Shea, United States Army

Persian Gulf Veteran: Corporal Robin Greeninger, United States Marine Corps

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn Veteran:  
SSG Amber Blanton, Pennsylvania Army National Guard



ENROLLING IN VA  
HEALTH CARE IS EASY.



Go to [www.lebanon.va.gov](http://www.lebanon.va.gov)  
or call **717-228-6000** or  
**1-800-409-8771 Ext. 6000.**

*Acknowledgements:  
We wish to thank everyone who contributed to the production of the FY2012 Annual Report. We could not have produced this document without the dedication and support of our employees, students, Veterans and stakeholders.*





*Dear Friends,*

Living in South Central Pennsylvania, I am mindful of our proximity to one of the Nation's great battlefields—Gettysburg. I often think of the brave souls who struggled there and hundreds of other places thereafter to maintain liberty and democratic values. I also think about the short speech President Lincoln delivered there in November 1863 at the dedication of the National Cemetery and I am very conscious of the fact that it is our responsibility to keep the Nation's promises to its Veterans. It is indeed a sacred calling.

This is why we have adopted a new mantra at Lebanon...Because You Served. This short simple phrase powerfully and eloquently describes why we are committed to Veterans and their families. Like many state-of-the-art hospitals, we have world class technology, highly trained physicians and nurses and open access to all our services. But what sets us apart, what makes us different than any other medical facility in south central Pennsylvania is our mission – serving Veterans. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say, everything we do, every day, is...Because You Served.

Nearly 45,000 men and women receive care here – care they have earned through their service and sacrifice. If you're already enrolled in our system, thank you. You know why VA health care is consistently praised as a national leader. If you're not enrolled, why not give us a try? Not only will you be pleasantly surprised by the breadth and depth of our services (which may come at little or no cost to you), but you will also discover a bond that unites Veterans and our staff...Because You Served.

When Veterans, their loved ones or our employees tell me how much they appreciate what happens here, I know, we're keeping the promise...

Because You Served,

**Robert W. Callahan, Jr.**  
Director and CEO, Lebanon VA Medical Center





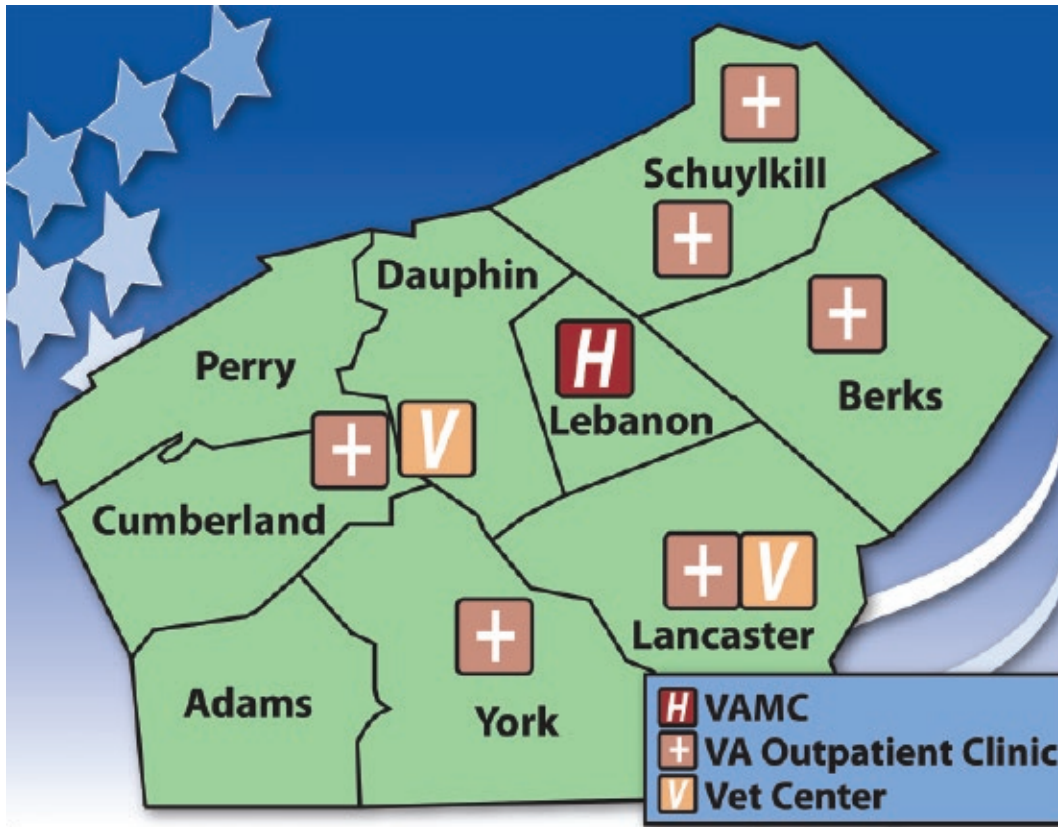
VETERAN-CENTERED CONVENIENCE,  
CARE AND ACCESS

*We Understand Veterans*

*We Respect Veterans*

*We Serve Veterans*

- ★ Comprehensive Health Care System Dedicated Exclusively to Veterans
- ★ State of the Art Hospital with Easy Access and Plenty of Parking
- ★ Six Conveniently Located Community Based Outpatient Clinics and One Outreach Clinic at Fort Indiantown Gap
- ★ Veteran-Centered Programs and Personal Care Teams
- ★ Employees Who Are Veterans
- ★ The Right Service at the Right Time by the Right Team



**Services offered at the Lebanon VA:**

Acute Psychiatry  
 Ambulatory Surgery Unit  
 Audiology  
 Barber  
 Behavioral Health/Mental Health Services  
 Canteen  
 Caregiver Support  
 Community Based Outpatient Clinics  
 Chapel  
 CWT (Compensated Work Therapy)  
 Day Care  
 Dental  
 Dietary  
 Emergency Department  
 Endoscopy  
 Food Service  
 Geriatric Care  
 Gulf War Exam  
 Health Education Library  
 Hepatitis C Screening  
 Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Program  
 Home/Community/Long Term Care  
 Homeless Veterans Program  
 Hospice  
 Intensive Care Unit  
 Infectious Disease  
 Laboratory  
 Medical Foster Home  
 Mental Health Intensive Case Management  
 MOVE!  
 Nursing  
 Nutrition  
 Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn  
 Ophthalmology  
 Occupational Therapy  
 Pharmacy  
 Police  
 Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation  
 Prosthetics  
 Radiology  
 Recreation Therapy  
 Respiratory  
 Substance Abuse Rehabilitation and Recovery Treatment Program  
 Social Work  
 Speech Pathology  
 Spinal Cord Injury Program  
 Suicide Prevention Program  
 Surgery  
 Veterans Activity Center  
 Visual Impairment Services  
 Vocational Rehabilitation Unit  
 Voluntary  
 Women's Health  
 YMCA at the VA





## Community Based Outpatient Clinics



BERKS VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

St. Joseph's Medical Center  
Community Campus  
145 North 6th Street  
3rd Floor  
Reading, PA 19601  
610-208-4717



POTTSVILLE VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Good Samaritan Medical Mall  
700 Schuylkill Manor Road  
Suite 6  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
570-621-4115



CAMP HILL VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

25 North 32nd Street  
Camp Hill, PA 17011  
717-730-9782



YORK VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

2251 Eastern Boulevard  
York, PA 17402  
717-840-2730



FRACKVILLE VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Good Samaritan  
Health Center North  
10 East Spruce Street  
Frackville, PA 17931  
570-874-4289

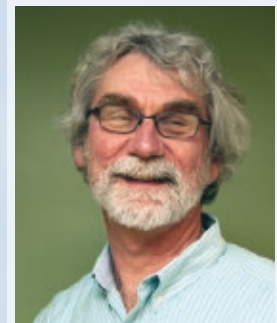


LANCASTER VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

1861 Charter Lane  
Suite 121  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
717-290-6900



Bill Griffiths  
Community Based Outpatient  
Clinics Program Manager



Anthony Slavinski, MD  
Community Based Outpatient  
Clinics Medical Director

## Vet Centers

Vet Centers welcome home war Veterans with honor by providing quality readjustment counseling in a caring manner. Vet Centers understand and appreciate Veterans' war experiences while assisting them and their family members toward a successful post-war adjustment in or near their community. Vet Centers also furnish bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children and siblings of service members who die of any cause while on active duty, to include federally activated Reserve and National Guard personnel.



HARRISBURG VETERANS CENTER

1500 North Second Street  
Suite 2  
Harrisburg, PA 17102  
717-782-3954



LANCASTER VETERANS CENTER

1817 Olde Homestead Lane  
Suite 207  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
717-283-0735



## Accreditation

### LEBANON VA ACHIEVED ACCREDITATION OR RECOGNITION BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS:

- ★ The Joint Commission
- ★ Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- ★ American Association of Blood Banks
- ★ American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer
- ★ College of American Pathologists – Laboratory—received “Gold Standard”
- ★ College of American Pathologists – Anatomical Laboratory
- ★ American Society of Health System Pharmacists
- ★ Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- ★ National Health Physics Program
- ★ Office of Inspector General
- ★ Long Term Care Institute
- ★ Management Quality Assurance Service, Financial Management
- ★ Information Technology Oversight and Compliance Office
- ★ Office of Security and Law Enforcement – Vulnerability Assessment Survey
- ★ Rainbow Learning Center Site Review



### LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER IS ACCREDITED BY THE COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES (CARF) IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- ★ Health Care for the Homeless
- ★ Homeless Outreach
- ★ Contract Housing
- ★ Grant and Per Diem Housing
- ★ Consolidated Work Therapy/Transitional
- ★ Rehabilitation/Vocational Rehabilitation
- ★ Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- ★ Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program
- ★ Veterans Justice Outreach
- ★ Department of Housing and Urban Development and VA Supported Housing Program (HUD/VASH)
- ★ Visually Impaired Services Outpatient Rehabilitation (VISOR) Program



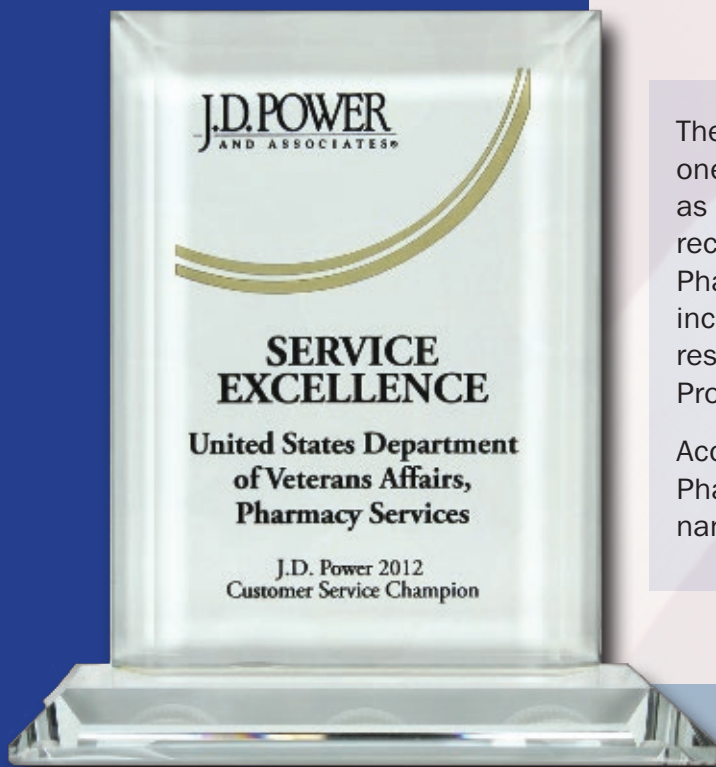


*Our patients say  
we measure at the top!*

- #1** Overall Rating Hospital
- #1** Willing to Recommend Hospital
- #1** Communication with Doctors
- #1** Communication about Medications
- #1** Discharge Information
- #1** Pain Management
- #1** Decision Making
- #1** Privacy in Room
- #1** Noise Level in Room
- #2** Communication with Nurses
- #2** Responsiveness of Hospital Staff
- #2** Quietness of Hospital

“There are so many options in health care today, it's easy to be overwhelmed. Veterans choose VA medical care because of the quality, convenience, and cost.”

Garett Schreier, RN, (LT-USNR)  
Director, Quality Management



The VA mail-order Pharmacy Program was recognized as one of 40 companies in the U.S. to earn the distinction as a *Service Excellence Champion*. This year, that recognition was expanded to include the outpatient Pharmacy Programs at all VA medical centers, which includes the Lebanon VA Medical Center. In fact, the results from Lebanon VA Medical Center's Pharmacy Program exceeded the national average!

According to J.D. Power and Associates, the VA Pharmacy Program is the only Federal agency ever named as a Service Excellence Champion.





## RESIDENTIAL RECOVERY CENTER:

### *A Transition to Permanent Independence*



We are building a world class center where Veterans can recover together in a mutually supportive environment, receive treatment, and learn job skills. We are dedicated to an improved integration of services. Our focus is on housing first concepts, marketable vocational training, and community reintegration for a permanent recovery.



*“Among my cherished memories are those from my service. Among my best friends are those with whom I served. My friends and I served in combat four wars ago. I don’t know if I have the vocabulary to express how I feel. Certainly, I have great pride for any of the VA projects upon which my company has worked. But it is with sadness, too, knowing that these things are necessary because our warriors have the need for them.”*

Joseph J. Mark, President  
Seawolf Construction Corp.



*“The atrocities of war will never change; the way we manage the aftermath of such atrocities can. As an employee of the VA, the opportunity to team and contribute towards constructive change for those who put the good of mankind ahead of themselves, is truly gratifying.”*

Richard McAlevy  
General Engineer and Project Manager



*“Prior to working for the VA, as someone who was not in the military, I did not realize how much sacrifice these Veterans gave to protect our country. It is truly an honor to build and maintain the facilities for Veterans.”*

Thaddeus Kocuba  
Facilities Manager



# Am I a Veteran?

YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED

how many times we are asked this question. Folks seem to have all sorts of preconceptions about what makes someone a Veteran. Fortunately, however, the answer is quite simple. If you served in the active Armed Forces of the United States, then you are a Veteran! Pure and simple. It's not necessary to have served overseas or during a time of war. National Guard members and Reservists who have been called to active Federal service are also Veterans. Age, income, race, gender, religion, creed or marital status do not matter—the only thing which does, is that you wore the uniform of an American defender. Thank you for your service!

## AM I ELIGIBLE FOR CARE?

ALL VETERANS ARE ELIGIBLE to apply for VA care. Our enrollment specialists review your military service record to determine your benefit eligibility. The results are sent to you in writing. You will be assigned to a priority group based on your specific eligibility status, income, and service information you provided on the 10-10EZ form.

Your enrollment information is reviewed each year or whenever you have a life change. Your ability to remain enrolled in VA may depend on the funding that VA receives from Congress to provide your care. You will be notified in writing if VA cannot renew your enrollment for another year.

You should contact our enrollment specialists any time you have a major life change such as retirement, loss of income or housing, change in marital status or a disability condition.

ELIGIBILITY



## COMBAT VETERANS

Veterans, including activated Reservists and members of the National Guard, are eligible if they served on active duty in a theatre of combat operations after November 11, 1998, and have NOT been discharged under dishonorable conditions.

Documentation used to determine service in a theatre of combat operations can include any of the following:

- Military service documentation that reflects service in a combat theatre, or
- Receipt of combat service medals, or
- Receipt of imminent danger or hostile fire pay or tax benefits.

## RETURNING VETERANS

If you are a recently discharged Veteran with service in a theatre of combat operations (OEF/OIF/OND—Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn), VA can provide you with free care for 5 years from your discharge from active duty for conditions possibly related to your service, regardless of your income status.

Call **1-717-228-6000** or **1-800-409-8771, ext. 6000** to speak to one of our enrollment specialists!

*"We are here to answer your questions, explain potential benefits and assist you with enrolling into VA health care."*

Christine O'Donnell  
Patient Information Management  
Services Supervisor





## World War II Veterans

**STAFF SERGEANT FRANK LASHINSKY**  
**United States Army Air Corps**



A young visitor to the medical center recently asked why World War II Veterans are called the Greatest Generation. Frank Lashinsky's story is one answer. The son of an immigrant coal miner, Frank started his first job outside the home at the age of 10. When he graduated from high school he joined the Army Air Corps.

He flew his first combat mission immediately after turning 20. He was in an aircraft that was destroyed in a crash-landing. He was in another plane which had to be scrapped after being hit by flak causing extensive damage. Two other aircraft he was in were so badly damaged from anti-aircraft artillery that he had to bail out. The first time his parachute malfunctioned and when he did land, he spent 3 weeks working with partisans evading capture. The second time he was forced to bailout, three crew members were killed and five more wounded by German soldiers as they descended before landing in a minefield. After being captured, the young airman was disarmed, stripped, beaten, and interrogated. Since he only provided name, rank, and serial number, he was threatened with execution for not cooperating before being sent to Dulag 161 where he was held with other allied fighters, as well as political prisoners, Jews and partisans.

Later he spent 6 weeks traveling by rail in a box car much like the famed "Forty and Eight" ones from World War I. The train was strafed by allied fighters and bombed by heavy American bombers not knowing the trains carried POWs. Since the prisoners were fed only a couple of times a week, food became an obsession for them. They talked constantly about what meals they'd like to have if they survived their captivity. When their train was destroyed by an Allied attack, Frank and the other prisoners were forced to walk for 3 more weeks before they arrived at their final



destination, Stalag VIIA in Moosberg, Germany. Finally on April 29, 1945, Frank and 27,000 other prisoners were liberated by members of the Fourteenth Armored Division and 109th Infantry of Patton's army. It was the largest liberation of POWs in the war.



After the war, the young airman, who thought he'd never have more than a high school education, attended college on the GI bill. He became a chemical engineer and worked in the pharmaceutical industry. He married Dorothy Byrne and they adopted three children. In retirement, Frank and Dorothy both volunteer for numerous Veteran Service Organizations and Lebanon VA Medical Center, of which Frank says, "Offers me top notch health care coverage through top notch providers in a top notch facility."





Martin Nourie served our country in the Navy during the Vietnam conflict. As a result of his service, Martin lost both his feet and suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Due to his multiple medical conditions and his inability to travel, he and his wife appreciate and benefit from the home visits by his primary care team and his long-time nurse, Carmen Hoffman. Mr. Nourie states, "I have known Carmen over 10 years and this is a wonderful program!"



“Veterans have many choices about where to receive their health care. There are also some misconceptions about VA

## Home Based Primary Care

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) is a program designed to treat a unique Veteran population...the housebound and chronically ill man or woman with multiple complex medical issues. When the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) began to explore better ways to serve these Veterans, the question became, "What is the best way to care for this aging population, while still allowing them their independence?" The answer was HBPC.

Veterans in HBPC have an interdisciplinary primary care team consisting of a provider (doctor, physician assistant or nurse practitioner) nurse, social worker, psychologist, rehabilitative therapist, dietician, and pharmacy consultant. Members of the team visit the patient in the Veteran's home to perform routine primary care procedures such as blood pressure checks, physical examinations, injections, and other medical necessities.

HBPC was started at the Lebanon VA Medical Center in 2004. There are approximately 280 patients in the program at any given time.

The HBPC program has been a success in avoiding recurrent inpatient stays, avoiding no-show appointments and the main goal...keeping the Veteran patient in his or her home. If you are interested in learning more about HBPC, please call **717-272-6621, extension 4406 or 4709.**



health care out there. Qualified Veterans who have insurance can still receive a full range of personalized medical services here or at one of our Community Based Outpatient Clinics. And if we are not satisfying your expectations, please contact me because we will make things right.

**Ivy Matthews, RN**  
HBPC Program Director



# Telehealth

I am proud to be a part of the largest health care organization that provides high quality care to our men and women Veterans. I have the power to make a difference.

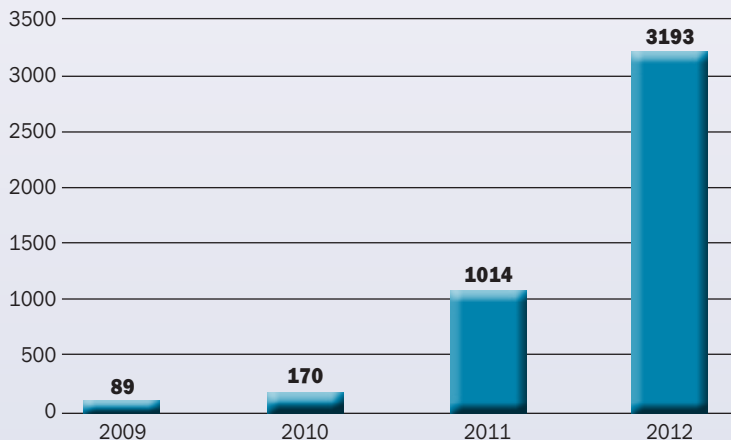
**Tammy Wessner, RN**  
Facility Telehealth Coordinator



Telehealth monitors began being placed in patient's homes in 2004 to monitor blood pressure, insulin levels, mood, and more. These monitors provide a direct link to the patient no matter how much distance is between the patient and the VA hospital. Check out the story on page 16.



## Lebanon Telemental Health Visits



The Behavioral Health and Sciences (BH&S) care line at Lebanon VA Medical Center has been at the forefront of an initiative to increase access to mental health care by using Clinical Video Teleconferencing (CVT). This technology permits a Veteran to receive mental health care at a remote site which is more convenient than driving to where the provider is physically located. This saves the Veteran time and resources while still receiving the same high quality level of care from our providers.

Our 13 separate CVT clinics across the facility and its Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) have accounted for 3193 visits this fiscal year through August; and have reached 534 Veterans.





## My Health, My Care: 24/7 <sup>Online</sup> Access to VA

This past year, Virtual Care was increased and expanded at the Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The additions included: Teledermatology and Teleretinal. The addition of Clinical Video Telehealth resulted in the expansion of mental health services. In addition, Specialty Services were added, including: Neurology, Home Oxygen Evaluation, Pharmacy, Bariatric and Visual Impairment Services Program. Home Telehealth also offers cellular modem devices for in home monitoring and Secure Messaging has been integrated throughout the medical center. In fact, the medical center ended the year exceeding the expected goal of 15% of Veteran patients using this confidential method of communicating with their health care team from anywhere the Veteran can obtain an internet connection. A total of 28% of Lebanon's Veterans received Virtual Care last year. This improves access and lowers costs.

"Serving Veterans is truly an honor, the one to one personal contact I have with them makes my job a joy. I take great pride in providing an essential link and sharing this educational tool with Veterans. The MyHealthVet program empowers our Veterans to be a critical member of their own health care team. Many of them often tell me how much they appreciate this simple and convenient access."

Jan Falk, MyHealthVet Coordinator



"It couldn't be easier." That's how Army Veteran Elaine Adams describes using MyHealthVet. "All I have to do to order my medications is check them off a list. It's also a definite plus that I can contact my primary care provider with questions and know that I am going to get an answer shortly from someone who knows me and works with me. It's wonderful. So is my provider. I don't know what I'd do without the VA."







## Korean Veterans

### TECHNICAL CORPORAL WILLIAM H. DANGRO United States Army

Bill Dangro spent 33 months in a communist prisoner of war camp. He had been wounded three times during one of the fiercest battles American personnel would ever fight – the battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Vastly outnumbered by the Chinese Army, Americans like Bill and his brother, who was there too, bravely fought until they ran out of ammunition – and then they fought with cold steel and anything else they could use as a weapon, in brutal hand-to-hand combat. Bill finally succumbed to his wounds and was captured. Forced to march through snow that was sometimes waist deep, the American POWs trudged toward an uncertain future. Lacking proper medical care, Bill dug a bullet out of his knee himself. His shoulder wound, from a plane that strafed the battlefield, prevented him from raising his arm and multiple shrapnel wounds from an enemy mortar, made it hard to sleep despite his physical exhaustion.

The young soldier worried about his parents and siblings. He had 10 sisters and he didn't know if his brother, who was with him the first time he was wounded and who bandaged his leg, had survived the battle. More than 4,000 Americans did not and Bill was a witness to much of the carnage. Later he would learn that his brother had not only managed to survive but evade capture. Sadly, he would also learn that his parents had been told he was wounded in action (WIA), missing in action (MIA) and then killed in action (KIA). In fact, his father died while Bill and the others were enduring their captivity. But his dad never gave up hope. "Our son Bill will be home," he repeatedly told his wife. Neither knew their son was part of a forced labor party at the prison camp.

Bill and the other POWs knew their fortunes were about to change when they received a visit from members of the International Red Cross. They delivered care packages and took mail to send back to the United States.

When Bill did finally get home, he arrived on a Friday. He went to a welcome home party in Ephrata and started work on Monday.

The former POW and purple heart recipient was not, however, allowed to buy a beer.

He was only 20 years old.



“When I came to the Lebanon VA, I was nearly a vegetable. I had been somewhere else and the care was non-existent. People there just didn't care. But here, the folks really care about you. There's always something to do. If there's a better place out there, I'd like to see it because nothing beats the Lebanon VA.”

BILL DANGRO



## Long Term Care...Right in Your Own Home



The Comprehensive Home Health Aide Care (CHHAC) Program provides the maximum level of home health aide services and represents a new model of patient-centered non-institutional long term care. This program allows Veterans in need of institutional nursing home level of care to stay at home with paid “24/7 live-in” caregivers as an alternative to traditional long term care. Each participant in the CHHAC Program receives oversight visits by alternating nursing and social work case managers.

The Veterans Health Administration’s T21 Transformational Initiatives focus is on providing Veterans with personalized, proactive, and patient-driven health care. This includes ensuring that non-institutional alternatives to traditional nursing home care are available for dependent Veterans of any age. We believe that these non-institutional alternatives are preferable in terms of health outcomes, quality, patient and family preferences, satisfaction, and cost.

“We enjoy peace and prosperity because of America’s defenders. So it’s with great joy and satisfaction that I help them remain in their homes, but still receive the skilled care they need, deserve, and have earned. Few people have jobs as rewarding as serving Veterans.”

**Deborah Bishop, RN**  
Program Manager

For more information about CHHAC, contact **Deborah Bishop, RN, at 717-272-6621, ext. 4365**

## Caregiver Support



Lebanon VA values the sacrifices caregivers make to help Veterans remain at home and recognizes that caregivers are the critical link to ensure Veterans have the highest quality care and optimal wellness. VA wants all caregivers to feel supported and have trust in VA to assist them in their caregiving roles.

The role of the Caregiver Support Program and the Coordinator is to honor and engage all Veteran Caregivers and to provide meaningful and effective support to Caregivers. The Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC) will help find the programs and services that will enable the Veteran and Caregiver to maintain their physical and emotional well-being. By reaching out to the Caregivers, the CSC finds ways that will keep the Caregivers feeling valued, connected, and informed.

For inquiries, please contact the Lebanon VA Medical Center Caregiver Support Coordinator, **Teresa Stump-Klinger, LCSW, at [Teresa.Stump-Klinger@va.gov](mailto:Teresa.Stump-Klinger@va.gov), 717-272-6621 ext. 5739, or 1-800-409-8771, ext. 5739**



## Vietnam Veterans

### SPECIALIST 4 JAMES SHEA, United States Army

In 1965, when SPC4 Jim Shea shipped out to Vietnam, he didn't give a lot of thought to his heart. He was young and healthy. His primary concern was doing his job and not letting down his buddies in the 630th Engineer Company. He served honorably, but is still occasionally haunted by the memory of helicopter bays being cleaned with a fire hose during the battle of Ia Drang, immortalized in the book and movie of the same title, *We Were Soldiers Once and Young*.

In 2012, however, Jim was keenly aware of issues with his heart. His father had died of a heart attack and Jim had required a catheterization and the insertion of three stents in 2000. As a Vietnam Veteran, he enrolled in VA health care and began receiving care at Lebanon VA Medical Center. He also enrolled in the telehealth program which monitors his vital signs and other important health related matters before sending a daily report to the medical center.

In February 2012, Jim received a call from his nurse Debbie Wagner; she told him she had just reviewed his daily report. She asked him a couple more questions and then instructed him to have his wife bring him to the emergency department immediately. Within 10 minutes of arriving, Debbie's suspicions were confirmed – Jim was having a heart attack!

Fortunately for Jim and his wife Connie, the former Army engineer was able to receive the surgical intervention he needed. Thanks to the state of the art telehealth program and his nurse's quick action, Jim has recovered and he's back to doing the things he loves. A soft spoken man of few words, Jim summarizes this all by simply saying, "The VA saved my life."



### AGENT ORANGE

Vietnam Veterans who believe they were exposed to the chemical Agent Orange are encouraged to have an Agent Orange exam. This exam consists of a complete physical, lab tests, and the Veteran's placement on the National Agent Orange Registry. To obtain more information about this program, the Agent Orange EAS Coordinator may be contacted at **1-717-272-6621, ext. 4747**, or toll-free at **1-800-449-8771, ext. 4747**.

VA assumes that certain diseases can be related to a Vietnam Veteran's qualifying military service. We call these "presumptive diseases," which include:

Ischemic Heart Disease	Multiple Myeloma
Hairy Cell and other	AL Amyloidosis
B-Cell Leukemias	Chloracne
Parkinson's Disease	Diabetes Mellitus Type 2
Prostate Cancer	Peripheral Neuropathy,
Chronic Lymphocytic	Acute and Sub Acute
Leukemia	Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
Hodgkin's Disease	Respiratory Cancers
Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma	Soft Tissue Sarcomas





## Compensation and Pension Exams

Lebanon VA Medical Center has a well-established and growing Compensation and Pension (C&P) Section, coordinated by full-time staff, who are Veterans themselves, each with many years of experience. Two physicians and the program manager physician assistant perform exams needed to evaluate a variety of conditions, at the request of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). All providers who perform C&P exams have been certified in the general C&P exam process, as well as their areas of specialization. The areas of expertise include mental health, audiology, physiatry, dental, neurology, and orthopedics. Examiners are responsible to review all clinical evidence and perform the appropriate exam for the condition in the claim.



“Disability compensation is a monthly tax-free benefit paid to Veterans who are at least 10% disabled because of injuries or diseases that were incurred in or aggravated during active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training. A disability can apply to physical conditions, such as a chronic knee condition, as well as mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).”

William Carlson, Physician Assistant, Compensation and Pension Program Manager

## Zero Deficiencies!!

Exams Completed in less than 25 days!

Learn more about disability compensation at

[www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-disability.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-disability.asp)



Need a ride to your VA appointment?  
The DAV provides transportation to eligible Veterans. Call **717-272-6621, ext. 4596**.





## Persian Gulf Veterans

**CORPORAL ROBIN GREENINGER**  
**United States Marine Corps**

Each journey begins with a single step. Sometimes the destination is known in advance. At other times, the destination is discovered along the way. Sometimes the journey takes us far from what is familiar and at other times, the journey brings us right back to the place where we started—the place where we were meant to be. During the journey we may encounter new friends (and enemies), see great distances from peak experiences or suffer privately in dark lonely valleys. We may learn truths about ourselves and others we did not know before and often times, especially for Veterans, we are much better for having made the journey.

This is certainly true for former United States Marine Corporal Robin Greeninger, a program analyst in Resource Management at Lebanon VA Medical Center. After graduating from basic training at Parris Island, the Cedar Crest High School graduate shipped out to California and later, Hawaii. In August of 1990, the field radio operator and the air control squadron she was attached to became part of the advance party sent to Saudi Arabia for what would become Operation Desert Shield/Storm. CPL Greeninger and the other females slept in a GP medium tent without air conditioning in the middle east desert for the next 5 months. They slept with their rifles and protective masks and suits. In December they moved forward, where they would soon become a regular target for incoming missiles.

“It was very hard,” Robin confides, “Sleeping in our MOPP gear, never knowing where the next round would hit or if it would be filled with chemical or biological agents, but we had a job to do, so we got it done.”

When the Marine got home, people could tell she changed. Many attributed it to the experience of combat, but the tough young corporal had a secret, a deep dark secret few wanted to address - she was a victim of military sexual trauma (MST). As she later learned, not all wounds are visible. Attempts at self medication failed, as did significant relationships. A downward spiral threatened to pull the Marine under until a Vietnam Veteran got Robin connected to a Vietnam Veterans group. “They really saved me. They understood where I was, who I was and what



happened. They showed me the way. They reminded me to never quit and to keep moving forward,” Robin says reflecting back over two decades.

Now the analyst, who joined VA as an employee in 2006 will soon finish her master’s degree. “I am so grateful to come here and receive the services I do. It is an honor and a privilege to be here and to serve other Veterans. When I joined the Corps, I thought I wanted to get out of south central Pennsylvania; now I realize I was meant to serve the Veterans of south central PA. I’ve been in their shoes. I know what it means to serve and I will always be proud to serve them.”

Semper Fi, Marine, Semper Fi.



To speak to a Military Sexual Trauma Specialist, call:  
**Christine Cooper, PH.D.**  
Building 17, Room 378  
**717-272-6621, ext. 5436**

**THE TREATMENT IS FREE**





## Behavioral Health

### LETTER FROM AN OIF VETERAN WITH MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS

"Then I came here to the Lebanon VA. Recognizing that my soul was somehow wounded and that my efforts to suppress the pain through self medication were not working, I came to you, silent but desperate for help. Quite frankly I was afraid to come here. I was afraid of what people might think of me. I was worried how coming here might affect my military career and I thought that the hospital I was going to find would be like the one in the movie, "Born on the Fourth of July." Instead, much to my surprise, what I found was a collective body of professionals, subject matter experts in a historic but state-of-the-art facility, who were willing to do everything in their power to assist me, to help me find peace, wholeness and healing. It would be an exaggeration to say that you saved my life, but it would not be disingenuous or false to say that you helped me find the footing, to rediscover my inner resilience and to find peace and hope."

Same Day Access for  
"Walk In" Unscheduled  
Behavioral Health Patients

100%

Veterans Seen  
Within 14 Days  
of Request

95%

Quality of Care

National Leader in  
Behavioral Health  
Quality of Care  
Measures

Telehealth

National Leader in  
TeleHealth (Virtual)  
Behavioral Health  
Services



"Some wounds are visible and some are not. The ones which cannot be seen may still be devastating. That is why we have expanded staffing and services to meet this growing need in the Veteran community. We want to ensure all Veterans lead healthy, happy, and productive lives."

PIRO RJEPAJ, MD  
Associate Chief of Staff  
Behavioral Health and Sciences





# Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn Veterans

## SSG AMBER BLANTON

### Pennsylvania Army National Guard

Sunday, December 12, 2004, is a day SSG Amber Blanton will never forget.

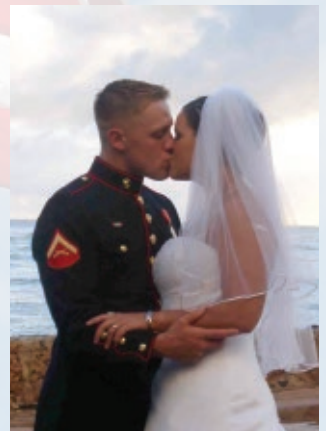
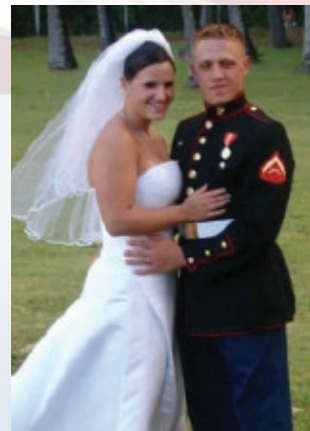
At the time, she was stationed in Afghanistan at the Kandahar Airfield, where she worked as a paralegal specialist for the 25th Infantry Division. She had already experienced rockets and mortars being shot at the base. She had been in country for 7 1/2 months. It was not unusual for officers or NCOs to wake her in the middle of the night and ask questions about the rules of engagement (ROE). But what was different about the night that would forever change her life, is that when she was summoned to the tactical operations center (TOC), she was told to report immediately. She was told to leave her PT (physical training) uniform on and dispense with putting on her DCUs (desert camouflage uniform) as she normally did. When she arrived at the TOC, her battle buddy – another female, was sitting outside the commander's office weeping. "When I saw her crying outside that office so hard, I was afraid that something had happened to her husband because they had gotten married right before we deployed," Amber vividly remembers.

"The CO (commanding officer) called me in and he was crying too," Amber states with a note of disbelief. "Jeff's been shot," he said. "What?" I asked, "I just talked to him on Friday. He was finally cleared to RTD (return to duty) after the last time he was shot."

The young bride's husband, a Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corps, had been deployed to Iraq, after his wife shipped out for Afghanistan. He had been wounded after he had been in country for a couple of months. The wound was serious enough that he was hospitalized for a month before he was allowed to RTD.

"You don't understand," the CO said, "your husband is dead. He was killed in action during a house clearing raid. He was the first man in a stack, going up a set of stairs when an enemy combatant shot him multiple times before the Marines could return fire. I'm sorry."

Later the young soldier, who just turned 21, would learn that her husband had traded places at point,



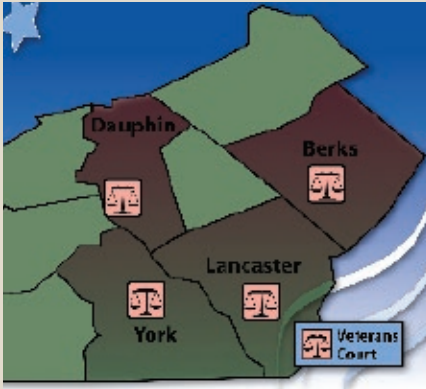
so that another Marine could have a break. "I'm very proud of him," she says with a glowing smile. "He was very brave."

Now the combat Veteran, widow, and single mother has found peace. "The doctors and nurses at Lebanon, everyone really, has really helped me so much. They always put you first. There's always a feeling of camaraderie with other Veterans, regardless of age— they are just like me. Going to a civilian treatment facility, you're just a number or insurance card...at the VA you're still a Soldier and that's nice. They understand and appreciate me."





# Veterans Justice Outreach Program



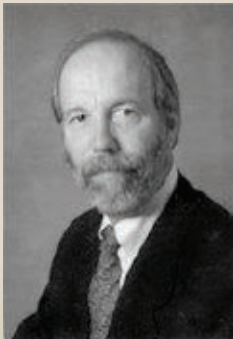
The Lebanon VA Medical Center's Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program added three Veterans Treatment Courts in FY 2012, bringing the total number of Veterans Courts in its service territory to four. Berks County Veterans Court, led by Judge Jeffrey Schmehl, has been in place since 2010. Lancaster County Veterans Court, led by Judge Jeffery Wright, was launched on 1/19/2012. Dauphin County Veterans Court, led by Judge Bruce Bratton, was launched on 1/27/2012, and York County Veterans Court, led by Judge Craig Treibelcock, was launched on 2/9/2012. The program currently provides case management to approximately 70 Veterans in these courts, in addition to outreach in county jails throughout its 9 county service territory.



“There's lots of reasons why this program is successful, but I really appreciate what the judges and courts have done.”

**Julie Bergstresser**

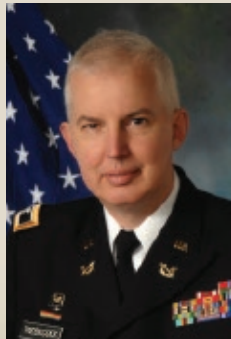
**Veteran's Justice Outreach Specialist**



**Judge Bratton**  
Dauphin County



**Judge Schmehl**  
Berks County



**Judge Treibelcock**  
York County



**Judge Bratton**  
Lancaster County

“The VJO Program and Veterans Treatment Courts are doing incredible work to help Veterans turn their lives around. One example is a Veteran who was recently referred to one of Lebanon VAMC's Veterans Treatment Courts. This gentleman is a Vietnam War era Veteran who never enrolled in services because he did not know he was eligible. After an assessment, Julie Bergstresser, VJO Coordinator, assisted him with completing a drug and alcohol evaluation and enrolling him in primary care through VA. Now he has his health issues managed by VA. He has even received new glasses and hearing aids! He is doing extremely well in the program and simply needed to be connected to the system. If not for the VJO Program, this Veteran would not be receiving the care he earned by his military service.”

**Robert W. Callahan, Jr.**

**Director and CEO Lebanon VA Medical Center**







## Voluntary Bus

The Voluntary Wheelchair Bus Committee accomplished something extraordinary that will help market community awareness for the Lebanon VAMC and contribute to building a community of caring for Veterans. The committee collected and managed donations totaling over \$127,000 to purchase a new activity wheelchair bus to replace a much older model. The bus is used to transport patients to events held off site that are staffed by Voluntary Service Staff and countless volunteers from Veterans Service Organizations. In the fall of 2009, staff members began receiving donations for the bus. In August 2011, they reached their goal and an order for a Freightliner, 36 passenger shuttle bus was submitted.



The Silver Award for “Improved Federal Image Award” was presented to staff members from Lebanon VAMC’s Voluntary Service Wheelchair Activity Bus Committee at the Excellence in Government Awards Ceremony. The “Improved Federal Image Award” is for achievement or action in promoting the mission or objectives of a specific Federal organization or the Federal government in general that resulted in a positive perception of Federal service. No Federal funds were used to purchase the bus. The funds were all donated to Voluntary Service.

### On Location!



Voluntary Services Team on a river boat cruise.



Standing: Scott Harman, Ivan Toledo and Christopher Levensgood  
Sitting: Dana Remlinger and Jolyn Swift



## *No Veteran Dies Alone*

Years ago, people died at home where they were surrounded by family and friends. For many Americans, including Veterans, serious chronic illness may last months to years with death often occurring in the hospital instead of at home. Some of these Veterans have outlived their loved ones or due to other circumstances, find themselves alone at the end of life. If this is the case, it can be a lonely experience. Consequently, it is VA's belief that Veterans at end of life must have the opportunity of human companionship and compassion.

The "No Veteran Dies Alone" program is designed to honor Veterans and to meet the unique needs of those Veterans who, for whatever reason, find themselves alone. Volunteers are provided a 2-day educational inservice at the Lebanon VAMC. These volunteers, in turn, are able to provide compassion, companionship, and reassurance to Veterans during what is likely the most vulnerable time of their illness. These volunteers benefit from participation in this program by being with Veterans, often decorated military servicemen and women, and providing comfort at the bedside when family and friends are unable to be present.

VA staff are readily available to support these volunteers as they share their time and presence growing through this experience. Training for this volunteer program is offered twice a year at Lebanon VAMC.

For more information call **717-272-6621, ext. 3811**.

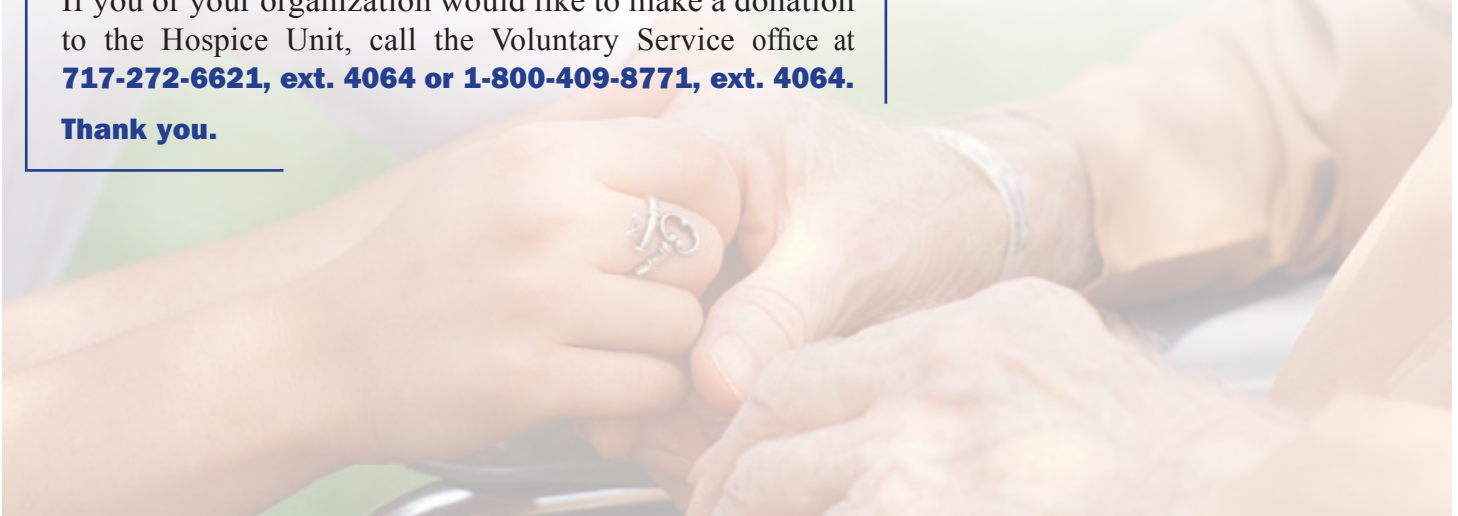
During the past year, 197 individuals and groups donated \$18,349.39 to the hospice unit. These monies are used exclusively to benefit Veterans who are at the end stage of life. If you or your organization would like to make a donation to the Hospice Unit, call the Voluntary Service office at **717-272-6621, ext. 4064 or 1-800-409-8771, ext. 4064**.

**Thank you.**



“Members of the armed forces always work in teams. We bring our team of professionals and volunteers to care for them in the most compassionate and caring manner they deserve. They have given so much, it's our moral obligation to give them our very best.”

**SCOTT T. SHREVE, DO**  
Director of Hospice and  
Palliative Care





## HEROES AMONG US

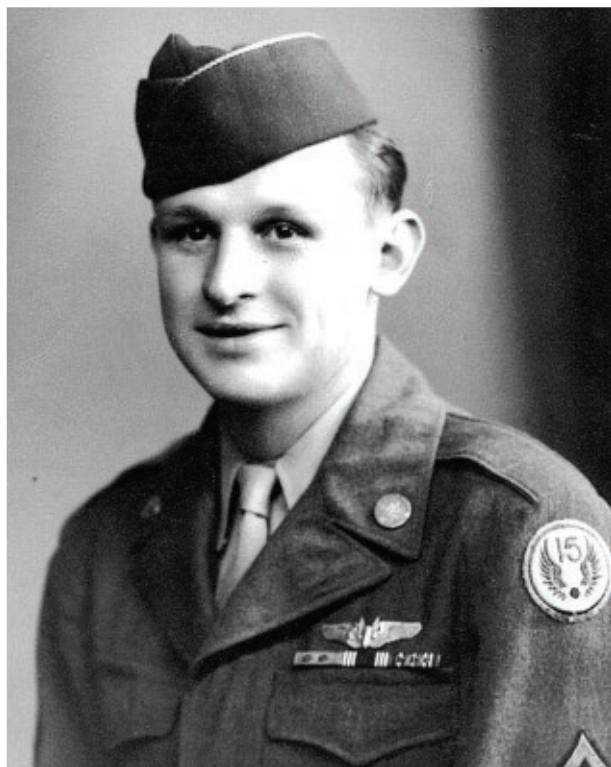
See pages 10, 14, 16, 18 and 20.



Staff Sergeant Amber Blanton



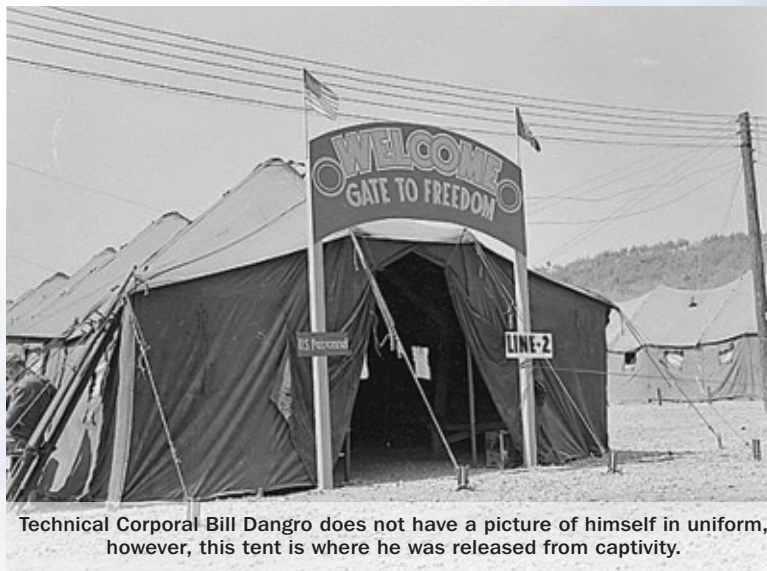
Specialist 4 James Shea



Staff Sergeant Frank Lashinsky



Corporal Robin Greeninger



Technical Corporal Bill Dangro does not have a picture of himself in uniform, however, this tent is where he was released from captivity.



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*The Best Employees Anywhere...The Best Care Anywhere*

### Lebanon VA Medical Center

1700 South Lincoln Avenue  
Lebanon, Pennsylvania 17042

717-272-6621 • 1-800-409-8771

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