

Britain's Prince Harry Visits VA's Manhattan Campus

On his first formal visit to the U.S., His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales was hosted at the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System's Manhattan campus on May 29. After being greeted by Director John Donnellan and VISN 3 Director Michael Sabo, Prince Harry, as he is commonly known, met with Clinical Psychologist Michael Kramer, Ph.D., for a briefing and demonstration of VA's virtual reality therapy, an effective treatment option for post-traumatic stress disorder sufferers.

The prince then toured the prosthetics lab, where amputee Paul Yarbrough, a Gulf War veteran, demonstrated the DEKA arm, an advanced artificial limb currently being tested in the lab. Later, OEF/OIF veterans met with Prince Harry, who served in Afghanistan, in a private roundtable discussion to share war experiences. Afterwards, the prince spoke with many of the campus's veterans and staff and posed for photos next to the facility's Wounded Warrior statue.



Gulf War veteran Paul Yarbrough gave Prince Harry a demonstration of an advanced artificial arm being tested at the prosthetics lab.

LAMEL HINTON



WILLIAM JUNIPHER

Patient April Goodwin with (left to right): Jon Palks, supervisor, Recreation Therapy; Fernando O. Rivera, medical center director; John Feight, executive director, the Foundation for Hospital Art; and Linda Odierno, wife of Gen. Ray Odierno.

Great American Paintfest Unites Soldiers in Iraq With Hospitalized Veterans in D.C.

Active-duty soldiers serving in Iraq and hospitalized veterans in Washington, D.C., were recently united for a common mission—painting 40 pre-drawn, color-coded designs on canvas to produce “The American Flag and Eagle” for the Great American Paintfest. Co-sponsored by the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center and the Foundation for Hospital Art, the finished canvases, once assembled, will measure 16 by 7 feet and will be prominently displayed in the medical center.

On July 4, Gen. Ray Odierno, commanding general of the multi-national forces in Iraq, and his soldiers joined (via video) more than 100 volunteers, veterans and staff members, including Odierno's wife, Linda, who gathered in the atrium of the D.C. VAMC to begin painting. “Several hospitalized veterans were able to paint portions of the canvases from their hospital rooms,” said Jon Palks, supervisor, Recreation Therapy. This year, more than 30 hospitals across the nation participated in their own Paintfests.

50th Anniversary Proves Memorable for Couple on Lebanon VA's Hospice Unit

On the hospice unit of Pennsylvania's Lebanon VA Medical Center, Robert and Fay Dabashinsky faced the probability that they would not be able to celebrate their 50th anniversary in Hawaii as planned due to his declining health. But to their surprise, the hospice staff brought Hawaii to them.

To the couple's delight, the hospice unit's halls were converted into a Hawaiian welcome strip, with staff dressed in Hawaiian garments on hand to greet them with leis. The veteran's bedroom was decorated in a beach theme, with original trinkets overnighted from Hawaii's welcome center. Grilled steaks, donated by staff, were served with fruit kabobs, umbrella-topped non-alcoholic drinks, and slices of Hawaiian wedding cake baked by another hospice employee. Photos were taken and the couple was presented with a 50th anniversary photo album along with a DVD commemorating the day. The veteran passed away a few weeks after the event. [VA](#)



DOUGLAS WAGNER

When Robert and Fay Dabashinsky couldn't celebrate their 50th anniversary in Hawaii, the staff brought Hawaii to them.