

Lebanon VAMC

N E W S L E T T E R



Lebanon VAMC's RRTP Restores Hope, Makes Growth Possible

DOUGLAS A. ETTER
Chief Communications Officer

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As an 8-year-old boy, Anthony "Tony" Raimo liked to watch television like lots of kids his age, but the content he enjoyed was different. Tony liked watching military documentaries. Like his father, uncle and both grandfathers before him, he felt an unalterable call to the United States military. His family's stories and the documentaries inspired him, so shortly after graduating from Reading High School in 2005, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. After completing boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and combat training at Camp Geiger, he went to receive his military occupational specialty training in aviation operations at Naval Air Station Meridian before shipping out to Okinawa, Japan.

Like many service members, Raimo was tasked with a variety of responsibilities beyond his occupational specialty. In addition to working future ops for the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, he also became a combat marksman instructor and a safety swimmer for his unit. His duties took him far from his Berks County home to places like the Philippines, Korea, Japan and Thailand.

When Raimo was discharged in 2010, he struggled with reintegrating into the civilian world like many Veterans. He had a hard time adjusting to life outside the structured and noble calling of the Marine Corps. He worked as a human resources specialist, but just couldn't escape the clutch of some demons which haunted him, so he tried to drown them with alcohol. The booze clouded his judgement. The former noncommissioned officer (NCO) made some bad decisions



Then Cpl. Tony Raimo serving in the United States Marine Corps in Okinawa in 2008. (Courtesy photo)

and found himself locked in a state penitentiary for 18 months. As a part of his conditions for release, Raimo agreed to enroll in the Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP) at Lebanon VA Medical Center's Residential Rehabilitation Center (RRC).

Initially, he was very apprehensive about the program. He didn't think he had a substance abuse problem, but one day sitting in class, he had, as he describes it, "an ah-ha moment". The revelation hit him hard. At that moment, he promised himself, he would commit his entire being to successfully completing the program, to recovering, to becoming healthy and to being a better father to his children. Raimo is now a full-time volunteer at a local nonprofit and a full-time student.

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Lebanon VAMC is proud to provide quality care to Veterans at 7 locations in South Central PA.

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VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Lebanon VA Medical Center

From the desk of the director...

Veterans, Co-Workers, Friends, Family and Stakeholders,

This edition of our newsletter includes a story about one of our Veterans, Sgt. Tony Raimo. As I read his testimony, the trust he put in our VA family to help him with his recovery was reassuring. In particular, he lavished credit upon our employees in the Residential Recovery Center (RRC) and Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP). Their dedication to our mission and their compassion and ability to heal Veterans reflects positively upon themselves and also upon VA employees everywhere. Veterans frequently share stories with me about their care and how employees at Lebanon go above and beyond the call of duty to care for America's noble defenders. Sgt. Raimo's story ends with the John C. Maxwell quote, "Change is inevitable. Growth is optional." At Lebanon VAMC, *change is intentional* and growth is *expected*.

You don't have to be around VA very long to experience *change*. The *changes* we continue to make in our services and modernization are intentional, results-driven and Veteran-centric because we are growth-oriented. In this issue of our newsletter, you will note *changes* to our senior leadership with our new associate director/chief operating officer Jeffrey A. Beiler II onboard and the appointment of Dr. Scott Shreve as acting chief of staff. These leadership changes are due to retirement and intra-agency transfer. We will certainly miss Cindy Shiner and Dr. Tony Slavinski, and I would like to thank them for their many years of service and commitment to the Veterans served here and wish them well.

One of the common questions we get from Veterans who have not been to the Lebanon VAMC campus for years is about the new buildings they notice on the other side of the Building 1 parking lot. That question is answered in an article profiling our RRC and RRTP which was recently *changed* and recognized by VA central office as a national best practice.

You will also learn about on-going construction projects including work on our new intensive care unit as we continue to improve and modernize our facility. The inevitability of *change* here in terms of construction also means associated noise and other minor inconveniences, and I thank all of you for bearing with us as we position our Lebanon VAMC campus for the next 70 years of service.

Finally, you'll hear from Voluntary Service about the volunteer transportation network they oversee that brings thousands of Veterans to the medical center each year for appointments. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of these Volunteers and their dedicated support to this program. Voluntary Service is consistently engaging our Veteran community and *changing* to meet the needs of an ever-changing Veteran population.

The common thread through our 70 years of service to the Veterans of South Central Pennsylvania and our ongoing improvement and *changes* are the professional dedication of our medical center's employees, many of whom are Veterans themselves. The dedication, commitment and passion of our employees who put the needs of Veterans first, makes Lebanon VA Medical Center and our community clinics, a very special place to serve America's heroes.

Thank you for your unwavering support.

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



Choose VA
Lebanon VA Medical Center
Serving Veterans Since 1947

LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Robert W. Callahan, Jr.
Director

Linda S. Umberger, RN
Executive Assistant to the Director

Jeffrey A. Beiler II
Associate Director

Margaret G. Wilson, MSN, RN
Associate Director for Patient Care Services

Scott T. Shreve, DO
Interim Chief of Staff

Laine Hellein, MSN, RN
Director of Quality Management

Lebanon VAMC Celebrates 70 Years of Service

Local Medical Center Maintains Focus While Constantly Updating Care

Lebanon VA Medical Center (VAMC) celebrated its 70th anniversary of service to the Veterans of South Central Pennsylvania on Sept. 15, 2017.

The Veterans hospital admitted its first patient on Sept. 15, 1947. The medical center currently treats more than 2,000 Veterans each day and 44,000 Veterans per year at its main Lebanon campus and its local community clinics. The goal of the hospital remains unchanged—caring for our nation’s warriors—however, the methods of care are constantly evolving.

“I’m certain that our original patients and staff would not recognize our technology,” said Robert W. Callahan, Jr., the medical center director and chief executive officer. “There has been a revolution in medical science, which VA often spearheads, such as electronic medical health records, implantable pacemakers and defibrillators, prosthetic limbs with sensors, telehealth and so much more. I’m convinced, however, there are some things they would recognize – the commitment of our staff to do their very best for the Veterans they serve and this beautiful campus. I think they would be as proud of us, as we are of the legacy they established.”

The original facility was a 501-bed, inpatient psychiatric hospital. It was later expanded to a 1,100-bed psychiatric hospital and long-term care facility. Lebanon VA now employs 1,500 South Central Pennsylvanians full time, and



completes 2,100 appointments each day. The local medical center is home to one of the most advanced surgical centers in VA; it also is home to a nationally showcased Residential Rehabilitation Program. Additionally, the Veterans Hospital trains approximately 180 doctors and 30 physician assistants from the Penn State College of Medicine each year.

Lebanon VA Medical Center is one of 168 medical centers in the nation with the sole purpose of providing world-class medical care to America’s Veterans. Lebanon VAMC serves a nine county area in South Central Pennsylvania covering Adams, Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, and Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, Schuylkill and York counties.

RRTP Restores Hope (continued from page 1)

“Recovery really is possible,” Raimo said. “It truly helped me to be in the program with other Veterans. The camaraderie was very important to me.”

Raimo identified Bob Hickox, a VA peer specialist, as one of his first confidants on the path of recovery.

“He was the first person I really opened up to. He’s a great guy. He was really influential in my recovery but really all the staff helped,” said Raimo, “You can tell they genuinely care. It’s not just a job for them. Their heart is in their work. That meant a lot to me. If I hadn’t had this program, if I didn’t get the classes and have the support of the staff, honestly, I would probably be back in jail.”

One of the proudest moments of Raimo’s life was the day he was allowed to pin on the Eagle, Globe and Anchor of the United States Marine Corps, ultimately rising to the rank of sergeant. He may be most proud, however, of the recovery he’s made with the help of Lebanon’s staff.

“One of my favorite quotes,” Raimo said, “is from John C. Maxwell: ‘Change is inevitable. Growth is optional! I truly believe that. If there’s a Veteran out there who needs help, just reach out. Stay determined. Hope is there. You can get it at Lebanon.’”

MEDICAL UPDATE

Residential Recovery Center serves as an important stop on Veterans' path of recovery

BARBARA A. CAFFREY, PSYD
Residential Recovery Center, Chief

The mission of the Residential Recovery Center (RRC) is to provide state-of-the-art, high-quality residential rehabilitation services for Veterans with substance use disorders and mental illnesses. Our vision is to provide high quality, recovery-oriented care and to treat all Veterans with a mental illness and/or addiction disorder with dignity and respect. The RRC is an intensive, evidence-based program with an average length of stay of six weeks.

The program is highly structured, and Veterans are engaged in six to eight hours of clinical programming each weekday and three to five hours each weekend day. Clinical programming involves the provision of group and individual therapies designed to improve symptom management, functional status, and recovery skills, and to sustain rehabilitation gains.

If needed and with treatment team agreement, Veterans in the RRC may supplement their treatment and participate in outpatient services, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder clinic and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Recovery Center. In all cases, the residential treatment component emphasizes incorporation of clinical care gains into a lifestyle of self-care and personal responsibility.

Our team consists of psychologists, social workers, nurses, nurse practitioners, rehabilitation technicians, health technicians, physician's assistant, and certified peer support specialists. Team members use their professional/personal experience, knowledge and training to help inspire and guide participants' recovery.

A Day in the Life

Typically, clinical programming begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 6:30 p.m. Breakfast is at 7 a.m. Monday-Friday, with Veterans having the option to sleep in until 9 a.m. on the weekends.

Groups are held from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. The RRC curriculum has both core (required) groups and elective groups,

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Lebanon VAMC's Residential Recovery Center (RRC) staff poses for a group photo in front of Building 35 of Lebanon VAMC's RRC complex during the Fall of 2017.



Lebanon VAMC Residential Recovery Center (RRC) staff simulate a group therapy session in Building 35 of Lebanon VAMC's RRC complex. Due to privacy restrictions, photos of Veterans involved in the program are unable to be used in this article.



Building 36 is the smaller of the two domiciliary buildings in the RRC complex. It accommodates 16 Veterans with both single and double occupancy rooms and features a day room with TV/DVD and a small kitchenette.

FACILITIES & ENGINEERING UPDATE

A first at the Lebanon VA Medical center, a tower crane!

THADDEUS S. KOCUBA
Facility Manager

The tower crane is erected to set steel, lift materials, and help in the construction of the second and third floors of Building 104. The second floor will be mechanical space, and the third floor will be a new Intensive Care Unit. The ICU will connect directly to the surgical center via a central elevator. The area features 13 beds and state of the art capabilities including Tele-ICU. If you're on site during the week, after 7 p.m. each workday you can see the crane in action setting the steel.



ICU construction progresses with the placement of steel for the new second and third floors to Building 104.



The tower crane aiding in the construction of second and third floors of Building 104 as seen from the rear of Building 1.

Phase two of the Radiology addition continues to progress forward. The area is now fully enclosed, and progress is being made on the internal construction. Phase two of Radiology will relocate many of the x-ray machines from the current area to the new ground floor location, next to the new Radiology entrance.

A project to renovate Building 24, commonly known as the gymnasium, has been awarded for construction. The project will renovate the building to modern finishes, replace the windows, add air conditioning to the gym, replace the pool liner, and add a new classroom for the MOVE! Program, a new reception area, and a new state of the art Hydrotherapy pool.



Construction of Radiology addition.



Proposed architectural rendering of the exterior of Building 24 following renovation and construction.



Conceptual rendering of the new MOVE! Classroom to be added to Building 24.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE UPDATE

Volunteers: A Driving Force

JEREMY K. FEES

Voluntary Service, Chief

There is little doubt that volunteers provide essential services throughout VA medical centers across our country. They dedicate a part of their lives to serve Veterans simply because they want to help. Volunteers truly enhance the care that Lebanon VA Medical Center provides our nation's heroes. One program offered at Lebanon is the Volunteer Transportation Network. Managed and run entirely by volunteers, they provide an essential service for Veterans who have a difficult time finding transportation to the medical facility.

Volunteer transportation coordinators receive requests and schedule rides for Veterans. Volunteer drivers then pick up Veterans at their door and take them back home when appointments are completed. The service they perform ensures Veterans have access to the health care they need. Some driver routes are over 200 miles round trip and start as early as 4 a.m. During 2017, volunteer drivers logged over 12,600 hours worked, 158,782 miles driven and transported 8,439 Veterans to medical appointments.

Disabled American Veterans, or DAV, is a major contributor to the volunteer transportation network. Each year, DAV donates vehicles to VA facilities across the country. These donations ensure Veterans are being transported in modern, safe and reliable vehicles. Currently there are 14 vehicles stationed at Lebanon VAMC or surrounding communities.

If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a volunteer driver, please contact the Voluntary Service office at 717-228-6123.



Stephen Moyer, volunteer driver, has over 8,500 hours dedicated to transporting Veterans to appointments at Lebanon VAMC.



VOLUNTEER *Spotlight*

PATRICIA MOYER

Patricia "Patty" Moyer has been volunteering for over six years helping Veterans at Lebanon VAMC. During this time she has logged over 2,500 hours. Not only does Patty volunteer for Lebanon VAMC, she also volunteers at the Berks County Veterans Affairs office. At both locations she answers the telephone and coordinates transportation for Veterans needing transportation. Volunteering, for Patty, is a family affair as her husband Stephen is also a volunteer driver.

Asked why she volunteers, Patty responds "Out of respect and gratitude toward my husband, a Vietnam era Army medic, and my father who was in the Navy during World War II." She has the utmost respect for those who will put their own lives on the line for others and for other's freedom. One of the things she enjoys most is "getting all of the ducks in a row" so Veterans can receive the care they need.

Her fondest memory of volunteering is when she was able to successfully transport a Veteran in crisis. She received a phone call in the middle of night asking if she knew of any way to get a Veteran to the Emergency Department at the Lebanon facility. She and her husband ended up transporting the Veteran so he could receive the care he needed.



Patricia Moyer coordinates transportation for Veterans for their medical appointments at Lebanon VAMC.



Patty has been volunteering and serving Veterans for over six years at Lebanon VAMC.

VOLUNTEER *Spotlight*

PAUL CRESS

"Because I enjoy helping people, especially Veterans" is the response Paul gives when asked why he volunteers.

Paul has been volunteering for the Lebanon VA Medical Center for 15 years and has logged almost 20,000 hours. Paul will be one of a handful of volunteers to ever reach this milestone in Lebanon. He serves as one of two transportation coordinators for the volunteer transportation network.

Prior to volunteering, Paul served two years active duty and four years reserve for the United States Navy. After his military career, Paul worked as a nursing aid at Lebanon VA Medical Center for 36 years. Combined, Paul has served Veterans at our facility for over 51 years.



Paul Cress will soon reach his goal of 20,000 volunteer hours served at Lebanon VAMC.

Residential Recovery Center

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allowing Veterans to help guide their treatment. With three or four groups held each hour, Veterans have many options.

All Veterans, regardless of reason for admission, engage in the Core curriculum: Orientation, Mindfulness, Wellness Recovery Action Plan, Leisure Education, Vocational Rehabilitation prep, Journaling, Yoga (unless medically restricted), Communication skills, Coping skills, Relapse Prevention and Transitions/Discharge planning.

In addition to the Core groups, Veterans seeking substance use treatment also have the following: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Stop the Chaos, SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) recovery, Motivational Enhancement Therapy, Relapse Prevention, Co-occurring disorders and Process group.

To address mental health disorders, along with the Core groups, Veterans engage in the following: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for depression/anxiety/psychosis (separate groups), Motivational Enhancement Therapy, Seeking Safety, Co-occurring disorders, Relapse Prevention, and Process group.

Examples of elective groups include Coping through Exercise, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) / Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Conflict Resolution, Creative Expression, Moral Injury (related to combat), Spirituality and Addiction, and Journaling.

The RRC is a voluntary program, so Veterans who wish to be admitted must be willing to commit to their recovery process. Many of our Veterans have had difficulty in outpatient care and have been unable to remain in Recovery, so they are in need of this intensive level of care. Veterans must be able to care for themselves in terms of bathing, dressing, eating, and other typical daily activities and be medically stable to engage in the intense programming.

There are several ways for Veterans to be referred to the RRC. Their VA providers may place a consult through CPRS. Veterans and community services providers may also call the Admissions Coordinator directly at 717-262-7721 or 1-800-409-8771, ext. 4543.



Building 35 serves as the hub of RRC operations and houses the Courage Café, group rooms and clinical staff offices.



Building 34 is the larger of the two domiciliary buildings in the RRC complex. It accommodates 26 Veterans with both single and double occupancy rooms and features a day room with TV/DVD and a small kitchenette.

COMMON QUESTIONS & VA HEALTHCARE ELIGIBILITY INFO

lebanon.va.gov

SOCIAL
MEDIA



/VALebanon



@VALebanon

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!

Combat/Separating Vets

If you are a recently discharged Veteran with service in a theater of combat operations (OIR/ORS –Operation Inherent Resolve/Operation Resolute Support), 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.

If you are nearing separation / retirement from military service and will be returning to the area served by Lebanon VAMC, when you are discharged it is important to contact the Transition and Care Management Team to discuss your VA health care options.

Returning combat or separating/retiring Veterans, please call the Transition and Care Management Team at 717-272-6621 x 4565 to discuss your VA options.

Am I Eligible for Care?

ALL VETERANS ARE ELIGIBLE to apply for VA health care. Your DD214 and previous annual income is reviewed to determine your eligibility status. You will be assigned a priority group based on your specific eligibility status, income, and service information you provided on the 10-10EZ form. 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 service connected disability condition. Veterans enrolled in VA health care meet the minimum required standards of the Affordable Care Act.

Veterans are encouraged to meet with enrollment specialists located in the lobby of Building 17 at Lebanon VAMC Monday-Friday from 0730-1600 regarding enrollment and eligibility. Enrollment specialists can also be reached via phone at 717-272-6621 x 6000.

Transportation

For Veterans unable to transport themselves to Lebanon VAMC appointments, there are a variety of transportation options available for Veterans. Many local transit authorities, some County Veterans Affairs offices and Lebanon VAMC's Volunteer Transportation Network may offer options. Information is available by logging on to www.lebanon.va.gov/trans.asp or contacting your local transit authority, County Veterans Affairs Office or the Volunteer Transportation Network at 717-272-6621 x 4596.

Enrollment & Eligibility Questions?

CALL 717-228-6000 TO SPEAK TO ONE OF OUR ENROLLMENT SPECIALISTS

*The Best Care Anywhere... The Best Employees Anywhere.
Quality care at 7 locations in South Central PA.*



Lebanon VA Medical Center

1700 South Lincoln Avenue
Lebanon, Pennsylvania 17042

717-272-6621 • 1-800-409-8771

www.lebanon.va.gov

COMMON LEBANON VAMC CONTACTS

717-272-6621 / 1-800-409-8771

Appointment Line	x 5105
Telephone Nursing Care	x 6041
Pharmacy Center	x 6009
Auto Med Refill / Acct & Appt Info Line	x 5991
Enrollment / Eligibility	x 6000
VETERANS CRISIS LINE	1-800-273-8255 Press 1