



HR HIGHLIGHTS

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VA in the News

Secretary Principi Acknowledges Presidential Rank Award Recipients

Each year, the President recognizes a small group of career Senior Executives with the President's Rank Award for exceptional long-term accomplishments. There are two categories of rank awards: Distinguished and Meritorious. Award winners are chosen through a rigorous selection process. They are nominated by their agency heads, evaluated by boards of private citizens, and approved by the President. The evaluation criteria focuses on leadership and results.

On Thursday, May 22, 2003, Secretary Anthony J. Principi acknowledged VA's 2002 Presidential Rank Award recipients at a ceremony held at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. VA had a total of 15 recipients; 3 Distinguished and 12 Meritorious.

The Presidential Rank Awards were established to recognize and reward career Senior Executive Service members who have demonstrated exceptional performance over an extended period of time. Executives with careers of sustained accomplishment, i.e., executives who have consistently demonstrated strength, leadership, integrity, industry, and personal conduct of a level that has established and maintained a high degree of public confidence and trust over a period of at least 3 consecutive years, may be considered.

The criteria for this award continues to place an emphasis on demonstrating leadership to produce results. These criteria emphasize characteristics that will be important in executives who lead our Government in the 21st century: executives who lead a Government that delivers great service; fosters partnerships and community solutions to achieve results; and continuously pushes to get the job done more effectively and efficiently.

VA's Distinguished Executives for 2002 are Alfonso Batres, Ph.D., Director, Readjustment Counseling Service, Veterans Health Administration (VHA); D. Mark Catlett, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management, Office of Management; and Patricia A. McKlem, Network Director, VISN 18, VHA. The Meritorious Executives for 2002 are James B. Donahoe, Director, Veterans Canteen Service, VHA; John J. Donnellan, Jr., Director, VA New York Harbor Health Care System, VHA; George H. Gray, Director, VAMC Little Rock, AK, VHA; Thomas R. Jensen, Area Director, South, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA); Kenneth H. Mizrach, Director, VA New Jersey Health Care System, VHA; Michael E. Moreland, Director, VA Pittsburgh Health Care System, VHA; Jimmy A. Norris, Chief Financial Officer, VHA; YC Parris, Director, VAMC Birmingham, AL, VHA; George T. Patterson, Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer, National Acquisition Center, Office of Management; Thomas R. Wagner, Director, VARO Houston, TX, VBA; James M. Williams, Jr., Former Director, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service, VBA; and Timothy B. Williams, Chief Executive Officer, VA Puget Sound Health Care System, VHA.



J.Davis/OHRM

Pictured Rear LtoR: J. Williams, Jr., J. Norris, G. Gray, G. Patterson, YC Parris, J. Donahoe, K. Mizrach, J. Donnellan, M. Moreland, T. Williams
Front LtoR: T. Jensen, M. Catlett, L. Mackay, P. McKlem, A. Principi, A. Batres and T. Wagner

Inside this issue:

<i>VA in the News</i>	1-2
<i>National HR News</i>	3
<i>Tech Tips</i>	3
<i>OHRM Highlights</i>	4-5
<i>Training News</i>	6
<i>Outside the Box</i>	7
<i>Monthly Conference Call</i>	7
<i>The Fun Corner</i>	8

Celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Almost two decades ago, President Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution declaring the first Asian Pacific American Heritage Week as May 4-10, 1979. Then in 1990, President George Bush signed an extension making the week-long celebration into a month-long. Public Law 102-450, approved October 23, 1992, designated May of each year as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

This year's theme was "A Salute to Liberty," and VA began the salute right on the first day of May with an opening ceremony in celebration of the month.

Samuel T. Mok, a retired U.S. Army officer and current Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Labor, was the invited keynote speaker for VA's opening ceremony. Mr. Mok gave an inspiring address, which included words of encouragement for everyone. The ceremony was complete with beautiful audio/visual exhibits and several tasty ethnic treats.



Pictured L to R: Armando Rodriguez, DAS for DM&EEO, Richard Hong, Chairperson APAH, Samuel T. Monk, CFO Dept. of Labor, and David Spivey, Asst. Dir., Compensation & Pension Svc., VBA

Richard Hong, a Veterans Benefits Administration employee, was

this year's Asian Pacific American Heritage

Month's Chairperson. VA held several cultural events throughout

May that appreciated and celebrated Asian Pacific American

Heritage Month. Events included cultural music, dance, food,

keynote speakers, arts and crafts, and much more.

For more information about Asian Pacific American Heritage

month, log on to www.apaha.org or contact Richard Hong,

Chairperson, at (202) 273-9667, or Joe Beltrano, Vice Chairperson,

at (202) 565-8274.



One of the cultural audio/visual exhibits displayed at the opening ceremony.

Nicholson Sworn In As New Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi administered the oath of office on April 16, 2003, to John W. "Jack" Nicholson as Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"Jack Nicholson is a veteran with an outstanding record of service and success," said Principi. "The important work of honoring veterans in death and continuing America's commitment to maintaining our national cemeteries as sacred shrines is in good hands."

Nicholson, a 30-year Army veteran, is a 1956 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY. He was a Federal Executive Fellow at the Brookings Institution and has served on the board of directors of several associations.

As Under Secretary, Nicholson will direct the operation and maintenance of 120 VA national cemeteries and other memorial-related programs for veterans and eligible family members. VA also provides headstones and markers for eligible veterans, administers a Federal grants program to help states establish veterans cemeteries, and issues Presidential Memorial Certificates to the families of honorably discharged deceased veterans.

Krump Sworn in as VA Chairman of the Board of Contract Appeals

The Honorable Tim S. McClain, General Counsel, administered the oath of office on April 30, 2003, to Gary J. Krump as the Chairman, Board of Contract Appeals.

"Mr. Krump brings years of valuable management and leadership experience to this new position," said Secretary Principi. "Ultimately, all veterans benefit when our contracting process works fairly."

In his new position, Krump will head a board composed of five other administrative judges. He will be responsible for ensuring fair and timely disposition of contract disputes in which VA is involved. Krump had been serving as VA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Materiel Management since September 1992.

Krump began his Federal career as an attorney for the Army, serving in the Far East and at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. At one time, he was also the Director, Office of Real Property Management for VA. Krump received a bachelor's degree from North Dakota State University, a law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School, and an MBA from Southern Illinois University.

National HR News

Are You Prepared For Retirement?

Statistics show that a large percentage of VA's current workforce will be eligible for retirement in the next 5 years. With all the talk about succession planning and retirements, will you be ready when the that time comes? Even if you are not eligible to retire in the near future, will you be ready when your time is near?

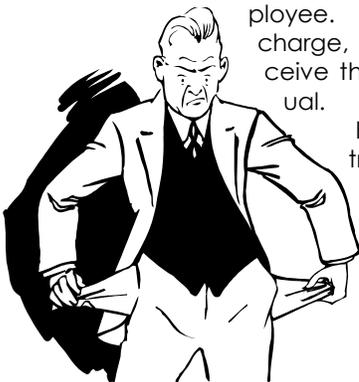
Ask yourself a few questions: Do I know all I should about my retirement system? What about social security benefits? Do I have them? Will they be available to me once I retire? Try to picture yourself in retirement. Will you actually be able to fulfill your retirement dreams? Will you find yourself retired, but still working, not because you want to, but because you have to?

If you would like to learn more about your retirement system, plan to attend an all-day VACO Retirement Planning Seminar in August 2003. The program is open to VA employees of any age or length of service. This program is especially helpful for employees who will be eligible for early or voluntary retirement anytime in the next 5 years. Married employees are encouraged to invite their spouses to attend and learn more about this topic.

The seminar for employees in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or CSRS Offset will be offered on Tuesday, August 5, 2003. The seminar for employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) will be offered on Wednesday, August 6, 2003. The seminars will be held in the Office of Personnel Management's Auditorium, located at 1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Each session will also include information regarding benefits under Social Security, Medicare, and the Thrift Savings Plan. The seminar registration cost is \$75 per employee. Spouses may attend free of charge, but will not be eligible to receive their own personal training manual.

For more information and registration procedures, you may contact Arlene Williams at 273-9731 or Mary Alan Beckley at 273-5933, Central Office Human Resources Service.



New Telework Handbook Issued

The Office of Personnel Management issued a new handbook on May 8, 2003. The handbook is designed to assist agencies with establishing telecommuting programs and increase the number of employees taking advantage of the programs. The handbook, "Telework: A Management Priority, A Guide for Managers, Supervisors and Telework Coordinators," offers insight on setting up a telecommuting program, overcoming the challenges of telecommuting, and monitoring telecommuting employees' performance. The handbook addresses some frequently asked questions about the topic, and even provides examples of different types of telecommuting programs and training materials.

In the handbook's introduction, OPM Director Kay Coles James says that "Managers and supervisors play a key role in the success of telework, identifying eligible positions and employees, setting performance expectations and parameters for telework arrangements, and monitoring productivity. This publication provides guidance to managers and supervisors to assist them with those tasks."

The handbook can be accessed on the Internet by logging on to www.telework.gov.



TECH TIPS!

CD Burn Speed

- Solve the mystery of CD burn speeds forever. When you see a CD-R advertised as a 12x10x32, what do these numbers mean?

12x = write speed. The write speed is how long it takes to burn a blank CD for the first time.

10x = rewrite speed. This is the time it takes to rerecord over a CD.

32 = read speed. This is how fast your CD-R can read a CD (either audio or data).

A typical CD of 74 minutes (650MB) can take up to 20 minutes to burn, depending on the speed of your CD-R. A rating of 1x means it takes exactly one minute to write one minute of audio. For data, the rate would be 150 kb/second.

CD-Rs with the following ratings record (or write) a 74-minute CD in these approximate times:

12x: 6:20 minutes, 10x: 7:40 minutes, 8x: 9:25 minutes, 4x: 18:25 minutes, 2x: 37 minutes, 1x: 74 minutes

A high-speed CD-R requires a high-speed blank CD. You can use a high-speed blank CD in a lower-speed CD-R, but it won't make a difference, nor will you increase the time it takes to write the CD.

OHRM Highlights

OHRM - *Featuring Our Own*



The "cover boy" on the Spring 1989 edition of VIETNAM magazine is OHRM's very own Terry Young. Now approaching his 33rd year of Federal service, he has been with VA for 31 years. After starting his career with the old Civil Service Commission, Mr. Young transferred to VA and has been with the Department ever since. After spending time at the Bath Center and the Coatesville Medical Center, Terry came to Washington's VA Central Office in 1979.

He has worked in staffing, particularly recruitment, and later became the principal researcher for the Health Occupational Report before leaving to join OHRM's HR Planning & Organizational Effectiveness group. From the work he did with the HR Planning & Technology Team, including OHRM's first Web site, he then joined the HR LINK\$ Project.

He now works primarily on the OHRM Web site and is also recognized as being the moderator of the monthly HR conference call.

As for the magazine cover, Terry said his reward for volunteering for the draft was "to be assigned to the 1st of the 9th Recon Squadron of the 1st Air Cavalry, the unit that was depicted in the movie Apocalypse Now."

Mr. Young said the portrait was taken by an Army photographer during a combat patrol, and many years later was selected from about 49 other photos by the magazine's editors to be the cover for that particular issue.

He is also mentioned in Chapter 13 of "Hunter-Killer Squadron," a book published in 1990 about that same unit. Mr. Young served as a radio operator, a grunt, a chopper gunner and finally a brigade liaison before finishing his military tour.



Feel free to contact [HR Highlights](#) via e-mail anytime to submit news, articles, or other information that may be suitable for inclusion in this publication. We also invite your questions and comments.

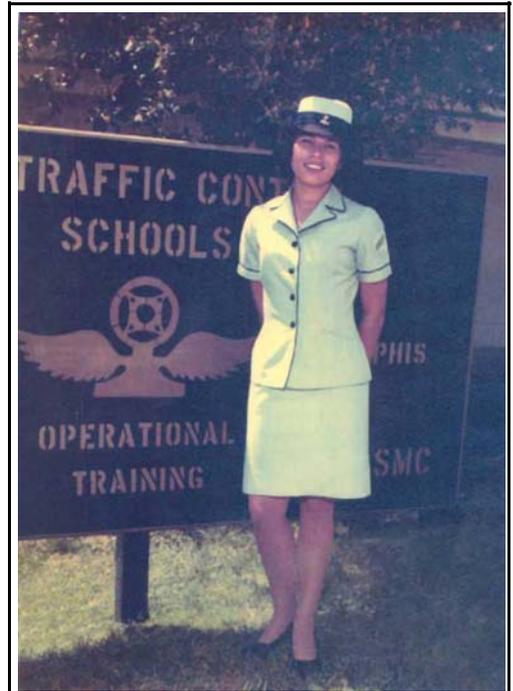
Highlights@mail.va.gov

DAS for HRM Featured In Video

VA recently produced a new television series entitled "The Face Behind The File." Produced with powerful historical film and photos, this documentary program dramatically profiles U.S. military veterans who served our country. The first episode detailed the experiences of Special Forces soldiers who fought during the Vietnam War. The second episode recounted the heroics of the famed Tuskegee Airmen and the third introduced veterans who work in VA. Among those featured in the third episode was Ventris Gibson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management, along with Mary Stout, VHA's Chief, Forms, Publications and Records Management, and Jim Mayer, Executive Director, Leadership VA.

Ms. Gibson, a disabled veteran, discussed having always been loyal and patriotic and wanting to join the U.S. Navy. She stated that one main incentive for joining the military was to receive the benefits of the G.I. Bill. In the video, she discussed having to deal with discriminatory issues as a minority female in the military, being only the 3rd female to be assigned to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and having overcome those obstacles to graduate Air Traffic Control School in the top 10 percent of her class. She stated that although she enjoyed her tour with the Navy, she was forced to leave due to service-related health issues.

After departing the military and returning home, she was offered a job in VA's personnel office. She accepted the position and has been with the Department ever since. She has held positions at several VA facilities around the country, only to return to VA Central Office. She served as the first DAS for Resolution Management, and now serves as the DAS for Human Resources Management, which makes her currently the highest ranking woman veteran in VA.



Ventris C. Gibson as an Air Traffic Control School student while in the U.S. Navy.

Native American Employment Initiative Presented

Ivone Ladomirak and Max Collier of OHRM's Marketing and Recruitment Staff visited Anadarko, Oklahoma, on May 15 – 16, 2003, to promote the Native American Employment Program Initiative (NAEPI) to Native American tribal leaders. NAEPI was established in 2002 to promote the employment of Native Americans. Through formal partnerships, tribal governmental officials enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VA. The program will foster a mutually supportive relationship and will allow VA to promote Federal career opportunities, assist tribal members with applying for VA jobs, provide Native American veterans and other tribal members with information that will facilitate access to job opportunities in VA and other government agencies, and strengthen VA's support to the tribal government's employment goals and objectives. The program also assists tribal educational counselors in identifying future occupational areas and encouraging Native American Indian students to pursue careers in science, health and allied health, medical research and development, and other career fields critical to VA. The goal of NAEPI is simply stated -- increase employment opportunities and outreach to Native American Indians, and increase Native American Indian representation in the VA workforce.



Pictured L to R: DeLorna Strong, Dir., Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Vocational Rehab. Prog., Ray Martin, Veterans Service Rep. Supv., Beverly Mattice, Apache Business Committee, Ivone Ladomirak, OHRM, Alonzo Chalepah, Chairman, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Max Collier, OHRM, and Jackie Tointigh, Apache Tribe Business Committee Member.

The Office of Marketing and Recruitment is responsible for implementing strategies for the successful execution of the initiative. Ms. Ladomirak and Mr. Collier met with Alonzo Chalepah, Chairman of the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, his staff and others to discuss the partnership. While in Oklahoma, Ms. Ladomirak and Mr. Collier also drove hundreds of miles to Muskogee, Oklahoma, to meet with the northern tribal leaders to discuss the initiative. Tribal leaders are currently reviewing the MOU and an official signing ceremony is expected to take place sometime this summer.

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Training News

Leadership Training For Managers



Join the Dale Carnegie Training's Leadership Training for Managers. Faye Fisher, one of Dale Carnegie's top Master Trainers from Canada, and Chris McCloskey will be working with you in this exciting program.

The program is designed for those who are looking for ways to improve their ability to lead, manage and motivate.

LEARN MORE ABOUT LEADING PEOPLE THROUGH:

- Developing Personal Leadership
- Communicating to Lead
- Recognizing Human Potential
- Building Cooperation
- Making Decisions
- Managing Conflict and Change

UNDERSTAND MANAGEMENT PROCESSES INCLUDING:

- Coaching Process and Appraisal Systems
- Delegation Process
- Performance Process
- Planning Process
- Innovation Process
- Developing Organizational Leadership

IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS IN THE DRIVERS COMMON TO BOTH LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:

- Self-direction
- People skills
- Process skills
- Communication
- Accountability

June 17-19, 2003
Crystal City Marriott
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
GSA Schedule Pricing - \$1,1449.49

Make-up sessions available for any sessions missed

If you have additional questions regarding this program, please contact Cynthia D. Leach, Employee Development Specialist for Human Resources Development Services (053), at (202) 273-9761 or via e-mail cynthia.leach@mail.va.gov.

SES Candidate Development Program Leads to Positions for Two

Two of this year's SESCDP candidates were SES-certified by OPM and subsequently selected to SES positions. The fourteen candidates who remain in the program are working their developmental plans to complete program requirements.

The next phase of the program includes a Human Resources Week in September, which will provide candidates with an in-depth knowledge of human resources and associated fields. Commencement services will be held in January 2004.

A 21st Century-style Awards Ceremony

The Title 38 Personnel Management Development Series Web Courses Award Ceremony was held Wednesday, May 7, 2003. It recognized project members for their personal commitment and significant contribution to the "Title 38 Personnel Management Development Series" Web courses. The ceremony was as state-of-the-art as the courses themselves, being held via V-Tel videoconferencing. Marianne Gray, Project Manager for the series, hosted the awards ceremony from VA Central Office to four locations across the United States. Participating facilities included the Salt Lake City, West Los Angeles, Memphis, and Minneapolis Employee Educational Systems (EES).



"You could see the appreciation that the team members felt, not just being recognized but being able to share it with their team members. It was a wonderful ceremony" said Marlee Garrick, Human Resources Assistant, OHRM Human Resources Development Service.

Award recipients:

- Alan Beale, OHRM, VACO
- Larry Ables, OHRM, VACO
- Richard Watkins, OHRM, VACO
- Marianne Gray, OHRM, VACO
- Phyllis Isiminger, VAMC, Memphis
- Debra Walthall, VAMC, Denver
- John Haltigan, LMR VACO
- Robert Swanson, VACO
- Ray Spry, Salt Lake City EES
- Anne Stechmann, Minneapolis EES
- Jeffrey Kleiner, VAMC, Biloxi
- Martin (Dan) Flynn, VAMC, West Los Angeles



Outside the Box



You "May" Not Have Known

Here are a few historical events you may not have known occurred during the month of May.

1. The English Colony at Jamestown, Virginia, was settled May 13, 1607.
2. The first inaugural ball was held in New York to honor President and Mrs. George Washington May 7, 1789.
3. Washington, DC was incorporated as a city May 3, 1802.
4. Issuance of the nickel coin was authorized by Congress May 16, 1866.
5. The Brooklyn Bridge, linking Brooklyn and Manhattan, opened to traffic May 24, 1883.
6. The 17th amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified May 9, 1913.
7. Babe Ruth hit his first homerun as a Boston Red Sox May 6, 1915.
8. President John F. Kennedy was born May 29, 1917.
9. The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated May 30, 1922.
10. The Empire State Building opened May 1, 1931.
11. The Golden Gate Bridge opened to the public May 27, 1937.
12. Germany surrendered to the United States May 7, 1945.
13. The Senate opened its hearings into the Watergate scandal May 17, 1973.
14. First Lady Jacqueline Onasis Kennedy dies May 19, 1994.



CORRECTION!



The **HR Highlights** extends a sincere apology for an error made in the April 2003 edition of **HR Highlights**.

In the "Tech Tips" section of the newsletter, we erroneously printed two Windows shortcuts. The corrections are printed below:

Control+V = Paste (not Copy)
Control+C = Copy (not Cntrl+B)

To all of our readers, please accept our apology for the error.

HR Monthly Conference Call

Please join us the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 3:00PM (EST), when we discuss various interesting HR topics.



The next set of conference calls are scheduled for June 11, July 9, and August 13.

To call in, dial 1-800-767-1750
For more information contact
Mr. Terry Young at
(202) 273-9821.



Class of
2003

Congratulations
to all the
graduates of
2003
from **OHRM.**

HR HIGHLIGHTS

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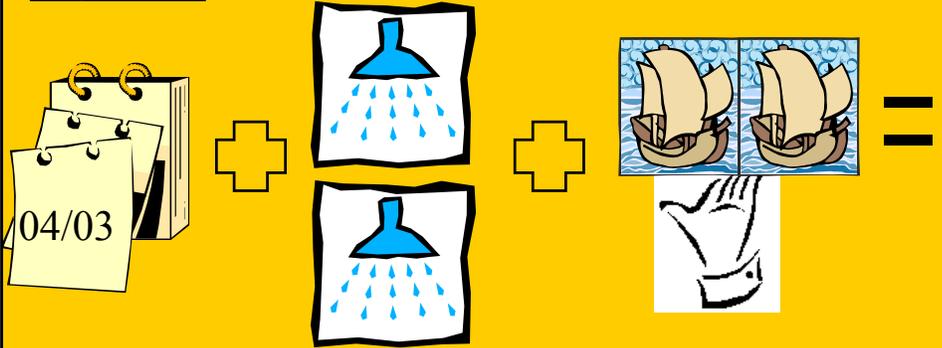
E-mail: Highlights@mail.va.gov

<http://vawww.va.gov/ohrm/>



Riddle Me This Spring Riddle!

See if you can solve this Spring-related riddle.



Write your answer here.

Look for the answer in next month's issue of HR Highlights.

Comings and Goings



Welcome to Katika Floyd, Lauren Kuiper, Matilda Bruno-Gaston. **Welcome back** to Cornelius McFadden and Sharia Barksdale who rejoins us as summer employees.

Our **Best Wishes** go out to **Jan Stanley** and **Arnold Gerber**.

Quote of the Month



“OBSTACLES DON’T HAVE TO STOP YOU. IF YOU RUN INTO A WALL, DON’T TURN AROUND AND GIVE UP. FIGURE OUT HOW TO CLIMB IT, GO THROUGH IT, OR WORK AROUND IT.”

-MICHAEL JORDAN

Submitted by Lorena Ruley

Submit a “quote” for future issues at Highlights@mail.va.gov

Below are the answers to last month's The Fun Corner, "The Think Spring" crossword puzzle:

1. White
2. Leaf
3. Daylight
4. Pastel
5. Fertilizer
6. Eggs
7. Tulips
8. Seed
9. Easter