

SPIRIT ONLINE

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VA Connecticut Healthcare System

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VETERANS PORTRAIT GALLERY UNVEILING

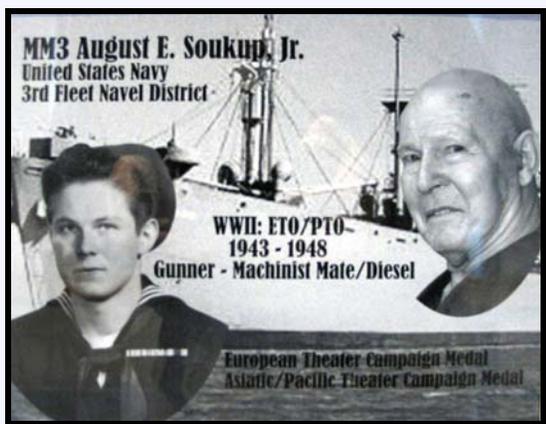
Volunteers led by Recreation Therapist **Mary Lou Lauricella** unveiled the latest veteran “then and now” portraits now on display on the connecting corridor on the second floor between Buildings 1 and 2 at the West Haven campus. “The portraits are useful images that remind employees of the tremendous lives and contributions the veterans they serve have made for us,” Mary Lou said. “They remind the medical students that the veterans they are treating are so much more than their diagnosis.”

The portraits are showcased in custom-built display cases allowing for more permanent, secure viewing. Previously housed on T3 West, the new location on a main corridor provides greater visibility for this project that honors our veteran patients and staff members.

Mary Lou initiated the Veterans Portraits several years ago in calendar format. The calendar originally featured only T3 West patients but now includes other veteran patients as well as VA Connecticut employees. As its popularity grew, the need arose to display the photos in a more permanent location and format.

The work behind this project is done predominately by volunteers. These volunteers do everything from taking the photos to creating the special effects necessary to display them in the gallery. Special thanks to the following volunteers: **David Howery, Stephen Carter, Al Bowers, Dan Cowden, Gene Demer, Hoccan Andre** and **Dennis Kwessell**.

Deborah Bocompani, Interior Designer and **Facilities Management Service Carpentry section** designed and built the display cases. Portraits will be unveiled twice a year, generally around Memorial Day and Veterans Day.



A “then and now” portrait of August Soukup, Jr, is one of many portraits displayed in the connecting corridor on the second floor between Buildings 1 and 2.

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Events

EDUCATION PROGRAM NOTICE

“Prevention & Management of Disruptive Behavior”

Hospital Education Classroom

West Haven Campus

July 14 & 21

August 11

September 8 & 15

BLOOD DRIVE



Blood supplies in Connecticut are low. Donate blood today! To make an appointment, call Helen Rogers at ext. 2385.

For more information on these and other events please see *Good Morning VA Connecticut*.

Researcher finds eyewitness memory poor in highly intense situations

The ability to recognize persons encountered during highly threatening and stressful events is poor in the majority of individuals according to research by **Charles Morgan III, M.D.**, Psychiatry Service and Yale University School of Medicine associate professor.

“Contrary to the popular conception that most people would never forget the face of a clearly seen individual who had physically confronted them and threatened them for more than 30 minutes, a large number of subjects in this study were unable to correctly identify their perpetrator,” Dr. Morgan said.

The study included 509 active duty military personnel enrolled in survival school training. The types of stress were modeled after experiences of military personnel who had been prisoners of war – food and sleep deprivation for 48 hours followed by interrogation.

There were two instructors in the room, a “guard” and an “interrogator.” The high stress interrogation included physical confrontation. During low stress interrogation, the interrogator tried to trick the subject into giving away information.

Twenty-four hours after being released from the mock POW camp, the military personnel were asked to identify the interrogator and guard in a live line up, a photo spread, and a sequential photo presentation. Regardless of the presentation, recognition was better during the low stress rather than the high stress condition. In some cases, those interrogated confused even the gender of the guard and/or interrogator.

“The present data have a number of implications for law enforcement personnel, mental health professionals, physicians, attorneys and judges,” Dr. Morgan said. “All professionals would do well to remember that a large number of healthy individuals may not be able to correctly identify suspects associated with highly stressful, compared to moderately stressful, events.” A segment on this study aired on the June 24 NPR show “All Things Considered.”

Co-authors included Major Gary Hazlett, Fort Bragg, N.C.; Lt. Commanders Anthony Doran, Brunswick, Maine; Gary Hoyt of Coronado, Calif.; **Steven Southwick, M.D.**, senior author and VA Connecticut Director of the PTSD Center; and Stephen Garrett, Paul Thomas and Madelon Baranoski of Yale.
(Yale News Release – June 3, 2004)

DAV DONATES VAN



Photo by Officer Ken Muller

The DAV presented a van to VA Connecticut on June 23 at the Newington campus. Pictured left to right are Carmine Onofrio, DAV State Dept. Commander; Karen Waghorn, VA Connecticut Associate Director; Steve Stupak, Past Dept. Commander DAV; Tom Cannavaro and Steve Stefan, Union City Chapter DAV, Naugatuck Valley.

VA Connecticut Medical Staff Members Named “Best Doctors”

Twenty-four members of the medical staff were named in New York Magazines 2004 listing of “Best Doctors.” Compiled by Castle Connolly, the physicians whose profiles are included in the listing were selected after peer nomination, extensive research and careful review and screening by the Castle Connolly physician-directed research team.

Castle Connolly Medical Ltd. is a research and information company founded in 1992 to help consumers find top doctors and top hospitals.

Castle Connolly's established survey and research process involves tens of thousands of top doctors and the medical leadership of leading hospitals.

Congratulations to the following medical members on their recent selection as one of the “Best Doctors” in New Haven County:

Peter Samuel Aronson, M.D. - Nephrology; **Lawrence M. Brass, M.D.** – Neurology
Irwin Braverman, M.D. – Dermatology; **Mark R. Cullen, M.D.** – Occupational Medicine
Vincent T. De Vita Jr., M.D. – Medical Oncology; **Stanley Dudrick, M.D.** – Surgery
Richard Edelson, M.D. – Dermatology; **John Elefteriades, M.D.** – Thoracic Surgery
Richard Ian Enelow, M.D. – Pulmonary Disease;
Gary E. Friedlaender, M.D. – Orthopaedic Surgery
Bruce Haffty, M.D. – Radiation Oncology; **Gary S. Kopf, M.D.** – Thoracic Surgery
Thomas Kosten, M.D. – Addiction Psychiatry; **Richard Mattay, M.D.** – Pulmonary Disease
Joseph Piepmeier, M.D. – Neurological Surgery; **Vincent Quagliarello, M.D.** – Infectious Disease
Carrie Redlich, M.D. – Pulmonary Disease; **Carolyn Rochester, M.D.** – Pulmonary Disease
Ronald R. Salem, M.D. – Surgery; **Robert T. Schoen, M.D.** – Rheumatology
Robert Sherwin, M.D. – Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism;
Dennis D. Spencer, M.D. – Neurological Surgery
Robert M. Weiss, M.D. – Urology; **Barry L. Zaret, M.D.** – Cardiovascular Disease



Information Security Officer **William McCasland** was recognized at this years National VA Information Security Conference in Atlanta, Ga., for his contribution to excellence in Cyber Security. Bill was nominated by his peer information security officers in VISN 1 for his contribution in training and preparing them for the Certified Information System Security Professional (CISSP) Exam in July.

William McCasland (right) receives an award from Bruce Brody, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Computer Security.



in the **NEWS...**



Study raises new issues about safety of marijuana

John Krystal, M.D., a collaborator on a research project led by **Cyril D'Souza, M.D.** and published in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* that raises new concerns about the safety of marijuana was interviewed June 16 by WTNH News Channel 8 regarding the study results. This study administered a component of marijuana, delta-9-THC to healthy subjects and found that it produced transient psychotic symptoms in these individuals. These data may support the importance of survey data from several studies that suggests that smoking marijuana during adolescence is associated with the development of schizophrenia, presumably in vulnerable individuals. It highlights the potential importance of programs aimed at preventing marijuana abuse in adolescence and possible new treatment strategies for facets of schizophrenia. There appears to be a great deal of interest in these research findings.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Department of Veterans Affairs via the Schizophrenia Biological Research Center supported this research. **Judith Ford, Ph.D.**, leads the Schizophrenia Biological Research Center, based in the Psychiatry Service at VA Connecticut. This Center is one of three research centers funded nationally by the Department of Veterans Affairs to study the biological basis and novel treatments related to schizophrenia.

Three VA staff members awarded VA Public Health Grants

The Public Health Strategic Health Care Group (PHSHG) announced 41 awards of \$1,000 each through its 2004 Public Health Grants Program. The goal of the program is to encourage the development of education and prevention materials and programs for VA patients or VA health care providers related to public health concerns.

Recipients included:

Richard Martinello, M.D. – Chief, Infection Control
Improving Health Care Worker Hand Hygiene Performance

Anthony Piland, Physician Assistant – Medical Service
Rapid HIV Testing, Education and Prevention Initiative

Christopher Ruser, M.D. – Primary Care
Tipping the Scales Toward Health

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