

THE WAHLEN

Fall-Winter 2018

Life Aboard the USS Salt Lake City

The Salt Lake City saw more action, fired more ammunition, than any other ship in the United States Navy

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Setting Sail with TRAILS

The TRAILS program is more than about the sport, it is really about the whole experience

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2018 Spirit of George E. Wahlen Awards

VA Salt Lake City Health Care System awarded two employees the Spirit of George E. Wahlen

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From the Director

At VA Salt Lake City Health Care System, we strive to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet and even exceed patient expectations when it comes to health care. Customer service is a priority for VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, and is a prime directive for VA Salt Lake City Health Care System. VA is outperforming the private sector in terms of quality of care and patient safety, and we are recommitting ourselves to the patient experience.

One of our strategic initiatives is to develop and design a delivery model for standardized customer service training so that staff are trained and equipped to achieve this objective. The customer service training program is called Own the Moment and is in line with the national efforts to improve Veterans' health care experience. We have taught classes twice a week, including teaching a class as part of New Employee Orientation, since April of this year. Our efforts will continue until all staff have received Own the Moment training, and we are meeting and exceeding Veteran expectations when it comes to health care.

With deepest respect and gratitude,

Shella Stovall

Shella Stovall, Director
VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

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The Wahlen is a quarterly magazine publication designed for VA Salt Lake City Health Care System staff, Veterans, their families, volunteers. Its purpose is to inform, educate, entertain, and generate new ideas. Its written and produced by the staff of VASLCHCS Office of Communications. If you have a story idea for our next edition, contact Jennifer Dikes at Jennifer.dikes@va.gov or Jeremy Laird at jeremy.laird@va.gov

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Clayton "James" Kearl (right) walks with friend Joe Larsen at Pearl Harbor. (Photo courtesy of Kearl Family)

Life Aboard the USS Salt Lake City

By Jeremy Laird, Public Affairs Specialist

Guadalcanal. Marshall Islands. Philippines Liberation. Iwo Jima. Okinawa V-J Day. All extraordinary dates in WWII history that most learn about in high school history class. But WWII Veteran Clayton "James" Kearl, not only witnessed history, he help make it.

A life-long Utahan, Kearl, was assigned to the U.S.S. Salt Lake City, a Pensacola-class cruiser ship that played was awarded 11 service stars for its duty in the Pacific.

"The Salt Lake City saw more action, fired more ammunition, than other ship in ship in the United States Navy," said Kearl, proudly nearly 74-years after he last set foot on the Salt Lake City. That's no exaggeration, the Salt Lake City partook in every single major naval battle of the War

in Pacific, and Kearl was there for all but two. Kearl, 21, enlisted in the Navy in August of 1942—despite knowing it broke the heart of his then girlfriend, and future wife, Betty. The Navy sent him to Pearl Harbor for fire control school and soon after graduation, he was assigned to the U.S.S. Salt Lake City, his "home" for the next three years. Onboard, he discovered his new job would entail a revolutionary new technology that would change the course of warfare – radar.

"Radar then was probably one of the most secret weapons that the United States had," Kearl said. "They had developed during the process a thing called IFF, which is identification friend or foe. And if it was the enemy, we picked them up and nothing would happen we would just

have the signal. But if it were U.S., they would send us a signal back and we'd pick up that signal. Knowing that it was friendly."

Battle of Komandorski Islands

Just weeks after joining the crew of the Salt Lake City, the ship headed for the Aleutian Islands—specifically the islands of Attu and Kiska. Japanese forces set up two garrisons on the islands, and the Salt Lake, a light cruiser and four destroyers were ordered to stop the Japanese navy from reinforcing the garrisons.

On March 26, 1943, the Salt Lake City found what it was looking for. "We picked up the Japanese convoy," said Kearl, "...three heavy cruisers, six destroyers, and then two transports loaded with Japanese soldiers."

During the ensuing battle, known as the Battle of Komandorski Islands, the Salt Lake City lived up to her nickname "The One Ship Fleet" helping hold off the Japanese force twice the size of her own. Over course of the battle, she fired over 800 shells at the Japanese ships—in spite of being "dead in the water" for three hours, after rounds from a Japanese cruiser hit the Salt Lake six times.

"The captain came on the loudspeaker and said 'I hate to say this, but it is necessary that I command you to prepare to abandon ship,'" recalled Kearl. "So, we were just waiting there for the Japanese to come and take over and all of a sudden, I was sitting at the radar table and I saw our dot was moving, and we were under way."

Although she suffered grave damage—the Salt Lake and the rest of the US force rebuffed the Japanese and the islands were not reinforced. For her actions, the Salt Lake City was award the Navy Unit Commendation.

"We lost five good men in the engagement and they were buried in Alaska," said Kearl.

Invasion of Gilbert and Marshal Islands

In October 1943, the Salt Lake City moved from north Pacific to the south Pacific. While there, she participated in the invasion of the Gilbert Marshal Islands.

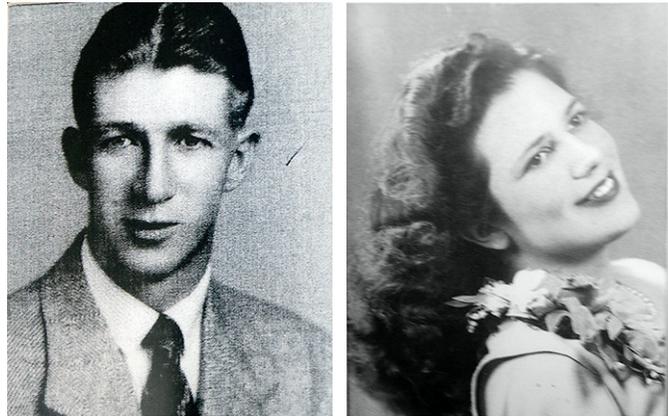
"We received information that the Gilbert Island was ready to take back," said James. "There was an old wreck, an old ship, and our captain asked the admiral if we couldn't go in and throw a few shells into it. The admiral told our captain, 'No, that is just a waste of time and ammunition.' ... So of course, we went back to bombarding the beach and our marines started to go in. And as they started to go, the sides of this old ship opened up and it was just full of guns—40 millimeters. We lost 500 Marines within the next two hours, because our intelligence had given us the wrong information. So immediately, without getting permission, we went in and laid about 12 8-inch shells into this old ship and of course destroyed everything, but the damage had been done."

At this point Kearl had been on the Salt Lake City for over year, participated in three major naval battles, and finally, he and the rest of the crew received a much-needed

break from the action in the Pacific. Kearl made the most of his shore leave in the states.

Leave & Marriage

"I came home and Betty and I were married on the 12th of May 1944," said Kearl. "My division officer called me and said that he had acquired a Quonset hut for me so I could bring my bride with me. She had the privilege of going aboard the USS Salt Lake City."



A young James Kearl and his wife Betty. The Kearls married during World War II. (Photos courtesy of Kearl Family)

The honeymoon was soon over for the Kearls. Jim would spend the next 18 months onboard the Salt Lake City and Betty would spend it at home in Salt Lake City.

Iwo Jima & Okinawa

The next year would be a busy one for the Salt Lake City as the crew participated in the bombardment of Wake Island, acted as a decoy to distract the Japanese away from the Philippines, conducted a raid on Formosa, participated in the second battle of the Philippines Sea and invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

The Salt Lake City started bombarding Iwo Jima and the surrounding islands in November 1944—two months before the first Marines set foot on the island. According to official Naval history of the Salt Lake City, during the bombardment of Iwo Jima the ship expended nearly 7,700 rounds.

It was during this time that Kearl witnessed one of the most iconic events of World War II.

"They ordered us to go around to the north side of island," said Kearl, "and give the Marines support because they were going to raise the flag on Iwo Jima... I was free of duty for a while so ... [I]walked up on the bay of the ship and I saw them raise the flag on Iwo Jima."

The Salt Lake City then moved. During the invasion of Okinawa, the Salt Lake City threw down more than 30-thousand rounds, downing two Japanese planes and repulsing several Kamikazes.

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The USS Salt Lake City laying off the Mare Islands 1944. The cruiser saw more action, fired more ammunition, than any other ship in the United States Navy during WWII. (Photo from National Archives)

Victory in the Pacific

After Okinawa, Kearl remembers the Salt Lake heading back to the Philippines to resupply and then in late July heading north.

“We were going to be in a convoy that was going to bombard Tokyo Bay.. we were put out in front because we had the longest range and could warn quicker about any enemy in the area than any other ship.”

Along the route the ship’s captain told the crew to tune the radio to a certain frequency.

“It was the Enola Gay,” said Kearl. He listened as the crew of the Enola Gay prepared the bomber for its historic drop.

“We heard him [the pilot] order the crew to their assigned positions... and then we heard him say all right prepare. He said ‘five, four, three, two, one. There she goes.’ The next thing we heard the pilot of the ship say, ‘Oh, my!’ He said the concussion from the bomb blew the Enola Gay fifty feet straight into the air.”

Just a week later, the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. “Of course, after the second atomic bomb was dropped, the [Japanese] Navy surrendered,” said Kearl. “And, on September the second, why of course, you all know, that the treaty was signed.”

The end of war didn’t end Kearl’s time on the Salt Lake City. Despite having enough points to be discharged, his captain told him he’d have to remain onboard until his replacement arrived because he was the only the man onboard who knew how to operate two machines.

“Well that period of time didn’t go very fast,” Kearl said laughing. Finally, he was released from duty and Kearl made it back to Salt Lake and his beautiful bride. They lived there the rest of their lives—raising a family of seven kids.

Kearl passed away in April 2018, at age 97 and just a few weeks short weeks short of his 74th wedding anniversary. A few months later his wife also passed away.



Setting Sail with TRAILS

■ By Jeremy Laird, Public Affairs Specialist

VA Salt Lake City Health Care System's Recreational Therapy program works to restore, improve, and maintain the whole lives of our Veterans, and community partners like the University of Utah Health's Technology Recreation Access Independence Lifestyle Sports (TRAILS) program help us accomplish this goal.

"The TRAILS program is more than about the sport," said Dr. Jeffrey Rosenbluth, spinal cord injury medical director. "It is really about the whole experience. Our whole goal is just to get people out and doing the things they want to do. The things they use to do that they haven't done."

On a recent outing to East Canyon, a group Veterans, who are part of the rec therapy program, sailed and paddled on adaptive equipment made just for them. "It is not just the physical act of recreating," said Heather Brown, VA Salt Lake City recreational therapist. "It is also the social piece of it."

While the social aspect is important, Brown also sees another goal. "I think a big part of my job is to increase independence and help Veterans get out of the VA."

U.S. Army Veteran, Feet Jensen, completely agrees with Brown, "We kind of do take these things and branch out and want to do them on our own. Finding out that we can do this and making it so we realize that things aren't out our grasp."

The TRAILS program works specifically with folks with spinal cord injury or disease and give people who are

completely paralyzed the chance to feel the wind of their face. The Tetra Sail allows them to sit at the helm of a sail boat and control the direction with a "sip and puff" system like those on wheelchairs.

"A lot of people who are in wheelchairs don't get the advantage of going really quickly," Brown said. "So, when you get out on the water, you get out a do something that has the ability to feel that sensation. It's kind of transformative."

For more information on the VA Salt Lake City's Recreational Program and the TRAILS program, give them a call at 801-582-1565, ext. 1559. You can also visit the [recreation therapy website](#), or the [TRAILS website](#).





Veterans work on sculptures as part of the Creative Wellness program at VA Salt Lake City Health Care System.

Creative Wellness: Using art therapy to cope with addiction at VA Salt Lake City HCS

■ By Jeremy Laird, Public Affairs Specialist

You can hear the laughing and joking of about a dozen Veterans as you walk down the hall of the Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (SARRTP) unit on the campus of the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center. Inside a small room lined with drawings and scratch art, two tables jut out from the wall closest to the door, another table runs down the wall by a window overlooking a small courtyard. The Veterans are

all seated at the tables busy creating animals from modeling clay—creating their spirit animals.

“We actually have a lot of natural artists that come into the program and they reconnect with the part of them that they kind of thought was lost,” reports Liz Shubin, SARRTP Nurse Manager and creator of the Creative Wellness art program.

Liz started the program after Veterans would often come looking for art supplies while in the recovery

program. Liz, whose first degree was in art, started pursuing supplies and space for a Veterans art program. The program launched 18 months ago. The program is research based and helps Veterans in several ways.

A chemical change happens in the brain when a person becomes addicted to a drug. The art wellness program looks to change that—if even ever so slightly.

“Reward signals in the brain get blunted,” said Liz. “Simple things like

sitting with a group of people and chatting and drawing don't bring any joy... We provide art therapy which is proven to help change the brain chemistry."

While that chemical change can take months, the program shows Veterans alternatives to isolation and substance abuse and helps develop some healthy new hobbies and habits.

Douglas, an Army Veteran who served in Afghanistan, was already seeing the benefits. "Our [other] classes and groups and stuff can be pretty emotional and difficult. Where this is, you know, we don't have to think about any of that... This is something that I haven't done in a really long time that brings back memories before addiction as well. So, it kind of helps me get out of that [addiction] mindset."

The art therapy also helps with other ailments afflicting Veterans fighting addiction.

"The rationale behind the program is art has been proven to reduce anxiety and stress. It can also help alleviate depression," Liz said.

Liz says the class promotes anxiety, because it is held in such a small space and forces the participants, who often isolate in their rooms, out of their

comfort zones.

"They get out of that headspace so they're not so filled with anxiety, and have a whole lot of things going through their brains," said Codie Archibald, Creative Wellness teacher and a registered nurse.

"We just kind of let them have an outlet—get away from that mindset of anxiety."

The Art Wellness program forces the participants to interact with other Veterans in the recovery program.

"They get kind of melancholy and isolative" said Codie. "We're able to just draw out something within them so they don't just go into a dark room and sit there and think about their substance of choice over and over again."

Through the program, the participants start to build an esprit de corps with their fellow Veterans.

"These my fellow Veterans," said Army Veteran Joshua pointing to the room where the other Veterans work on their projects. "You know we're like our own little family... We may joke around and give them crap but you know in the long run that they'll do whatever they can to help out."

While the class's effectiveness is based on peer reviewed studies

regarding the use of art in recovery programs, Liz and Codie have seen the changes first hand.

"[Veterans] always come out happy," said Liz. "I think it surprises them, and some of them do some really good work."

"The first time they go through it, they kind of have a lot of anxiety, don't really want to do it, don't think they're creative," said Codie. "And after they get a chance to experience it, they realize that they can be creative... I definitely see a reduction of anxiety and just kind of more confidence in themselves over time."

And Joshua couldn't agree more. Art allows him to get into his own little world, forget about his problems, and just focus on the project at hand. "It's been peaceful," he said. "I plan on doing it more because I find that it helps me calm my nerves."

Liz and Codie are looking to expand the class to other parts of the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center in the near future.

The program is always looking for supplies for the class. If you would like to donate, contact Voluntary Services at 801-584-1241.



A Veteran-created therapy mask. The words and images on the outside of the mask represent how the Veteran feels the world views him or her, while the inside of the mask signifies how the Veteran feels about him or herself.



Tab the thumbnail to enlarge it. (interactive only)

Creative Arts Festival

By Jeremy Laird, Public Affairs Specialist

“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same.” The quote from Catholic Monk Thomas Merton sums up the therapeutic and healing value of the creative arts, and two Utah Veterans from different eras and backgrounds in the arts agree with that sentiment.

“When I am in the creative process, either planning a piece of art or in the process of creating a piece of art, it gets me out of myself and I don’t think about my life,” said Army Veteran, Buddy Measles. “I just think about this piece of art that I want to do and the outcome that I want to achieve.”

Buddy, a Cold War Veteran, exhibited three pieces at the 23rd Annual Creative Arts Festival at the George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center. He took up painting just

a year ago, but he already sees its benefits.

“It takes the fear of people away from me,” explained Buddy, who suffers from PTSD connected with military sexual trauma. “Momentarily at least... because I am still thinking about that piece of art. It’s gotten me to the point that if it is something that is related to my art or art in general, I don’t have so much anxiety leaving my home.”

His art has also allowed him to confront his fears head-on. His visual art piece, Chambers of My Heart, allowed him to use his fears to inspire others dealing with a similar situation. “I did that to bring voice to sexual harassment and rape [victims]... That is for all the people who haven’t spoken up yet and haven’t gotten help yet.”

Creative Arts

The Best-of-Show winner, Vietnam Veteran Jack Johnston, served as an illustrator for the Army and was sent to Vietnam to document the War. He returned to the states and art became his profession.

“You know when we came back we didn’t admit that we had a problem,” said Jack, “and I didn’t admit that I had a problem for over 30 years.”

That problem—PTSD. Jack has been getting help for his PTSD through VASLC the past dozen or so years, and art helps. “It [Art] is very meticulous,” said Jack. “As a result, when you are doing it, time passes, the world passes. The good things are within and the bad things go away. The art brings you a calmness that you can’t get in any other way of life.”

His award-winning sculpture of an old Native American man dressed for war called The Last Warrior, is very personal and reflective. “I named him that because I feel like I am the last warrior. When the battles come around the world or even in our own nation or in the schools, I feel like I want to jump in and become a guard and help, but I know I can’t,” explained Jack pointing to his sculpture. “But this old character is the same thing—he wanted to get in and help his people. So, it has been psychologically good for me”

Buddy and Jack, along with Vietnam Veteran Gloria Thornton and Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran “Feet” Jensen are competing at the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition in Des Moines, Iowa from October 29 to November 4, 2018.

If you would like more information about competing in the 2019 Creative Arts Festival, contact Recreation Therapy at 801-582-1565, ext. 1559.

★ POSITIVE HEALTH

What is Recreation Therapy?

Recreation Therapy is a systematic process that utilizes recreation interventions based on the assessed interests, abilities and needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions.

A significant number of positive health outcomes have been found in the VA’s Recreation Therapy programs including:

Improved Physical Health

- weight loss
- muscle strength
- balance

Improved Psychosocial Health

- community reintegration
- decreased stress
- social independence

Improved Mental Health

- less boredom
- positive release of emotion
- constructive use of leisure time

National Veterans Programs held annually:

- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
- National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic
- National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

To receive a monthly email newsletter announcing all current groups, events and activities, please contact your recreation therapists.

2018 SPIRIT OF GEORGE E. WAHLEN AWARDS

VA Salt Lake City Health Care System awarded two employees the Spirit of George E. Wahlen awards. The award is given annually to one supervisor and one non-supervisor on Oct. 5- the day the medical center's namesake, George E. Wahlen, received the Medal of Honor for his courageous acts on Iwo Jima.

The 2018 winners, Sheena Bufton, program coordinator, Polytrauma Amputation Network Site, and Shelley Granger, the float pool nurse manager, transfer coordinator, and travel and lodging coordinator exemplify the characteristics and behavior of Mr. Wahlen. In his Medal of Honor citation, the phrase "tireless in his ministrations" is used to describe Mr. Wahlen's dedication on the battlefield, but it also describes his lifelong commitment to Veterans. This phrase also defines Sheena and Shelley's commitment to Veterans. Their coworkers describe both as "going above and beyond" and "going the extra mile" and providing exemplary service to Veterans is at the heart of what both

Shelley and Sheena do.

"Policies are great," said Shelley, who has worked at VA Salt Lake for 27, "but doing what's right for the patient is what I instill in my staff."

Sheena gets to know Veterans on first name basis and tries to make that personal connection with every Veteran. "I think as a patient that makes you feel better when you are treated like someone knows you and you're more than a number."

In addition to the two winners, 17 VA Salt Lake City employees were also nominated for the award. The nominees are Carlos Aguilar, Amy E. Avery, Connie Jo Campbell, Alexandra Gribbin, Deborah Henry, Rachelle Heyen, Allen Johnston, Elijah Kennedy, William Klinger, Jessica Mann, Andrea Morgenegg, Nicole Pappas, Troy Perkins, Denise Schumacher, Laramie Smith, Matthew Stuart, and Joseph Wanzek. Congratulations to the winners and all the nominees -- they steadfastly serve our Veterans and in doing so keep the spirit of George Wahlen alive.



Dr. Karen Gribbon, left, and Melba Wahlen (widow of George E. Wahlen), right, award Shelley Granger (photo bottom left) and Sheena Bufton (photo top right) with 2018 Spirit of George E. Wahlen awards.



2018 SPIRIT OF GEORGE E. WAHLEN AWARDS



Advanced Low Vision Rehabilitation Clinic

The Low Vision Clinic works collaboratively with the VIST Coordinator to assess the Veteran's needs and interests as well as determine goals to assist the Veteran in adjustment to vision loss.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 1574

Choice Program

Serving Veterans waiting more than 30 days for an appointment or living greater than 40 miles away from the closest VA facility.

☎ 1-866-606-8198

www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/

Community Residential Care (CRC) Program

CRC provides supervision to eligible Veterans who are not in need of hospitalization or nursing home placement but who, because of mental health or psychosocial conditions, would benefit from living in a home setting.

Decedent Affairs

Patient Representatives are here to assist you when a loved one passes. We can answer all of your questions about burial reimbursements, grave markers and bereavement assistance.

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 1900

Fisher House

This home away from home provides a place for families (who live 50 miles away or farther) to stay, free of charge, while their loved one is receiving treatment. Reservations are required.

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 5900

Holistic Medicine

Holistic Medicine provides pain medicine, palliative care and integrative health services to our Veterans.

- **Pain Medicine service** provides care for patients with persistent or "chronic" pain, including medicines to control pain and psychological care.
☎ 801-581-1565, ext. 4942
- **Palliative Care service** provides supportive care for patients with serious medical illness, pain and management symptom control, psychosocial and spiritual care; advanced

care planning, end of life care and bereavement support to families.

☎ 801-581-1565, ext. 2059

- **Integrative Health service** offers several options for patients: acupuncture, meditation, manual therapies, hypnosis, Qigong, Yoga and a Choose to Heal class to introduce various strategies and multicultural approaches to physical, emotional, spiritual wellbeing and better health.
☎ 801-581-1565, ext. 2661

Referrals from your primary care provider are required.

Complementary and Integrative Health Classes

- **QiGong**
Gentle movements performed in a relaxed meditative state to promote health and healing.
- **Choose to Heal**
Expand awareness of how mind, body and spirit integrate to promote healing.
- **Mind Body Bridging**
Integrates mind, body, and spirit in a self-help therapeutic process.
- **Intro to Mindfulness**
Explore the basic mindfulness practices and concepts.
- **Meditation and Relaxation Training**
Experiential group that includes participating in a 40-minute mindfulness exercise.
- **Mindfulness and Compassion**
Helps manage stress, chronic pain, physical disease and mental health disorders.
- **Warrior Yoga**
Focuses on breath and body awareness to increase relaxation and mental clarity for wellbeing, management and prevention of disease.
- **Mind-Body Skills**
Breathing techniques, gentle body movement and postures to reduce stress and promote health.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2325

Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)

The mission of HBPC is to provide a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and primary care in the homes of Veterans

with complex medical, social and behavioral conditions for whom routine clinic-based care is not effective. The team evaluates needs, identifies resources and assists with obtaining federal or community services. Veterans must meet criteria to be eligible for HBPC.

Referrals to the HBPC program are made by a the VA primary care provider.

Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) program

It is VA's goal to keep Veterans "well and well-informed." We strive to improve the quality of life for Veterans by providing VA clinicians with evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention practices. For more information on classes and programs, contact

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 4246

- **Living well with Chronic Conditions**
This is a six- week program to help any Veteran with any chronic condition to manage symptoms, work with your health care team and improve your health. Learn self management techniques and skills needed in the day-to-day management of any type of ongoing health condition.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext 4246
Community locations also available at www.livingwell.utah.gov
- **MOVE! Weight Management program**
VA's weight management program designed to help Veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health. The MOVE! program offers patients several weight management options from group classes focusing on topics of nutrition, behavior modification and exercise.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2149
- **Walk with Ease walking class**
Twice a week walking program to reduce pain and improve overall health. Available at the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center, plus Orem and St. George CBOC's.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2149
- **Tobacco Cessation program**
Our Tobacco Cessation program is designed to help Veterans quit smoking, chew or e-cigarettes. The program consists of tobacco

cessation group treatment, pharmacist consultation, telephone coaching and text coaching. VA telephone quit-line: Counseling free of charge, any time between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Mountain time. The quitsmoking telephone coaches provide up to four phone calls and can be reached
☎ 1-855-QUIT-VET (1-855-784-8838)

- **VA 24/7 texting support service**
For Veterans that can receive text messages. Sign up by texting VET to 47848 from your mobile phone, or visit www.smokefree.gov/VET. When you need support they will text you tips and encouragement.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2088
- **Living Well classes for specific diseases**
These four-week classes will help you manage and reduce your risk for specific conditions. Also available at VA community-based outreach clinics via Telehealth.
Living Well with Heart Disease
Living Well with Chronic Lung Disease
Living Well with Diabetes
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 4286 or 4289
- **Stepping On, fall prevention program**
A seven week program shown to help adults improve balance and reduce the risk of falls.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 1682

Library

The library features regular and large print books and magazines. Internet access is also available.
Bldg. 14, basement
Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Medical Foster Home program

MFH is a voluntary program that offers safe, long-term care in a home setting. MFH is a great alternative to institutionalized care. The program includes regular comprehensive case management visits by a VASLC Home Care Team.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2183

My HealthVet

My HealthVet is VA's online personal health record that allows Veterans to take charge of their own healthcare.

- Communicate with your VA providers and clinics through secure messaging
- Access your VA medical records through the Blue Button
- View appointment information
- See lab results
- Prescription refills
- Get personalized wellness reminders ...and much more!

☎ 801-584-1209
www.myhealth.va.gov

Nutrition and Food Services (NFS)

NFS provides expertise in nutrition assessment, diagnosis and intervention to help the Veteran improve his/her nutrition condition, medical outcomes and overall quality of life. We provide group or one-on-one sessions.

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2123

Pain Management

Pain Medicine service provides care for patients with persistent or “chronic” pain, including medicines to control pain and psychological care. A referral from your primary care provider is required.

☎ 801-581-1565, ext. 4942

Other VA pain management programs:

- **Women's Comprehensive Pain program**
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 5414 or 2151
- **Chronic Pain Management group (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)**
A six-week class designed to improve your quality of life and physical/ emotional functioning despite the presence of pain.
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 3497

Pathways

Coping with life's problems and/or mental illness can be difficult but getting help should not be. Pathways can help you access the right care. This is not a therapy group; it is an orientation group. Walk-ins welcome! Bldg. 16, Bear Lake classroom
Tuesdays 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2321

Recreation Therapy

Recreation Therapy is a process that utilizes recreation interventions based on the interests, abilities and needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions. Veterans can choose from dozens of seasonal activities including skiing, bowling, golf, water volleyball, fishing, rock climbing, art, guitar, singing and many more.

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 1559

Sweat Lodge

Healing Native American Sweat Lodge ceremonies are held at 7 p.m. each Friday; and a women's only ceremony is held at 2 p.m. the third Saturday of each month at the Purtkwahgahm Healing Ground (southeast corner of Bldg 4).

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 4556

Call for information about other Native American Ceremonies.

Transfer & Lodging Center (TLC)

Lodging is available for Veterans traveling more than 50 miles for medical appointments in Salt Lake City. Veterans should check in at the Transfer & Lodging office. Bldg. 1, first floor, room 1B31 Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:15 p.m. After hours, weekends and holidays check in through the Emergency Department. Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services program (VD-HCBS) An alternative for (long-term) nursing home placement, Veterans are able to live in their own home.

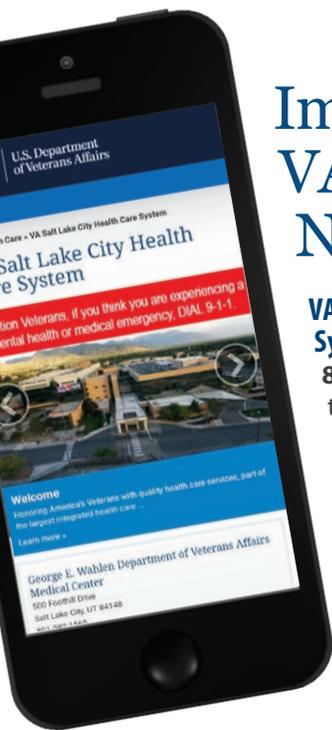
☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2492

Veterans Transportation Service (VTS)

The Veterans Transportation Service in partnership with Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Nevada Veteran Service Organizations proudly support the transportation needs of Veterans traveling for appointments in Salt Lake City. Van service is available from Ely and Elko, Nevada; Idaho Falls and Pocatello, Idaho; Afton and Rock Springs, Wyoming; and from Vernal, Price, Richfield, Logan, and St. George, Utah. Wheelchair transportation is available on some routes.

☎ 801-582-1565, ext. 2003 or 1027

☎ 1-800-613-4012, ext. 2003 or 1027



Important VA Phone Numbers

VA Salt Lake City Health Care System

801-582-1565 or
toll-free **1-800-613-4012**

Scheduling an Appointment

801-584-2575, ext. 1 or toll-free
at **1-800-613-4012, ext. 2575**

Veterans who need to schedule, cancel or reschedule an appointment for all primary care clinics can call Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Automated Prescription Refill Line

801-584-2525 or toll-free at **1-800-579-0540**

Veterans who need to request a refill of a prescription or check the status of refills can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Have your social security number and prescription numbers ready when calling.

VA Benefits (other than health care)

1-800-827-1000

Veterans who need information on VA benefits including VA pension and compensation, home loans, and education can call the VA Regional Office.

Billing Questions

801-582-1565, ext. 2547 or toll-free at **1-866-393-1846**

Veterans who have questions about a bill can call Billing.

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255), Press 1 for Veterans

Veterans can call the Veterans Crisis Line to talk to trained professionals 24 hours a day, seven days a week or visit www.veteranscrisisline.net.

My HealthVet

www.myhealth.va.gov

Veterans can manage their health by logging onto My HealthVet, which offers access to Veteran health benefits and services.

Looking for more ways to improve
your health and well-being?



Veterans Health Library

Your source for health information

The Veterans Health Library is a free resource in partnership with My HealthVet to help Veterans stay well and healthy, and take an active role in their health care. It provides Veterans, family members, and caregivers 24/7 access to comprehensive Veteran-focused health information including more than 1,500 health sheets, more than 150 videos, go-to-guides and flipbooks that have been approved by VA experts. These include topics specific to Veterans, for example, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat-related traumatic brain injury and Agent Orange.

www.veteranshealthlibrary.org

For more information on VA related topics,
visit www.saltlakecity.va.gov. Follow us
on Facebook and Twitter.

