

# VETERANS'

*healthy living*

A Legacy of  
Strength and  
Compassion

Selfless Service,  
Then and Now



**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE

Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century



# Dear Veterans

## A Message from the Network Director

Michael F. Mayo-Smith, M.D., M.P.H.  
Network Director



**Fall, especially November 11, is a special time for honoring our Veterans** and all those who served and sacrificed for our country. Now it is our time to serve you by providing a wide range of healthcare tailored specifically to your needs.

In this issue on page 3, you will find “A Strategic Plan for the Future of VA Healthcare,” which tells about the aggressive outreach initiative currently underway to educate, enroll, vest, and retain more users in the VA healthcare program.

On pages 4 and 5 is a story of selfless bravery in the face of the enemy. Sent on a mission down Vietnam’s Mekong River, Lieutenant Commander Thomas Kelley found himself caught in an onslaught of enemy fire from all directions. Positioning his boat in such a way to protect others, he was seriously injured and barely able to speak, but he still continued, refusing to back down until all the men reached safety. For his valor, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

“A Legacy of Strength and Compassion” on page 6 reflects on the astonishing accomplishments of Edith Nourse Rogers during her 35-year tenure as a U.S. Congresswoman. The article also describes several of the recent women’s clinic construction projects in VISN 1.

On page 7, you will find the endearing story of two men, Leon Audet and Almo Nickerson. “Until We Meet Again” tells how the two men stormed the beach at Normandy and later miraculously became roommates at Patriot Place. Page 7 also discusses the expansion of mental healthcare professionals to meet the evolving and sometimes complex needs of our Veterans.

As the leaves change colors from green to beautiful shades of orange and gold this fall, remember that this land — our country and all the beauty it possesses — would not be considered “the land of the free” if it weren’t for all the brave Veterans who served.

Thank you for your service. Now let us serve you!

Michael F. Mayo-Smith, M.D., M.P.H.  
Network Director

**On the Cover:** Lieutenant Commander Thomas G. Kelley is awarded the Medal of Honor by President Richard Nixon.

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# A Strategic Plan for the Future of VA Health Care

“With an eye to the future viability of VA health care in New England, VISN 1 is promoting its outreach efforts to a strategic objective,” said Mike McNamara, Outreach Program Manager, VA New England Healthcare System. “Over the next four years, VISN 1 will aggressively educate, enroll, vest, and retain users in order to expand its patient base by increasing the number of patients utilizing VA health care. The strategic objective is to add 47,000 new users and reach 300,000 users by September 30, 2015.”

To accomplish this goal, each facility in VISN 1 has formed a committee responsible for planning, orchestrating, and executing initiatives in that area. A VISN-wide committee, formed of representatives from each facility, meets monthly to discuss and make changes to outreach programs as needed to ensure all initiatives are on track for success.

What are the fundamentals of VISN 1’s strategic plan for outreach initiatives?

- Provide outreach/enrollment training for all individuals who conduct outreach.
- Contract with a national advertising agency to conduct a needs assessment

across New England and develop an advertising plan for VISN 1 that will include print, radio, television, and billboard ads.

- Conduct direct mail campaigns to veterans who are enrolled but have not had an appointment with VA health care facilities in 18 to 24 months.
- Hire four regional outreach specialists.
- Execute at least four VISN-level outreach events.
- Enhance relationships between states and the VA.
- Enhance relationships between the Department of Defense and the VA.
- Produce enrollment best practices.

With a solid plan of action and a team of dedicated and trained outreach professionals, VISN 1 has already seen an increase of 6,511 new users (a 3 percent increase) and 7,336 new enrollees (a 2.5 percent increase) in 2012. So, what can you do to assist VISN 1 in reaching its goal of 300,000 new users by

## Veteran demographics as of September 30, 2011:

- New England Veteran population: **982,497**
- Enrolled in VA health care: **349,509**
- Using VA health care: **252,599**

2015? Tell fellow Veterans about available services and provide them contact information – you can make a difference!

## How can Veterans enroll?

In VISN 1, Veterans can enroll by phone at 866-825-1465 or online at [www.newengland.va.gov/outreach](http://www.newengland.va.gov/outreach).

Nationally, Veterans can enroll by phone at 877-222-8387 or online at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez).



Kristin Maxwell, Manchester VAMC, speaks with a female veteran during NASCAR's Lenox 301 at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway, July 15, 2012.



President Richard Nixon shakes Thomas Kelley's hand after awarding him the Medal of Honor.

On a hot, humid afternoon in June of 1969, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Thomas G. Kelley was leading a column of eight river assault craft along the canals of Vietnam's Mekong River. His mission: extract one company of U.S. Army infantry troops from the east bank of the Ong Muong Canal. All was going according to plan when suddenly one of his transport vehicles reported a mechanical loading ramp failure. Moments later, enemy forces ambushed the entire column. Heavy fire was coming from all directions, and the disabled craft was suddenly a sitting duck.

As the bullets screamed from the riverbanks towards the disabled craft, Kelley knew it was only a matter of time before this attack went from bad to worse. Seeing no other options, he repositioned his fleet between the disabled craft and the riverbank, selflessly placing himself and his vehicle directly into the line of

fire while the men continued to fix the loading ramp.

Suddenly, a rocket-propelled grenade screamed straight toward Kelley's craft. The resulting explosion was a staggering blow, spraying shrapnel in all directions and hurling Kelley off the bridge of

the vessel 10 feet down onto the floor.

Despite sustaining serious head injuries that left him unable to move and barely able to speak, Kelley continued to carry out his orders by radio until the crippled transport and all of its troops reached safety. He was later

## *Selfless Service,* **Then and Now**

Medal of Honor recipient  
Thomas G. Kelley, 2011. *Photo  
by Johnny Bivera, MilitaryHealth*



*His military career appeared to be over. But Kelley still had some fight in him.*

medically evacuated and taken to a field hospital where Army doctors were sure he would die. The last thing he remembered was hearing a doctor tell someone he wasn't going to make it.

Several weeks later, Kelley regained consciousness. He'd lost an eye as a result of his injuries and was declared physically unfit for duty by military doctors. His military career appeared to be over. But Kelley still had some fight in him. Selflessly devoted to serving his country, he fought for — and was granted — a return to service, and he served as a captain in the U.S. Navy until he retired in 1990.

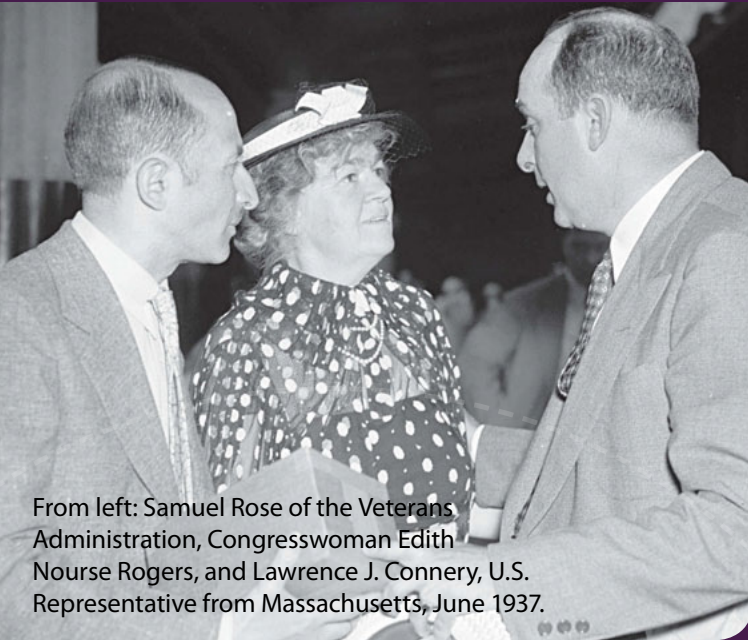
On May 14, 1970, President Richard Nixon presented Kelley with the Medal of Honor for his bold leadership, courage under fire, and resolute determination shown on that hot summer day in Vietnam.

His service to his country did not stop there. Kelley decided to use his experience and visibility to help our Veterans. "I felt I should bring something to the table on behalf of Veterans and the agencies that serve them," he explained. After 30 years in the Navy, Thomas Kelley decided to make serving his country a career.

He worked for the Department of Defense and later served as Secretary of Veterans Services in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where he pushed to change the laws on Veteran benefit eligibility from only those who served

during wartime to anyone who serves over 90 days. His work on the "Welcome Home" bill provided bonuses and education tuition assistance to Veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today, Thomas Kelley continues to work with the VA by serving as the Veterans Advisor to VISN 1. He encourages all Veterans to take advantage of existing programs, and he is optimistic about the future of the VA and its programs. "We've got some great systems in place," Kelley explains, "and we would love to see more people taking advantage of them."



From left: Samuel Rose of the Veterans Administration, Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers, and Lawrence J. Connery, U.S. Representative from Massachusetts, June 1937.

## A Legacy of Strength and Compassion

“No one could see the wounded and dying as I saw them and not be moved to do all in his or her power to help,” said Edith Nourse Rogers of her experience inspecting field hospitals during WWI with the Women’s Overseas Service League. As a strong, compassionate woman who ultimately served 35 years as a U.S. Congresswoman, Edith helped change women’s acceptance in the military, as well as medical services for soldiers and Veterans.

From 1925-1960, she introduced 1,263 bills to Congress and was instrumental in securing millions of dollars for a network of Veterans’ hospitals and establishing the GI Bill.

In 1941, only months before U.S. involvement in WWII, Mrs. Rogers introduced the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps Act. When the Rogers’s Women’s Army Corps Bill passed in 1942, women were finally given military status.

Her legacy continues today at the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital in Bedford,

Massachusetts. The facility is one of several in VISN 1 undergoing or that have undergone construction projects within their women’s clinics.

**Bedford’s** recently completed Women’s Clinic is designed to provide women Veterans with privacy, dignity and sensitivity to their gender-specific needs. The clinic includes a private waiting room and seating area, as well as exam rooms specifically designed for female patients.

The **Togus** Women’s Clinic will include a complete renovation of existing office space into a clinical space with a dedicated entrance. A high level of attention will be given to orientation of exam rooms, patient comfort in the environment, rooms specific to women Veterans, and room finishes.

In **Providence**, the Women’s Health Center design will include a procedure room and exam rooms; an RN exam space and office; a conference room; reception and waiting rooms; and support space.

**West Haven** will relocate the Women’s Clinic to a completely renovated space in Building 2 on the 7th floor. The new space is approximately 3,000 square feet, and projected completion is next summer.

Veterans visiting VA clinics and hospitals across the country remember Edith Nourse Rogers as a monumental example of how one person can make a difference in the lives of many.

### VA primary health care for women Veterans includes:

- General care such as health evaluation and counseling, disease prevention, nutrition counseling, weight control, smoking cessation, and substance abuse counseling and treatment, as well as gender-specific primary care.
- Mental health care for issues like depression, mood, and anxiety disorders; intimate partner and domestic violence; sexual trauma; elder abuse or neglect; parenting and anger management; marital, caregiver, or family-related stress; and post-deployment adjustment or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Military sexual trauma.

## Until We Meet Again

On June 6, 1944, otherwise known as D-Day, an estimated 160,000 allied troops landed on the beaches in Normandy, France. Two of the brave young Army soldiers involved in the momentous battle were Leon Audet and Almo Nickerson (Nick) of the 4th Infantry Division.

Side by side, the two stormed onto Utah Beach but were separated when Audet went ahead as a scout. Crossing a field, he was hit by a bullet that tore through the front of his helmet. As the troops advanced, Nick found him bleeding and unconscious. Thinking Audet was close to death, Nick stuck his rifle in the ground by the bayonet and hung a helmet on top, which was a signal to the enemy that the soldier lying there was already dead. Nick went on fighting and was

captured by German forces. He was held as a POW until the war ended in 1945.

Nearly 40 years later, Nick got a huge surprise while playing golf in Vassalboro, Maine, where he happened to run into Audet. "I went over and shook hands with Nick and we hugged each other. We hadn't seen each other since the war," said Audet. Miraculously, Audet's serious wound had not been fatal and he rejoined the allied troops — injured but very much alive. Because Nick had left Audet marked as a fallen soldier, the Germans passed him by. "He saved my life," Audet said.

Today, the two are roommates at Patriot Place, a Dementia Specialty Care Unit in Maine

Veterans Hospital. They rarely speak of D-Day but simply enjoy their time together — side by side.

For more information about the Dementia Specialty Care Unit or the Community Living Center, contact Jodi Hardwick at 207-623-8411, ext. 5511.



Leon Audet and Almo (Nick) Nickerson

## Continuum of Care

To ensure Veterans have access to quality mental health care, the VA recently announced it will be employing an additional 1,600 mental health professionals and 300 support staff to complement the existing workforce of 20,590. VISN 1 will be welcoming 36 new staff members that will include psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional mental health counselors.

"The expansion of providers is not focused on adding additional *types* of services, but to enhance the facilities' ability to provide timely *access* to these programs," said Dr. Craig M. Coldwell, Mental Health Service Line Director, VA New England Healthcare System. "As the number of Veterans returning home increases, we need to ensure

that we have the right number of clinicians and administrative staff to provide the best services as soon as possible."

The VA offers treatment for a variety of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.

For more information about mental health services, go to [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov) or visit a VA facility near you.

## VA MEDICAL CENTERS

### CONNECTICUT

#### VA Connecticut Healthcare System

**Newington Campus**  
555 Willard Avenue  
Newington, CT 06111  
(860) 666-6951

**West Haven Campus**  
950 Campbell Avenue  
West Haven, CT 06516  
(203) 932-5711

### MAINE

#### VA Maine Healthcare System

1 VA Center  
Augusta, ME 04330  
(207) 623-8411  
(877) 421-8263

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hosp.

200 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730  
(781) 687-2000

#### VA Boston Healthcare System

**Brockton Campus**  
940 Belmont Street  
Brockton, MA 02301  
(508) 583-4500

**Jamaica Plain Campus**  
150 S. Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA 02130  
(617) 232-9500

**West Roxbury Campus**  
1400 VFW Parkway  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
(617) 323-7700

#### VA Central Western MA Healthcare System

421 North Main Street  
Leeds, MA 01053  
(413) 584-4040

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Manchester VAMC**  
718 Smyth Road  
Manchester, NH 03104  
(603) 624-4366  
(800) 892-8384

### RHODE ISLAND

**Providence VAMC**  
830 Chalkstone Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908  
(401) 273-7100  
(866) 590-2976

### VERMONT

**White River Junction VAMC**  
215 North Main Street  
White River Junction,  
VT 05009  
(802) 295-9363

## COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINICS

### CONNECTICUT

**Danbury CBOC**  
7 Germantown Road  
Danbury, CT 06810  
(203) 798-8422

**New London CBOC**  
4 Shaw's Cove, Suite 101  
New London, CT 06320  
(860) 437-3611

**Stamford CBOC**  
Stamford Health System  
1275 Summer Street  
Stamford, CT 06905  
(203) 325-0649

**Waterbury CBOC**  
95 Scovill Street  
Waterbury, CT 06706  
(203) 465-5292

**Willimantic CBOC**  
1320 Main Street  
Tyler Square (next to  
Social Security Office)  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
(860) 450-7583

**Winsted CBOC**  
115 Spencer Street  
Winsted, CT 06098  
(860) 738-6985

### MAINE

**Bangor CBOC**  
35 State Hospital Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(207) 561-3600

**Lincoln Outreach Clinic (Bangor Satellite Clinic)**  
99 River Road  
Lincoln, ME 04457  
(207) 403-2000

**Calais CBOC**  
50 Union Street  
Calais, ME 04619  
(207) 904-3700

**Caribou CBOC**  
163 Van Buren Road, Ste. 6  
Caribou, ME 04736  
(207) 493-3800

**Fort Kent CBOC**  
Medical Office Building  
197 East Main St.  
Fort Kent, ME 04743  
(207) 834-1572

**Houlton Outreach Clinic**  
Houlton Regional Hospital  
20 Hartford Street  
Houlton, ME 04730  
(877) 421-8263, ext. 2000

**Lewiston/Auburn CBOC**  
15 Challenger Drive  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
(207) 623-8411 Ext. 4601  
(877) 421-8263 Ext. 4601

**Mobile Medical Unit**  
Main Street  
Bingham, ME 04920  
(866) 961-9263

**Portland CBOC**  
144 Fore Street  
Portland, ME 04101  
(207) 771-3500

**Rumford CBOC**  
431 Franklin Street  
Rumford, ME 04276  
(207) 369-3200

**Saco CBOC**  
655 Main Street  
Saco, ME 04072  
(207) 294-3100

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Causeway Street CBOC**  
251 Causeway Street  
Boston, MA 02114  
(617) 248-1000

**Fitchburg CBOC**  
275 Nichols Road  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
(978) 342-9781

**Framingham CBOC**  
61 Lincoln Street, Suite 112  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 628-0205

**Gloucester CBOC**  
298 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
(978) 282-0676

**Greenfield CBOC**  
143 Munson Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
(413) 773-8428

**Haverhill CBOC**  
108 Merrimack Street  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
(978) 372-5207

**Hyannis CBOC**  
233 Stevens Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
(508) 771-3190

**Lowell CBOC**  
130 Marshall Road  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 671-9000

**Lynn CBOC**  
225 Boston Street, Ste. 107  
Lynn, MA 01904  
(781) 595-9818

**New Bedford CBOC**  
175 Elm Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(508) 994-0217

**Pittsfield CBOC**  
73 Eagle Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413) 499-2672

**Quincy CBOC**  
114 Whitwell Street  
Quincy, MA 02169  
(617) 376-2010

**Springfield CBOC**  
25 Bond Street  
Springfield, MA 01104  
(413) 731-6000

**Worcester CBOC**  
605 Lincoln Street  
Worcester, MA 01605  
(508) 856-0104

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Conway CBOC**  
71 Hobbs Street  
Conway, NH 03818  
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199  
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

**Keene Outpatient Clinic**  
640 Marlboro Street  
Keene, NH 03431  
(603) 358-4900

**Littleton CBOC**  
658 Meadow Street, Ste. 4  
Littleton, NH 03561  
(603) 444-1323

**Portsmouth CBOC**  
302 Newmarket Street  
Portsmouth, NH 03803  
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199  
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

**Somersworth CBOC**  
200 Route 108  
Somersworth, NH 03878  
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199  
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

**Tilton CBOC**  
630 Main Street, Ste. 400  
Tilton, NH 03276  
(603) 624-4366, ext. 3199  
(800) 892-8384, ext. 3199

### RHODE ISLAND

**Middletown CBOC**  
One Corporate Place  
Middletown, RI 02842  
(401) 847-6239

### VERMONT

**Bennington CBOC**  
186 North Street  
Bennington, VT 05201  
(802) 447-6913

**Brattleboro CBOC**  
71 GSP Drive  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
(802) 251-2200

**Colchester CBOC**  
162 Hegeman Ave., Unit 100  
Colchester, VT 05446  
(802) 655-1356

**Newport Outpatient Clinic**  
1734 Crawford Farm Rd.  
Newport, VT 05855  
(802) 334-9700

**Rutland CBOC**  
232 West St.  
Rutland, VT 05701-2850  
(802) 772-2300



WHERE TO  
FIND US