

LABOR DAY 2012: THE TRUE MEANING

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, represents the creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. This day pays tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity and the overall well-being of our country.

The first Labor Day was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City. In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday. The Central Labor Union urged other organizations in other cities to follow their example and celebrate the "workingmen's holiday" on that date.

In a time where the job market is questionable, and many people are unemployed, Labor Day may hold different meanings. We, as a country, must still hold true to our history as a nation built on hard work, strength, freedom and leadership.

The American worker is the emphasis for what has shaped the United States of America. Let us all take a moment to fully realize the true meaning of Labor Day.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy Labor Day weekend.

Labor Day Events

- Hickory American Legion Fair
- NC Apple Festival: Hendersonville, NC
- Beach Music Extravaganza: Bald Head Island, NC



VA LAUNCHES SPOUSE SUPPORT LINE

The VA has announced a new telephone support program aimed at providing assistance to the spouses of those veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. A pilot program of the phone line showed it greatly reduced stress for spouses when used.

The telephone support program is part of the Caregiver Support Program, and is meant to aid spouses with coping with the challenges that reintegration into society can bring for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

Spouses involved in the pilot program showed reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, likely due to the increase in social support. The VA's website, www.caregiver.va.gov, provides general information on the spouse support line and other caregiver resources.

SEPTEMBER 2012

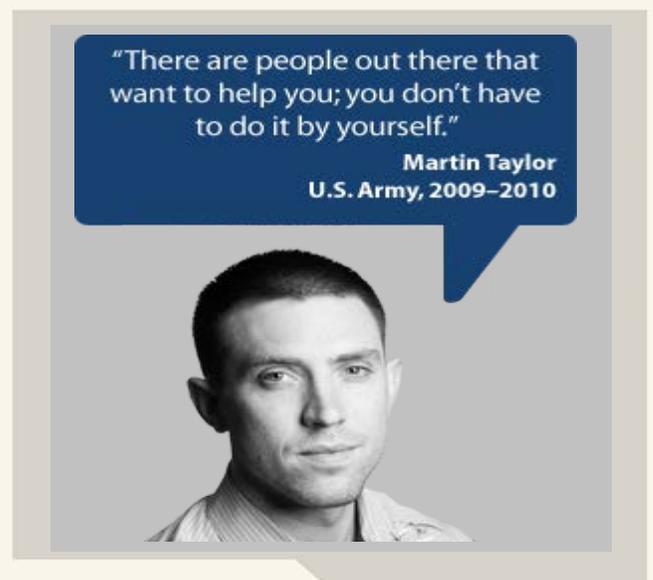
VA LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM TO CONNECT VETERANS

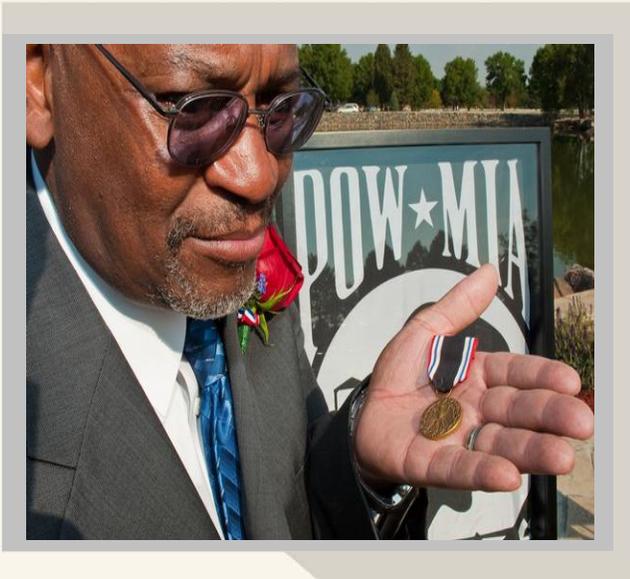
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), has announced the launch of a new campaign, entitled Make the Connection, which is a way for veterans and their family members to connect with other veterans.

The VA says the aim of the program is to allow veterans and their families to contact one another to share experiences, and also to connect veterans with needed information and resources to help them navigate civilian life, locate health resources, and to ease the transition to civilian life.

At the heart of the campaign is a new website, www.MaketheConnection.net. The website features the experiences, stories, triumphs and challenges of many veterans. Other veterans and their families will be able to read the personal testimonies of other veterans, who have dealt with a variety of issues from day-to-day life to mental health conditions and other health symptoms. The website also offers information and resources that are relevant to the lives of veterans.

On the website, veterans will also be able to access information regarding mental health treatment. The VA feels this is a great option for veterans, because it will allow them to access much-needed resources from the comfort and privacy of their home. Users of the website will also be able to customize their filter, therefore tailoring their experience on the site to their own needs. They will be able to view the information that is most relevant to their own life and situation.





COLORADO VETERAN FINALLY RECEIVES POW MEDAL

An Air Force Veteran who was one of 65 Americans taken hostage in Iran in 1979 has formally been awarded the Defense Department's Prisoner of War Medal.

Retired MSGT James O'Neal Hughes was a staff sergeant and an intelligence assistant for the Defense Intelligence Agency when Iranians seized the US Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979.

As part of the Islamic Revolution, protesters marched in Tehran demanding the ouster of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and an end to American imperialism and martial law in Iran.

"To see a protest outside the walls was normal, but that day they pushed through the gate. I was searched, blindfolded and marched out of the room" says Hughes. After 16 days of eating bread, goat cheese and rice, he and 12 other black and female hostages were released.

Although the VA has recognized him as a POW, Hughes said he never felt he could accept the recognition because it was never in his records. Then in December, he received the medal in the mail. Hughes also served in Vietnam and at other embassies. He now works as a staff assistant at Ft. Logan.

REMINDER

Veteran's Day is just around the corner. Please join us on Monday, November 12, 2012, for our annual Veteran's Day Open House. This event will be held in the 2nd Floor Meeting Room of the Government Center in Newton. There will be lots of food and some great fellowship!