VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

Meet
Vaneada "Vee" Terrell

What branch of service did you serve in?
I served in the U.S. Army.

When were you in the service?
I served 23 years (from 1988 to 2011). I served for all desert wars to include Operation Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn. Also, I served in Korea, Germany, Kosovo and Djibouti.

What was your most memorable experience while serving active duty?
Working with the U.S. embassy in Kuwait, I was a contingency contracting officer working with Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA).

What does being a Veteran mean to you?
It means selfless service.

What do you think about your care at McGuire?
I think McGuire is one of the best Veterans facilities in the country because it offers better services in fields like neurology, adaptive sports, music therapy, and pain management. I really enjoy the VIP program and the polytrauma programs. The recreation therapy program is the best ever!
Veteran Daniel Glanz lost his right hand while serving in Afghanistan 12 years ago. Today, Glanz has a brand new prosthetic hand with world-class technology which gives him the ability to adjust hand functions on the fly in ways that weren’t possible in the past.

For the past 10 years, Glanz has been coming to McGuire VA Medical Center to receive the latest in prosthetic hand technology. On May 8, he was fitted for an iLimb Quantum prosthetic hand, which is programmable with a smartphone app and can change functions with a simple gesture.

The device can be programmed with up to four different hand settings at a time. Each setting is activated by the wearer gesturing with his arm to the left, right, forward or back.

This allows Glanz, who served in the Army Reserves from 1993 to 2006, to instantaneously switch between various modes. For example, to shake hands, he can move his arm slightly to the left. With a slight gesture to the right, he could change to a pinching grip to hold a car key. Another gesture forward could switch it to a grip more suited to gripping a steering wheel.

There are dozens of potential modes, all of which can be selected via the smartphone app, and are tailored for everyday uses to help Glanz’s life. He selects four modes that are most useful to him for daily tasks and then has the ability to switch between them instantly.

If he wants to make changes later, it’s as simple as grabbing his smartphone.

Glanz says this technology will make it easier than ever for him to use his prosthetic hand.

“It’s just going to make wearing this hand more useful every day,” he said. “It will be easier to use it in everyday environments.”

John Fox, the chief of McGuire’s Prosthetics Lab, said the technology is the best on the market right now and is far more advanced than technology available to most civilians.

Glanz now works as an aerospace engineer. He said he is hopeful his new prosthetic hand will help make life easier and allow him to do his job more efficiently than before.
Thank you to all of our nurses for your endless contributions to make the McGuire VA Medical Center the best place for Veterans to receive care.

National Nurses Week culminated with a visit from Linda McConnell, VHA Chief Nursing Officer (pictured bottom left).
The laboratories at McGuire introduced three instruments during the Lab Week Open House, Thursday, April 27.

Each year, the laboratory tests more than 3 million clinical lab fluids, such as blood and urine, and about 25,000 tissue samples and body parts.

The ribbon cuttings gave employees a firsthand look into the new Aptio, Spa and Ortho Vision, used to improve patient care.

“These new instruments offer the latest state-of-the-art technology in healthcare that our Veterans deserve,” said Frank Rider, account manager for Siemens.

The machines increase production by streamlining the laboratory process and lowering costs by keeping more tests in house said, Karmen Purdel, chief medical technologist for the Laboratories.

After a brief speech, the ribbon cuttings began by introducing Ortho Vision – a blood banking analyzer for transfusion medicine.

The largest and most integrated unit is the Siemens Aptio Chemistry analyzer. This massive multi-functional unit sends blood and urine samples throughout the laboratory using a conveyer belt system.

Aptio eliminates manual steps to run samples in the laboratory, said Purdel. As a result, it improves workflow and increases resources. The machine scans the barcode label, loads samples by priority and sorts for necessary chemistry tests after being spun in a centrifuge. The conveyer belt system even places the samples in the refrigerator once testing is complete.

“The Aptio accepts a higher workload than what was here previously,” said Rider. “It’s more economical and efficient, allowing staff to manage growth for the future.”

The Kappa Lambda Analyzer, referred to as Spa, uses an intense halogen light with various filters to measure abnormalities in blood. This test enables McGuire to screen for multiple myeloma, leukemia and more.

“This machine cuts our costs in half for this test,” said Wayne Stevens, immunology supervisor. “The best part for us in the lab is it gives us a more complete picture.”

Stevens said Spa gives the lab an additional source to compare results and obtain a more complete picture of a patient’s condition.

Top photo: McGuire staff members and Siemens Representatives introduced the Aptio Chemistry analyzer.

Middle photo: Lynsie Thomas (left), Brenda Michelle Carlton, Dr. Salwa Elshowaia, and Dr. Davis Massey cut the ribbon on the Ortho Vision, a blood banking analyzer.

Bottom photo: Wayne Stevens (left), Eloise Estrada, and Siobhan Perkins cut the ribbon on the Spa-Kappa Lambda Analyzer.
This past January, William Miller had a mechanical problem with his Harley Davidson Softail motorcycle and pulled to the side of the road. Miller, who spent six years as a military policeman, believes the problem was the cruiser’s clutch system. While assessing the bike, he was struck by a passing vehicle.

Although Miller lost his left leg above the knee, the North Carolinian said he is lucky to have survived. He credits first responders for saving his life after the accident. By pure happenstance, the off-duty crew was traveling in an ambulance about a mile behind when everything occurred. They were able to provide live-saving first aid to Miller in the crucial first minutes.

Not one to let misfortune hold him back, Miller has worked hard and exceeded expectations since his arrival at the McGuire VA Medical Center in early May.

“Mr. Miller is not your run-of-the-mill kind of patient,” said Patty Young, amputee rehabilitation coordinator at McGuire. “He is also fearless; not afraid to challenge himself by being out of his comfort zone.”

Young leads the Amputee Boot Camp at McGuire and challenges participants to reach their goals. She leads Veterans to grocery stores, the mall, outdoor playing field and playground, local coffee shops and even Belle Isle in Richmond. Participants are challenged to spend 3-5 hours in rehab each day as part of the program.

“I don’t tend to be the nicest when it comes to the outing.” Young said. “We take the long way, or the bumpy way, or the most crowded way to provide the opportunity to be in an uncontrolled environment.”

Miller is extremely agile and has strength and body awareness unlike many amputees, Young said. He was ready for everything the boot camp threw at him.

“We go around outside,” Miller explained, gesturing his hands toward the patio landscaping outside the Polytrauma Transitional Rehabilitation Program building at McGuire. “I did some gardening the other day.”

Upon his arrival to McGuire, Miller, a spry 29 year old, entered the Servicemember Transitional Advanced Rehabilitation (STAR) program. STAR is a residential treatment program focused on rehabilitating patients with amputations or other polytrauma injuries. While in STAR, Miller routinely visits with multiple therapists and specialists to track progress and address new issues.

Miller wants to one day return to his active lifestyle. Part of that process involves finding a proper fit with his new prosthetic leg.

“I’m hoping to run on it one day,” Miller said. “I’m looking to do all that fun stuff I used to do.”

Before losing his leg, Miller trained to work as an airframe power plant technician. He gained employment shortly before his accident and the company agreed to hold the position for him, Miller said.

“They said it was because of my work ethic,” he said.

Miller said he is looking forward to starting his new job very soon.
More than 30 Veterans recently received laptops donated by Tech For Troops (T4T), a Richmond area non-profit organization.

On Tuesday, May 16, T4T President and Executive Director Mark Casper came to McGuire VA Medical Center with more than 50 refurbished laptops. The Richmond Fisher House received laptops for each of their 21 rooms, where they can be used by family members of Veterans receiving care at McGuire. The remaining computers were donated to Veterans in need, many of whom are part of the VA’s vocational rehab program.

T4T is dedicated to empowering Veterans with skills, computers and IT workforce training. They seek to accomplish this through providing Veterans and the children of Veterans with refurbished computers for free. T4T partners with businesses that provide training or networking experiences.

By donating these laptops, T4T is providing assistance for Veterans who need computer access to help find and maintain employment, as well as pursue educational opportunities.

On May 6, approximately 282 riders set off across the rolling hills of Hanover County just north of Richmond, Virginia, for the third annual Operation Rise & Conquer benefit ride.

The event, organized by VAMAC Inc., a Richmond-based, family-owned plumbing company, has donated 100 percent of the funds generated each year to the adaptive sports program at the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond.

This year, the event size and participation more than doubled; increased number of riders and donations brought the total to 40,000 dollars.

“Everyone had a great time and people were excited that VAMAC announced they would have the event again next year,” said Nicole Shuman, recreation therapist and adaptive sports coordinator at McGuire.

Last year, the adaptive sports program at McGuire purchased a Top End Force 3 cycle and outfitted it with special adaptations for a quadriplegic Veteran, explained Shuman. The bike has a special steering setup, arm shifters and brakes, which are applied using only the elbows.

With this year’s donation, the program plans to add archery equipment, extra golf equipment, an adaptive video game controller and other devices to help Veterans with adaptive sports.

If you are a Veteran and are interested in participating in any adaptive sport, you must be cleared by a primary care provider or physical medicine and rehabilitation physician.