

From: VACO ANNOUNCEMENT <NoReply@va.gov>
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To: Undisclosed Recipients
Subject: MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF: MyVA Story of the Week

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF

CORRECTION: Last week's "MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF," dated March 31, 2016, highlighted those employees who received a thank you note from the Secretary or Deputy Secretary during the month of March. Included in the list was Ms. Lucy Filipov at the Philadelphia Regional Office (RO). Ms. Filipov was incorrectly identified as the supervisor of an employee who was detailed to the Philadelphia RO and who did indeed receive a letter of appreciation from the Secretary. I regret any confusion this mistake may have generated.

Veteran-focused Employees: Living our VA I-CARE Values, Serving our Nation's Veterans

On behalf of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, I would like to highlight another of the many "MyVA" stories we received about employees who demonstrate our commitment to put Veterans first.

There are great things happening at VA every single day that make a real difference to Veterans. If you have an inspirational story, click [here](#) to share it with us. We would love to hear about it.

A Veteran within Our Ranks

Behind every Veteran, there are VA employees dedicated to serving our Veteran community, including our own Veteran employees. A retired Iraq War Army Combat Veteran, who worked as a Veteran Service Representative (VSR), and is now a Veterans Claims Examiner, shared his story, bringing it closer to home.

The Veteran made a commitment to serve the men and women around him while he was still on the battlefields of Western Iraq. He stated, "My search for the means to fulfill this promise led me to a position as a VSR at the VA Regional Office, San Diego. I enjoyed my work as a VSR, and had a fair measure of success. I passed my certification on the first try and became proficient as a promulgator and Senior VSR."

However, the Veteran said, "What I did not realize is that the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, which I thought I was able to control, was becoming more and more difficult to manage." He continued, "One day I could not manage what was inside me anymore. I folded the work on my desk and wrote a resignation letter. My government service was over and I felt I had failed my fellow Veterans."

The Veteran's Union President encouraged the Veteran to request VARO's leadership's help and with assistance from the VARO's Human Resources staff, the Veteran was provided with an extended leave of absence to obtain treatment and was reassigned to a more suitable position within

the VARO. The Veteran stated, "My perceived failure would have haunted me to the end of my days and my perception of myself and my capabilities would have been negatively affected, adding another psychological wound to my already full plate of 'things to live with.'"

The Veteran also shared that, "My Regional Office chose to live the "I-Care" values and did the extra work to help a Veteran within their ranks. Instead of another psychological wound to carry around, I have the opportunity to offer Veterans the best service I can offer as a VA employee. It was a combined effort of my Union, the HR Department, the Leadership Team and my peers that got me through a difficult time in my life and found an effective way for me to continue my service to Veterans while managing the effects that combat had on my mental and emotional health."

Bob Snyder

PLEASE PRODUCE LOCALLY FOR ALL THOSE WHO DO NOT ROUTINELY ACCESS EMAIL DUE TO THEIR SPECIALTIES.