

# AMERICA'S & *Heroes & Heroines*

## Smoothing The Way For Wounded Warriors

(NAPSA)—American troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are learning to overcome the trauma of war thanks to efforts by Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense (DoD) to make their transition back to everyday life as smooth and seamless as possible.

“We want to ensure that every seriously injured or ill service member returning from combat receives priority consideration and world-class service,” said John Brown, director of VA’s Seamless Transition Office, created in January 2005 to ease the transition of service members from the military to civilian life.

Veterans of the war on terrorism seek VA help for a variety of needs. The most common is health care, provided free at VA medical centers and clinics for two years after a service member’s discharge from the military. This includes National Guard and Reserve members coming off active duty after Nov. 11, 1998.

Spinal cord injuries are debilitating, but today, veterans with these injuries work toward achieving an active, independent lifestyle through VA’s network of 23 spinal cord injury centers. Blind and low-vision veterans learn how to regain independence in VA’s blind rehabilitation program, staffed by more than 300 blind rehabilitation specialists and support personnel.

Amputees receive physical therapy and prosthetic devices from VA, including computerized legs and myoelectric arms that respond to the body’s nerve impulses.

VA provides other benefits to meet the needs of returning service members, ranging from col-



**Many veterans rely on medical resources provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.**

lege tuition assistance to home loan guarantees. Job training and vocational rehabilitation services help disabled veterans get back into the work force. Severely disabled veterans can get an adaptive housing grant from VA to make their homes accessible.

A combat veteran’s psychological adjustment to civilian life can be difficult. Veterans who experience such difficulties receive confidential counseling at VA’s 207 Vet Centers throughout the country and can be evaluated and treated for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Family members of returning troops can also get counseling at Vet Centers and Vet Centers offer grief counseling for the families of soldiers who die in combat zones. For the Vet Center nearest you, call 1-877-222-8387 or visit <http://www.va.gov/racs/>.

For more information about VA transitional assistance, contact the Combat Veteran Coordinator at the nearest VA medical facility, call 1-800-827-1000, or visit [www.seamlesstransition.va.gov](http://www.seamlesstransition.va.gov) on the Web.