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## **Indiana veterans are focus of four new programs funded by Lilly Endowment**

In recognition that ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan is having major repercussions on combat veterans and military families in Indiana and throughout the country, Lilly Endowment Inc. today (Oct. 10) hosted a news conference to highlight the work of four organizations that recently have received grants from the Endowment as follows:

Indiana National Guard Relief Fund Inc. -- \$570,000

Crane Technology Inc. -- \$400,000

Purdue University, Military Families Research Institute -- \$8.9 million

Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center -- \$9.9 million

The four organizations' programs address a range of needs relating to combat veterans and their families in Indiana and to varying degrees will have national impact and may serve as models for similar programs around the country.

(At the news conference members of these organizations gave brief descriptions of their programs and distributed individual news releases providing more program details. Representatives were N. Clay Robbins and Craig Dykstra, president and senior vice president for religion, respectively, Lilly Endowment; Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, president, Indiana National Guard Relief Fund; James Schonberger, director of special projects at Crane Technology; Dr. France A. Córdova, president, Purdue University; Dr. Michael J. Kussman, undersecretary for health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and Susan P. Bowers, director of the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center.)

(more)

Indiana veterans  
Add 1

“In recent years the U.S. military has been engaged in sustained, large-scale, high-combat missions, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Craig Dykstra, senior vice president for religion at the Endowment. “Collectively, these four organizations have informed us that approximately 45 percent of the military service members involved are full-time, active-duty personnel. But a majority are members of the National Guard and reserve units of the various armed forces. These are part-time service members who live in their own homes, have regular jobs and are called up for active duty only in times of national emergency. These service members are now being called upon more heavily than ever before.”

According to the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University, most of the nearly 19,000 members of the Guard and Reserve in Indiana have now been deployed at least once, and many have been deployed two, three and even four times. This fall the largest deployment of Indiana National Guard (ING) troops (4,000) since World War II will take place. Indiana, which is 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation in population, has the fourth largest number of National Guard members.

“On television and in the newspapers, we get brief glimpses of what our military service members and their families are going through,” he continued. “We see them board airplanes for Iraq and Afghanistan. We watch daily skirmishes on the news and read about those who have been killed or injured. From time to time, a unit comes home, and we watch them disembark from huge planes and kiss their spouses and children, while flags and banners wave. But then what?

“Then,” Dykstra said, “begins an often very difficult process of reentering life back home.”

What they are doing, largely out of sight except to family members and close friends, is trying to fit back into their families, often meeting babies for the first time, returning to their former jobs or trying to find new work. But now, so much is different.

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Indiana veterans  
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Their families have changed, and they have changed. And if they have been wounded, their challenges are, of course, so much greater.

“Lilly Endowment researched these issues,” Dykstra said, “and identified three broad categories of needs and problems faced by many returning combat veterans: financial and employment issues; medical, rehabilitation and permanent disability issues; and a wide range of family issues. We also found that these four organizations already had programs that are addressing one or more of these challenges and learned that additional funding would enable them to raise their level of impact significantly. We hope these grants will do just that.”

### **Indiana National Guard Relief Fund**

The \$570,000 grant to the Indiana National Guard Relief Fund will augment the Endowment’s three previous grants which have totaled \$750,000. The Fund provides grants of up to \$10,000 per year to ING members and/or their families who suffer significant financial hardship as a result of active duty service. This new grant will add another \$350,000 to that fund and also support ING’s new Families First Initiative.

This initiative will serve the children of ING members by supporting Kids Camp and Operation Re-Connect, programs already in place. It also will provide for calling cards and care-package shipping for ING members overseas, emergency travel assistance for families to visit injured loved ones who have just been brought home from the battlefield, and an annual weekend retreat for families of those killed in action.

It will result in partnerships with community organizations throughout the state, thus raising the awareness of programs available to ING members and their families and promoting more community participation and support for this cause. “Gifts such as the Endowment’s and the projects they support strengthen the Indiana National Guard and provide greater capabilities for it to serve its members well,” said Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger, president of the ING Relief Fund and adjutant general of Indiana.

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Indiana veterans  
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**Crane Technology Inc.**

The \$400,000 grant to Crane Technology Inc. (CTI) will support a pilot project called the Crane Learning & Employment Center for Veterans (CLEC), which will be the first comprehensive program of its kind in the country to help veterans with disabilities enter or reenter the workforce. According to James Schonberger, CTI director of special projects, “Too many returning service members and veterans have difficulty sorting through the many options available to them. Even if they do, they often lack adequate personal support systems to help them succeed.”

Enter CLEC. During the 12- to 18-month pilot project, some 15 to 20 disabled combat veterans will receive on-the-job training and customized postsecondary education. After completing the program successfully, each veteran will be offered a permanent job at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Crane in southwest Indiana, which will house the program. The center will give veterans access to comprehensive services including medical and rehabilitation care, housing for themselves and their families, transportation, workforce education, and salaried employment. (The Indiana Department of Workforce Development is also a supporter of CLEC.) If the pilot program proves successful, Crane plans to expand it significantly and help other agencies across the country learn from its experience.

**Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University**

The \$8.9 million grant to the Purdue Research Foundation will support the work of the university’s Military Family Research Institute (MFRI). The only such university-based institute in the country, MFRI was established in 2000 with funding from the United States Department of Defense to compile and analyze existing research on issues facing military families, their ability to adapt and cope with situations they face and the resources available to them. “Purdue is grateful for this support from Lilly Endowment, which will enable this crucial institution to enhance its research efforts and deepen and

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Indiana veterans  
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expand its impact to benefit service members and their families throughout the country,” Córdova said.

The grant will support three main focuses for MFRI:

- researching the needs and challenges military families face, before, during and after deployment;
- identifying and providing personal assistance for veterans and new resources for family support groups already in place in National Guard and other military facilities across Indiana; and
- offering briefings and educational programs for Indiana professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers, youth workers, ministers and others) to help increase their awareness and understanding of the special needs and circumstances of combat veterans and their spouses, children and parents whom they serve (often without knowing it) in the course of their daily work.

### **Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center**

The \$9.9 million grant to the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center will support the Indiana Veterans Enhanced Services Initiative, a four-pronged approach that focuses first and primarily on combat veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and secondly on veterans who have previously served their country. Since 2004, the Medical Center has treated a total of almost 3,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. This patient population nearly doubles every year, with no end in sight.

Roudebush is one of the key hospitals in the VA system. As one of 21 polytrauma network sites in the country, it provides acute medical and rehabilitative care for combat veterans in Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, who have suffered multiple injuries including amputations, traumatic injuries to the brain and other organs, as well as significant mental health problems.

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Indiana veterans  
Add 5

The enhanced services supported by the grant will enable veterans to receive highly sophisticated medical and rehabilitation treatment even more effectively and efficiently.

“Through the generosity of Lilly Endowment, the Indiana Veterans Enhanced Services Initiative enables the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center to be a national model of the integrated, holistic care exemplifying the mission of service to the newest of our nation’s veterans,” said Susan P. Bowers, director of the VA medical center.

The grant will help fund four major activities:

- establishing the Seamless Transition Integrated Care Clinic that will provide a broad range of services necessary to help facilitate healing and reintegration of veterans in a new, 24,000-square-foot addition;
- construction of a two-story, 28-suite Comfort Home to house families of injured service members while their loved ones undergo extended periods of medical care and rehabilitation;
- retreats for returning combat veterans and their spouses, which will offer an environment that fosters family cohesion and the healing of relationships strained by long separations and the duress of war; and
- rehabilitation events for veterans including the National Veterans Golden Age Games to be hosted in Indianapolis next summer.

“While each of these grants is aimed at slightly different needs and challenges, the Endowment sees great potential for collaboration among them all,” Dykstra said. “The Endowment hopes that these programs, individually and collectively, will inspire other universities and nonprofit organizations, workforce development and other governmental

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Indiana veterans  
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organizations, veterans' organizations and hospitals, businesses and other funders to develop and support additional programs to address the significant needs of veterans and their families throughout the country. They deserve the support of all of us.”