



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
*Canandaigua VA Medical Center*  
400 Fort Hill Avenue, Canandaigua, NY 14424

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MAJOR LEAGUE UMP VISITS HOSPITALIZED VETS IN CANANDAIGUA

When Major League Baseball Umpire Jerry Layne talks, people listen. Whether calling balls and strikes in major league games or telling amusing baseball anecdotes to sick and disabled veterans at VA medical centers - he gets attention. He'll be telling those stories and more to veterans on **Tuesday, November 11, 2008**, during a special celebrity visit to the **Canandaigua VA Medical Center**. The event will be held in the Building 5 Auditorium at 1:00 p.m.

Umpires have the reputation of being gruff, no nonsense guys who don't want their judgment questioned, but Jerry's heart overflows when he visits sick and disabled veterans in VA medical centers. He's been umpiring in the majors since 1988, a profession which demands that he visit each city on the major league circuit. It's during those trips that he takes time to visit sick and disabled veterans who are patients in VA medical centers as part of the Disabled American Veterans VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) program.

"I want to bring smiles and brighter days to those veterans who have given so much to our country," Mr. Layne said. "I want them to know they are appreciated."

There are 172 VA medical centers in the U. S. which treat the 2.3 million disabled veterans represented by the DAV. Many veterans spend long, lonely hours during lengthy hospital stays and Mr. Layne's visits are enthusiastically welcomed. Major League Baseball Umpire Larry Barnett started the hospital visit program in 1977 as part of the DAV VAVS program and actively recruited Mr. Layne.

"We have a free country because veterans made it free and keep it free," Mr. Layne said. "Brightening the lives of sick and disabled veterans with a friendly visit is a very small price to pay for what all Americans owe them."

The event is free and the public is cordially invited to attend. For more information please contact Hank L. Riegel, Recreation Therapy Supervisor at (585) 393-7370. The Canandaigua VA Medical Center is located at 400 Fort Hill Avenue, Canandaigua, NY.