FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 30th, 2014

Veterans Inc.’s Stair Wins National Unsung Hero Award
Former Homeless Veteran Now Serving Others Recognized by National Coalition for Homeless Veterans

Washington, D.C. -- Robert Stair, PhD, a former homeless veteran who has committed his career to helping other homeless veterans, was presented with the Unsung Hero Award at the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. yesterday. Stair is a social worker at Veterans Inc., the largest provider of services to veterans and their families in New England and headquartered in Worcester.

“Bob Stair’s story is a classic American story of hope and inspiration, a story about how you can really do the most amazing things with your life despite your circumstances,” said Vincent J. Perrone, President and CEO of Veterans Inc. “Just as there is no greater tragedy than for one of our nation’s veterans to be homeless, there is no greater triumph than when that veteran not only ends their homelessness but also dedicates their life to helping to save other homeless veterans. That’s Bob’s story.”

Stair served as a member of the United States Air Force for sixteen years from 1982 through Operation Desert Storm. Following an unexpected reduction in force, Stair lived out of his car for nearly half a year, barely able to support basic needs financially. In 1998, he presented at Veterans Inc. – then the Central Massachusetts Shelter for Homeless Veterans – with only a bag of clothing to his name.

For the next two years, Stair stayed with the program, working 80 hours per week and attending school. During that time, Stair also cleared his debt, began a savings account, and re-united with his daughter.

Stair eventually earned his PdD in Psychology, and joined the staff at Veterans Inc. as a Case Manager. He currently serves as Site Manager for Veterans Inc.’s Grove Street facility, and 85-bed shelter for homeless veterans and the agency’s largest. In addition, Stair obtained a certification in Timeline Therapy and Hypnosis, which has allowed him to help countless veterans end their addiction to smoking and to overcome the symptoms of PTSD.

“Bob is an inspiration to all of us”, said Denis Leary, Executive Director, “He has the unique perspective of knowing first hand what homelessness is like. He overcame adversity and used that accomplishment to help other veterans do the same. He truly embodies the phrase “leave no one behind.”

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, which bestows the award, is the resource and technical assistance center for a national network of community-based service providers and local, state and federal agencies that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management support for hundreds of thousands of homeless veterans each year. Stair was presented with their Unsung Hero Award at the awards banquet held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington as part of NCHV’s annual conference.
Veterans Inc. is New England’s leading provider of support services to veterans and their families. The organization’s single-minded mission is to be there for our veterans in their time of need. Since 1991, Veterans Inc. has helped more than 55,000 veterans in need and today operates offices and programs in all six New England states. The support services include temporary and emergency housing, counseling, employment services, job training, family programs, benefits counseling and advocacy, transportation, temporary financial assistance, health and wellness, food services, and veterans’ childcare services.

###

*Also attached for your use is a JPEG photo featuring (L to R): Denis Leary, Veterans Inc. Executive Director; John Driscoll, NCHV Executive Director; Pete Dougherty, NCHV Board Member; Robert Stair; X; Vincent Perrone, Veterans Inc. President & CEO*