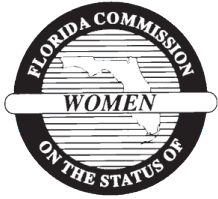


*Florida's Women Veterans:
Challenges and Needs of Those Who Served*



**Florida Commission on the
Status of Women**

2011 Annual Report



FLORIDA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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Dear Florida Citizen:

On behalf of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, we are honored to present our Annual Report, *Florida's Women Veterans: Challenges and Needs of Those Who Served*. This report was created not only to raise awareness about the specific needs of our female veterans, but to serve as a resource for veterans to seek further information about topics outlined in this report. This report honors the contributions and reflects the experiences and needs of Florida's women veterans from all eras. It incorporates information, resources and procedures to guide women veterans in answering questions and resolving issues.

The Florida Legislature, through Section 14.24, Florida Statutes, mandates the Commission to study the changing and developing roles of women in American society, including the implementation of recommendations to improve the development of individual potential. The focus of the Commission's mission is to empower women from all walks of life in achieving their fullest potential. It is in fulfillment of our mandate and mission that the Commission has chosen needs of women veterans as the focus of this 2011 Annual Report.

It is our desire that the information provided in this written report impacts those we serve – girls and women, and acts as a catalyst to ensure the challenges and needs of our military personnel are met.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy C. Acevedo".

Nancy C. Acevedo
FCSW Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie C. Pizzo".

Laurie Pizzo
Annual Report Committee Chair

Acknowledgements

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to empowering women in achieving their fullest potential, to eliminating barriers to that achievement, and to recognizing women's accomplishments.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) is grateful to the many individuals whose knowledge and dedication to Florida's women made this report possible. First and foremost, FCSW Intern Juanita Williams and Research Specialist Veronica Vasquez are recognized for their dedication to this project.

This issue was brought to the attention of the Commission by Celia Szelwach, 1990 West Point graduate, former Army Captain and senior-rated paratrooper who served at Fort Bragg, NC from 1990-1995 during the Desert Shield/Desert Storm era. She formed WOVEN Women Veterans Network in May 2007. WOVEN is an online community for women veterans interested in connecting to share stories, lessons, and transition information. We thank her for her inspiration and assistance in this report.

Much of the information printed in this report is based on research published in the California Research Bureau's 2009 Women Veterans report. We are grateful for their guidance in the research of this report.

A special note of appreciation goes to the FCSW Annual Report Committee for their

input and guidance of this project: *Laurie Pizzo, Chair, Susanne Hebert, Laura McLeod, Ramola Motwani, Barbara Wall, Nancy Acevedo, Ex. Officio.* For their contributions throughout the creation of this report, current FCSW employees Kimberly Mehr, Michele S. Manning, and Kelly S. Sciba, are thanked.

FCSW would also like to extend our gratitude to Governor Rick Scott, The Florida Legislature and the Office of the Attorney General for their continued support of the Commission and making this publication possible.

“Pride in one’s country, and a sense of patriotism, are not sentiments that are limited to a specific gender, nor is the sacrifice of service to one’s country through a military career. Therefore, it should be remembered and taught that service to our country has not, nor ever should be, limited only to our nation’s men. In this greatest country on our planet, Americans know that we do our best when employing the best qualities of both men and women working together for the betterment of our nation.”

-Author Unknown

Introduction

Due to their increasing numbers in the U.S. Armed Forces, women are the second-fastest growing population of veterans (after elderly veterans). After serving in the military in a variety of important missions, they are returning to their roles as wives, partners, mothers, caregivers, and workers in unprecedented numbers. Women veterans share many of the physical, mental, and emotional needs that their male counterparts face as a result of serving their country. In addition, they have unique experiences and needs as female veterans.

Florida's Women Veterans: Challenges and Needs of Those Who've Served describes the state's 140,871 women veterans from all branches of the military, including the Florida National Guard and the military Reserves. This report honors the contributions and reflects the experiences and needs of Florida's women veterans from all eras. However, the publication focuses on the issues and needs of service members who have served after September 11, 2001 in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). It is this growing group of women who are leading the necessary changes in federal, state, and local structures that serve veterans.

The report identifies the challenges women veterans face, the primary services they need, and the barriers they encounter. It includes experiences of women veterans who shared their experiences and opinions through a survey. To better understand these experiences and issues, the report also provides a brief overview of women in the military and explains the federal, state, and

local service delivery structures that provide the benefits and services available to all veterans, including some targeted to women.

As an additional resource, the report includes a compilation of the recommendations relating to women veterans that have been put forth by organizations during the past several years. It also includes websites and other resources for further information.

Throughout America's history, women have served honorably and sacrificed tremendously, and they continue this effort throughout the world today. Yet, there are still needs these heroines have that need to be met. Collectively, steps must be taken to improve health care for female troops and veterans—taking their unique health care needs into account—and expand existing support services and transitional resources.

The unique issues of homeless females needs to be addressed. Additional efforts need to be made towards eliminating sexual assault and harassment from within the military, and career opportunities expanded for women. This will make our military stronger and our country more secure. With more female troops enlisting and returning home from combat every day, there is no better time to heed the words of President Lincoln and care for she 'who has borne the battle.' The brave women who answer our country's call deserve nothing less. (Mulhall, 2009).



Throughout America's history, women have served honorably and sacrificed tremendously.

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Florida Lieutenant
Governor
Jennifer Carroll



JENNIFER CARROLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

March 1, 2012

Dear Florida Citizen:

Florida Commission on the Status of Women has a long and proud history of advocacy on behalf of our State's women and girls, reflecting the important role women have played in determining the legacy and the strength of our State today.

As a woman Veteran who enlisted in the Navy as a jet mechanic and retired 20 years later with the rank of Lieutenant Commander, Aviation Maintenance Office, I know firsthand the numerous challenges and tremendous rewards of military service.

As this 2011 Annual Report, *Florida's Women Veterans: Challenges and Needs of Those Who Served* illustrates, the Commission continues its tradition of empowering women in achieving their fullest potential and recognizing women's accomplishments. I am delighted that the Commission chosen to focus this report on the unique needs of Florida's Women Veterans.

This publication will be an extremely useful tool for all of the women veterans in Florida and will also help us understand better the issues and challenges faced by women transitioning out of the military and the barriers that confront them. It will also highlight the many accomplishments of these heroines, who have given so much for our country and freedoms.

I hope that this report proves useful to inform the policy discussion and efforts to ensure that women veterans receive the recognition and services they have earned and deserve.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Carroll,
Lieutenant Governor

Executive Summary

According to the United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, Florida is one of the states with the largest number of women veterans-home to at least 140,256 women veterans, which is 1.9 percent of the state's adult female population. The women's veteran population in Florida is largely composed of older, white non-Hispanic women compared to their male counterparts. These women have served their country in the same capable conduct as their male comrades.

According to the *California's Women Veterans Report*, most service members transition from military to civilian life without difficulty. However, many women and men who return home from serving in the continuing wars in Iraq (OIF) and Afghanistan (OEF) share a wide range of difficulties adapting to a calming society as a result of their experiences in combat. This report informs state policy-makers about women veteran's challenges and needs. It also describes the federal and state service structure for women veterans and includes some descriptive statistics regarding women veterans.

Challenges

The largest group of women veterans served in OEF/OIF operations. Women make up at least 11.3 percent of those veterans. Roughly 49.7 percent of female OEF/OIF Veterans have enrolled with Veteran's Healthcare-47.8 percent of this group have used the healthcare eleven or more times. The average age of women veterans is forty-seven years compared to sixty-one years for their male counterparts. In the fiscal year of 2008/2009, the top three clinically diagnosed categories that women veterans

faced was post-traumatic stress disorder, hypertension, and depression that was treated by the VHA.

Women veterans report that they do not receive the same recognition and respect for their military service, especially their combat experiences, that is afforded to their male peers. Women face a challenge trying to access the support they need from their own female veterans. Another challenge that these women can face is re-connecting the family relationships they left after long deployments. Women are rarely awarded the decompression time they would require to adjust and address their needs before caring for the needs of their families.



According to the *California Women Veteran Report*, conditions during their deployment, such as carrying heavy loads, hard climate conditions, and lack of adequate personal hygiene all can contribute to chronic pain and health conditions that women veterans face when they return from their deployment. Physical weaknesses would include, but not limited to; joints, back, and different muscular troubles due, in part, to equipment designed for the handling of men. These women return home with digestive illnesses, urinary system failures and must seek healthcare technicians knowledgeable about their experiences and needs.

Mental disorders are experienced by more women veterans than males, especially for the younger generations. Military Sexual Trauma, known as MST, is common amongst women while in military service. An estimated

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- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
www.womenshealth.va.gov

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20 to 48 percent of women have been sexually assaulted and roughly 80 percent report having experienced some form of sexual harassment. MST victims are more likely to experience other forms of mental illnesses associated with being traumatized. Studies have concluded that women are twice as likely as men to develop post traumatic stress disorder and typically experience longer lasting symptoms than males, and it is often accompanied by physical disabilities. Depression and substance abuse are very common among women being treated for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The military would not be able to perform its mission without the continued contributions of female troops. Although a growing number of women are serving in the military today, females are leaving the military at higher rates than males, and proportionately fewer women plan to serve until retirement. While many factors can negatively impact the decision of women to remain in the military,

women have expressed concerns about the opportunities for career advancement, balancing a military career and family life, inadequate military health care for female troops, and staggering rates of sexual assault and harassment (Mulhall, 2009).

Women are not the only ones who struggle; their dependents, especially young children, experience the hurt of watching the struggle of these veterans returning to civilian lives. They are also at increased risk of slipping into homelessness in the face of extreme cases of trauma they experience while performing military services. Struggles including gender discrimination, balancing work and home, traumas, and physical impairments all make it difficult to stay on top of bills. Many have difficulty finding jobs that pay as well as the military and therefore they are unable to maintain the lifestyle their families are accustomed to living. Surveys also show that child care is a challenge, in addition to difficulties accessing healthcare, mental health and other needed services due to the lack in finding an affordable and well suited child care provider.



Women are not the only ones who struggle; their dependents, especially young children, experience the hurt of watching the struggle of these veterans returning to civilian lives.

Brief History of Women in the Military

By: Juanita Williams, FCSW Intern

When discussing the history of women in combat, one might reference Joan of Arc who in 1429, at the tender age of 17, successfully led French troops into battle against the English. Hundreds of women have disguised themselves as men to fight in both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Separate military services for women were established, starting in the early 1940's, but women did not gain professional military status in the United States until 1948 when President Truman signed the *Women's Armed Services Integration Act* which limited their number to 2 percent of the total military. In 1991, the restriction of women from flying combat aircraft was repealed, but the 1948 law still banned women from serving on naval combat vessels (Willens, 1996).

There were many arguments during this time stating that if combat slots are open to women, then they may be subjected to the draft. The male only draft was found to be constitutional in 1981 in the *Rockster v Goldberg* case, largely because the draft was viewed as a way to fill combat slots that women were prevented from filling (Willens, 1996).

Women are a vital part of the military and the veterans' community. Although they were not formally under military command until the early part of the 20th century, they have found other ways to serve their country.

In spite of the somewhat limited standing of women in the military at the time, World War I was indeed a turning point in history for military women. Prior to this, numerous women distinguished themselves on the

battlefield for the Continental Army. For example, Margaret Corbin and Mary McCauley, who were heroines in the Battle of Monmouth in 1778 and thought to be the model for the legendary Molly Pitcher, fought in the Battle of Fort Mifflin in 1776 (Holm, pp.3-4). Later during the Civil War, at least 400 women on both sides of the conflict disguised themselves as men and assumed combat roles alongside men. By the end of WW I, about 34,000 women served as nurses in all of the armed forces, which by then included nurses in the Marines and Coast Guard as well as in the Army and Navy.

World War I is believed to have been a turning point in the history of women in the military. The significant role of nurses and women serving in other roles during the war firmly established the importance of women. By the end of the war, nearly 280,000 women were serving out of 12 million in the armed forces. In all, roughly 350,000 women served in the military during the course of the war (Holm, p. 100).

At the end of fiscal year 2006, there were an estimated 149,000 living women veterans of WW II (Office of the Actuary, December 2004). It was during WW II when women were first given full military status with the establishment of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) by Congress in 1943.

June 12, 1948, President Harry Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, making women permanent members of the Regular and Reserve forces of the Army, Navy, Marines and the newly created Air Force (Women in Military Service

(Continued on page 10)

Women Veteran Fact:

The current projected percentage of U.S. Veterans who are women is more than 8 percent.

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
www.womenshealth.va.gov

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for America Memorial Foundation, p.2) and was no longer regulated to serving in "women's components" during times of war.

The Korean Conflict was the first immediate post-WW II manifestation of that challenge and women played an active role in the engagement. At the time the war broke out in 1950, there were about 22,000 women in the armed forces, with roughly one-third in nursing or health-related jobs. Over the next year, efforts to increase the number of active duty military nurses succeeded, particularly by activating many military nurses in the reserves who had served during WW II (Holm, pp. 149-150).



The passage of P.L. 90-130 in 1967 was meant, in large part, to statutorily remove any obstacles to women becoming high ranking military officers. In 1970, Brigadier General Anna Mae Hays, head of the Army Nurse Corps, became the first woman to attain star rank in nursing. By 1972, Rear Admiral Alene B. Duerk, head of the Navy Nurse Corps, became the first woman admiral (Holm, p. 203), and also in 1972, E. Ann Hoefly became Brigadier General in the Air Force Nurse Corps.

The 1970's also saw the appointment of women to star rank who were not nurses: Army Brigadier General Elizabeth P. Hoisington (1970); Air Force Brigadier

(Continued on page 11)

Special Needs of Florida's Female Veterans

- Increased recognition for military services
- Updated and concurrent military records of all services
- More research on traumatic experiences to be used as evidence in reporting Veteran's Administration (VA) assistance
- Reduction of claims backlog
- Trauma reduction counseling for families
- Eliminating homelessness
- Prevention of suicide
- Childcare options
- More experienced healthcare provider for specific problems
- Affordable housing and assistance
- Job placement that allows for a stable transition from combat to domesticated lifestyle

(Continued from page 10)

General Jeanne M. Holm (1971); Navy Rear Admiral Fran McKee (1976); and Marine Brigadier General Margaret A. Brewer (1978) (Moseley Brown, 2005). Gains made by women in the military continued through the 1970's.

In the National Defense Authorization Act for the Fiscal Years 1992-1993, Congress rescinded female combat exemption laws and then the Clinton Administration opened a quarter million previously closed combat positions to women (GAO Report, July 1996).

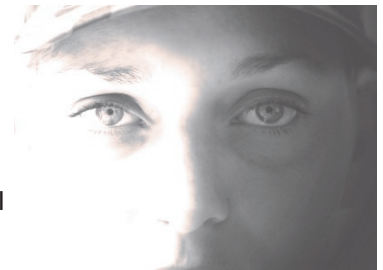
October 1, 1994, the Defense Department issued a policy that rescinded the "risk rule" that gauges the specialties to which women can be assigned. The policy was backed strongly by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and was the extension of the changes made in April 1993 that opened most aviation specialties, including attack helicopters to women (Army, March 1994). Proponents of opening all positions in the military to women argue that military readiness is enhanced when there is a larger pool of applicants, whereas opponents insist that due to politics, quotas would be undeniable, thus allowing unqualified women into key military positions. Opponents of allowing women to compete for combat billets argue that it is too dangerous to put women in the position of becoming prisoners of war. Without a doubt, there is a much greater probability for acts of sexual molestation and rape with the addition of women to the front lines. The "front lines" in modern combat, however, are fluid.

Although they were technically in support roles, two female U.S. soldiers were taken captive and one was sexually abused by her

Iraqis captors in the Gulf War. This situation made those who were already skeptical about putting women in such a compromising position further question whether women should be subjected to the horrors of combat. Many, however, argue that adult women who make the decision to join the military are aware of the consequences (Willens, 1996).

Another argument against women in combat is that they simply do not have the physical strength and endurance needed. Military service by its nature is a physically demanding job that not everyone is fit to handle. Many experts agree however, that there are some women who have the physical strength and endurance to be combat soldiers and fill roles not traditionally available to women (Army Times, July 29, 1996). There is still some question as to whether women can handle the gravitational forces of an aircraft, but there is absolutely no evidence that says they cannot. It is interesting to note that surveys show that men and women alike believe the physical standards for **military occupational specialties (MOS)** should be identical for both men and women (Willens, 1996).

Currently, all members of the armed services must pass fitness tests, which are scaled according to age and gender. There are no current tests that specifically measure the physical skills required for each military occupational specialty (MOS) -- the only way to test this is have the soldiers simply go out and perform their task. The goal is to create these gender-blind specific tests that more accurately predict a soldier's success in combat (Willens, 1996).



October 1, 1994, the Defense Department issued a policy that rescinded the "risk rule" that gauges the specialties to which women can be assigned.

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The Marine Corps awarded twenty-three women the Combat Action Ribbon for service in the Persian Gulf War because they were engaged by Iraqi troops.

Another argument against women serving in combat billets is that they would disrupt the cohesive unit and undermine the *esprit de corps*. The effectiveness of the military hinges on cohesion -- every member must completely trust and respect one another. Many argue men would not be able to trust women to be capable of accomplishing the physical demands of combat, which could lead to serious problems. In order to maintain cohesion, experts agree that all members of the military must be treated equally. A standard must be maintained to make every member feel as if he/she is part of one single unit, not separated by gender (Willens, 1996).

Romantic relationships and pregnancies also concern many experts. The argument is that romance may undermine *esprit de corps* and that pregnancies will hurt readiness. Although pregnancy is a major concern of many, statistics show it has little bearing on military readiness. In fact, women on the average spend a mere one fewer hour per month at work than their male counterparts. When one excludes pregnancy leave, women have a

lower rate of lost time at work than their male counterparts (Willens 1996).

More than 40,000 American women served in the war against Iraq. The Marine Corps awarded twenty-three women the Combat Action Ribbon for service in the Persian Gulf War because they were engaged by Iraqi troops. Desert Storm was a huge turning point for women, much like Vietnam was for African-Americans, and it showed that modern war boundaries between combat and non-combat zones are being blurred. It makes no sense to cling to semantics (combat vs combat support) given the reality of war. Furthermore, allowing both men and women to compete for all military occupational specialties is not an equal rights issue, but one of military effectiveness. If the United States is to remain the world's most capable and most powerful military power, we need to have the best person in each job, regardless of their gender (Willens, 1996).



Veteran's Spotlights: Sharing Their Stories

Success stories. They inspire and encourage us. We learn from the seeds they plant. Throughout this report are the stories of women veterans all over the state of Florida who have made an impact on their communities. These stories are not only a source of information, but also inspiration. Some are members of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame, some were shared by County Veteran Service Officers, and others are women veterans the Florida Commission on the Status of Women has met and learned their amazing stories over the years.



Veteran's Spotlight: Lt. Governor Jennifer Carroll

Jennifer Carroll is Florida's 18th Lieutenant Governor. She is the first female elected as Lieutenant Governor in Florida and the first African-American elected Statewide. She was a state legislator for over seven years, a small business owner, former Executive Director of Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and a Navy veteran. Carroll is an example of the American Dream come true. In addition to her duties assisting the Governor with economic development, Carroll oversees the Florida Department of Military Affairs, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, Governor Designee on the Florida Defense Support Task Force and also serves as Chairperson of Space Florida.

In her role as head of Military Affairs, Carroll has visited nearly every military installation in Florida. She travels to Washington, D.C. to meet with Congressional and Pentagon officials to advocate for Florida's \$65 billion military economy and defense industry. Carroll's efforts resulted in increased military positions, military construction funding and increased defense contract opportunities for Florida's businesses.

She was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad West Indies, immigrated to the United States as a young child and served her adopted nation honorably and with distinction. Carroll enlisted in the United States Navy in 1979 rising from the ranks of an enlisted jet mechanic E-1 to retire as a Lieutenant Commander, Aviation Maintenance Officer after 20 years. During her time in the Navy she was awarded numerous awards that include: Meritorious Service Medal, two Navy Commendation Medals, two Navy Achievement Medals, Navy "E", Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, two Sea Service Ribbons, two Coast Guard Special Operation Ribbons, and an Expert Pistol Medal.

As a legislator, Carroll worked to pass meaningful legislation that enhanced economic development, which includes procuring \$2.9 million to fund the Florida Export Finance Corporation to help employers have access to short term loans in order to retain and create jobs. She sponsored the Entertainment Economic Development Legislation that created thousands of jobs for Floridians who were paid over \$485 million in wages.

Carroll also served as Deputy Majority Leader from 2003-2004, Majority Whip from 2004-2006, Vice Chair of the Transportation and Economic Development Committee 2003-2004, Chair of the Finance Committee from 2006-2008 and Chair of the Economic and Development Council from 2008-2010.

Carroll holds an MBA degree from St. Leo University. She and her husband Nolan started and ran a successful public relations consulting and franchising business. Carroll is married to Nolan Carroll of Miami and they have three children, Nolan II, Nyckie and Necho.



Florida Lt. Governor Jennifer Carroll

Overview of Women Veterans: Then and Now

THE ARMED FORCES: ACTIVE AND RESERVED

The armed Forces consist of both Active and Reserved Forces. The Active Force encompasses the Army, Coast Guard*, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Over 1.8 million women are serving in the military in more than 80 percent of all jobs and in over 90 percent of all career fields (these percentages differ amongst the branches).

The tables below will reflect data reported to the Department of Veterans Affairs as of September 30, 2010 and September 30, 2011. The total percent difference between women in Active Duty from 2010 to 2011 is an increase of just 0.1 percent.

** Unlike the other four services within the U.S. Department of Defense, the Coast Guard is attached to the Department of Homeland Security.*



Florida, with more than 140,000 women veterans, was one of five states with the highest numbers.

ACTIVE DUTY (September 30, 2010)

	Women	Total	Percent Women
Army	76,193	566,045	13.5%
Marine Corps	15,257	202,441	7.5%
Navy	52,546	328,303	16.0%
Air Force	64,275	334,196	19.2%
Total for Dept. of Defense	208,271	1,430,985	14.6%
Coast Guard	5,552	42,358	13.1%
Total	213,823	1,473,343	14.5%

Source: Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. Data Reported as of September 30, 2010

ACTIVE DUTY (September 30, 2011)

	Women	Total	Percent Women
Army	76,694	565,463	13.6%
Marine Corps	13,667	201,157	6.8%
Navy	53,385	325,123	16.4%
Air Force	63,552	333,370	19.1%
Total for Dept. of Defense	207,308	1,425,113	14.5%
Coast Guard	6,790	43,251	15.7%
Total	214,098	1,468,364	14.6%

Source: Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. Data Reported as of September 30, 2011

RESERVE and GUARD (September 30, 2010)

	Women	Total	Percent Women
Army Reserve	62,344	284,184	21.9%
Marine Corps Reserve	5,423	97,087	5.6%
Navy Reserve	19,761	102,348	19.3%
Air Force Reserve	29,113	110,674	26.3%
Total for Dept. of Defense	116,631	594,293	17.7%
Coast Guard Reserve	1,592	9,737	16.4%
Reserve Total	118,223	604,030	19.6%
Army National Guard	52,356	366,902	14.3%
Air National Guard	19,826	107,676	18.4%
National Guard Total	72,182	474,578	15.2%

Source: Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. Data Reported as of September 30, 2010

RESERVE and GUARD (September 30, 2011)

	Women	Total	Percent Women
Army Reserve	62,473	288,686	21.6%
Marine Corps Reserve	5,704	100,453	5.7%
Navy Reserve	20,549	103,015	19.9%
Air Force Reserve	28,463	106,814	26.6%
Total for Dept. of Defense	117,189	598,968	19.6%
Coast Guard Reserve	1,592	9,526	16.7%
Reserve Total	118,781	608,494	19.5%
Army National Guard	53,290	365,166	14.6%
Air National Guard	19,500	105,685	18.5%
National Guard Total	72,790	470,851	15.5%

Source: Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. Data Reported as of September 30, 2011

The total percent difference between women in the Reserve is an increase by 1.9 percent and the Guard is also an increase of 0.3 percent.

Due to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the National Guard and Reserves have been activated on an unprecedented scale. Service members from both the Guard and Reserve have made up roughly half of those serving.

The Reserve components provide the Armed Forces with trained units and individuals in time of war or national emergency, or if required by "national security", when needed to supplement the regular Active components. The Reserves, as well as the National Guard, in most aspects, are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. All five branches of the Armed Forces have their own reserved forces.

Veteran's Spotlight:

MG Marianne Mathewson-Chapman, Ph.D.



MG Marianne Mathewson-Chapman, Ph.D. (Florida Women's Hall of Fame Member, Inducted 2000)

Major General Marianne Mathewson-Chapman, Ph.D., was the first woman in the Army National Guard to be promoted to the rank of Major General. The Major General's active military service began in 1970 when she was commissioned in the Navy Nurse Corps. She served as Deputy Surgeon General and Special Assistant to the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army/Director, Army National Guard until 2002. She also has served as Chairperson of the Adjutant General's Advisory Council on Minorities' and Women's Issues. A powerful health care advocate, she specializes in the field of oncology. She retired from active military duty in 2005. She currently serves as a VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION Outreach Consultant to the National Guard/Reserve and families.

The Major General was born in Sabetha, Kansas, and is a graduate of Kansas State University, Trinity Lutheran School of Nursing, the University of San Diego, the University of California, the University of Texas and the University of Florida. She is the recipient of numerous awards and decorations including the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medal, and the Order of Medical Military Merit Medal. She also was awarded the highest accolade in military nursing, the 9A-Proficiency Designator, from the Surgeon General of the Army.

Major General Mathewson-Chapman was inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame in 2000.

WOMEN VETERANS

When thinking of the average veteran, most people envision an older, silver-haired male, perhaps from the WWII era. Although this may once have been statistically accurate, today's veterans make up a much more diverse population. Veterans who served during the Vietnam War now make up the largest number of male veterans (age 55 and older), and this group includes various races and ethnicities. Servicewomen from all eras must now be included in the veterans' pool, along with younger servicemen who've served during peacetime, the Gulf War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF).

In spite of their long history of military service, women are often overlooked as veterans. Women were not even asked if they had ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces until the 1980 Census. When they were asked, 1.2 million answered that they had, according to the California Research Bureau (CRB).

Women veterans' population increased by the year 2000, to 1.7 million and continues to grow, while the male veterans' population gets smaller. This growth may be due to:

- An increased number of women entering, as well as leaving the military
- A greater survival rate of women than men at any given age
- A younger age distribution of women, then male veterans. (CRB).

ROLE OF WOMEN VETERANS

During his Second Inaugural Address, President Abraham Lincoln pledged America's solemn obligation "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." More than 140 years later, the spirit of Lincoln's words is very much alive. However, women have joined the military's ranks—serving in new roles, in greater numbers than ever before, and in combat situations. Like their male peers, women veterans have shown enormous dedication and courage in defending their country. But too often, they do not receive the same support within the military and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

While new positions and doors of opportunity have been opened for women in the services, they still face significant, unique challenges. Career progression is often slower for women and they are still underrepresented in the military's senior ranks, despite great progress. Challenges for women with young children and a perceived lack of opportunity for advancement have led many women to leave the service early in their careers. Inadequate military health care for women and staggering rates of women reporting sexual assault and harassment are also hindering some female troops from continuing their military careers. These challenges are not only bad for service members' well-being and reflect the military's struggle to properly protect its own, but they have a substantial impact on the mission readiness of the overall force. (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

When they come home, female veterans are confronted with new challenges. While it has made strides in recent years, the Veteran's Administration is still underprepared to

(Continued on page 18)

The purpose of this section is to describe the characteristics of women veterans. Unless otherwise stated, the main sources for this section will come from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Policy and Planning.

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Florida is ranked third among states with the largest population of women veterans.

provide adequate care to the surge of female veterans coming to its hospitals and clinics. In addition, women veterans face significant barriers when entering the civilian workforce, and homeless rates among female veterans are on the rise. Given the inadequate support services specific for our women veterans, this comes as no surprise. (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

Female troops and veterans deserve the same access to high-quality health care, transitional resources, and benefits as their male counterparts. After honorably fighting abroad, they should not have to wage new battles here at home. In order to fully honor their outstanding contributions to the military and service to the country, more needs to be done to support our women warriors. (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

As early as the Revolutionary War, and in every other major American conflict thereafter, women have served honorably and courageously on behalf of the country.

In Iraq and Afghanistan especially, the health of our force relies heavily on a sustained and strong female population. More than 212,000 female service members have been deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF), making up 11 percent of our force there. Over 120 of those women have given their

lives, and more than 600 have been wounded in action. (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

However, women have not always had an officially recognized role in the military. It was not until June 12, 1948, when President Harry Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act that females were allowed to serve a permanent role in the active and reserve branches and were no longer relegated to serving in "women's components" during times of war. (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

During the Equal Rights Movement of the 60's and 70's, many of the remaining limitations on female participation in the Armed Forces were reduced, particularly with the advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973. The need to fill the ranks without a draft led to targeted recruitment of women. By 1976, women had gained admittance to all of the service academies. In the last two decades, legislative and Department of Defense (DOD) directives have created even more options for women. Currently, more than 80 percent of all DOD positions are now available to women, and these opportunities vary by service. For example, 99.7 percent of Air Force specialties are open to women. (Erin Mulhall, 2009).

Florida remains ranked third among states with the largest population of women veterans, and it increases each year.



DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Florida Department of Military Affairs provides management oversight of the Florida National Guard, and provides units and personnel ready to support national security objectives; to protect the public safety of citizens; and to contribute to national, state and community programs that add value to the United States of America and to the State of Florida. The Department of Military Affairs, a state agency created by Chapter 250, Florida Statutes, oversees and provides administrative support to the Florida National Guard. Directly responsive to the Governor of Florida, the Department and the Florida National Guard together operate within the policy guidance and fiscal framework of both federal and state authorities.

In accordance with Chapters 250, 251 and 252, Florida Statutes, the Adjutant General is specifically tasked with (1) the combat readiness and emergency preparedness of the Florida National Guard, (2) responding to disasters and civil disturbances, (3) reducing the importation of controlled substances, and (4) assisting Floridians at risk.

Both the Department of Military Affairs and the Florida National Guard Headquarters are located in St. Augustine. The Adjutant General is a federally-recognized general officer serving as both a department head of the Department of Military Affairs and commanding officer of the Florida National Guard. Her or his staff represents a complex blend of full-time and part-time military personnel, federal technicians, state employees, Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen. The joint headquarters is responsible for more than one billion dollars in federal property,

armories in 55 communities across the state, and more than 73,000 acres in training lands.

With over \$454 million in federal funds and about \$18 million in state general revenue funding annually, the department manages a force of about 12,000 National Guard members, more than 1,900 full time military personnel, and 335 state employees. Together, the Department of Military Affairs and the Florida National Guard are committed to serving the vital interests of the nation, the state, local communities, and Florida's citizens.

FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD

The Florida National Guard (consisting of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard) traces its heritage back to 1565, the year the Spanish founders of St. Augustine organized their first company of Citizen-Soldiers. Florida's militia has defended local communities for over 440 years. Consistent with Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, Florida's Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen continue to serve in units from the Panhandle to the Keys. Today, Florida Guardsmen are involved in hundreds of community service projects across the state, and each day many serve in disaster relief operations, helping residents recover from natural disasters. Others train or serve in critical national defense positions throughout the nation and overseas deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan supporting operations in the war on terrorism.

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Their mission is to provide military units and personnel ready to support United States national security objectives; to protect life and property; preserve peace, order and public safety; and, to contribute to such national, state, and local programs that add value to The United States of America and the State of Florida.

The Florida National Guard is organized and equipped to accomplish both state and federal military missions. We have units and personnel actively engaged in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other places around the globe. We will continue to provide information about these federal operations at the Florida National Guard's website.

Additionally, the Florida National Guard trains and prepares to protect the citizens of Florida during natural disasters and domestic security threats. When called upon by the Governor, the Florida National Guard can deploy more than 8,000 personnel to perform a range of emergency management services from search and rescue to area security and logistics support.

Each year prior to hurricane season, Guardsmen from across the state begin preparing themselves and their families for potential activation and deployment.

FLORIDA NATIONAL GUARD FOUNDATION

The Florida National Guard Foundation was created to provide support to men and women of the Florida National Guard in times of emergencies and deployments. They honor and assist Soldiers and Airmen who have sacrificed their health and well being for the

security of our State and Nation, and to preserve our history so the sacrifices of the soldiers and airmen are never forgotten.

The Core values of the Florida National Guard Foundation are:

- Collaboration — Work with other agencies to ensure we provide the best service possible to the members of the Florida National Guard in their time of need.
- Respect — Respect the dedication and sacrifices that our Wounded Warriors have made in defense of our state and nation. Honor those sacrifices with assistance and encouragement.
- Empower — Empower our Soldiers and Airmen to deal with their financial crisis; therefore allowing them to concentrate on their mission to keep our country safe.
- Work-Life Balance — Help our Soldiers and Airmen to find their Work-Life Balance by assisting them in their times of need.

Since July 2009, as a 501(c) 3, the Foundation has responded to the needs of over 700 members in support of their mission statement. Additionally, they have helped provide basic needs such as food, gasoline and housing to Soldiers and Airmen facing hardship from unemployment after their deployment. The demand of their personnel will continue this year with over 2,500 soldiers returning from a year long deployment and with an anticipated 30percent returning to no jobs.



Visit the Florida
National Guard's
website at:

[www.floridanationalguard
foundation.org/index.html](http://www.floridanationalguardfoundation.org/index.html)



Veteran's Spotlight: T. Denise Manning

T. Denise Manning imagined a future for herself and refused to stop short of her potential. Learning early that life provides some children with little more than an imagination and a potential, Denise has overcome hardship and loss to succeed where failure is the easier path. Raised amid rampant gang violence and a raging drug war near Oakland, California, she found her way out through inspiration, action and drive. A story of family upheaval, grief, goal identification and brazen tenacity, Ms. Manning's life and worldview is a shining example of what the human spirit can endure and achieve.

Born just one generation beyond prostitution and abject poverty, T. Denise Manning first moved beyond expectations by graduating high school with honors when many thought she would never walk the stage. Entering the military allowed her to pursue her education without interruption and to focus on her many intellectual interests. Today, with over thirteen years of military service in the United States Army, including a one-year tour in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom, OIF 09-10), Ms. Manning holds degrees in both Criminal Justice and Criminal Science. Extending her expertise in forensics, criminal defense and crime scene investigation through extensive military training, Denise has also worked with various police departments in fingerprint analysis and crime scene processing. Currently, Denise serves as the agency's statewide Civil Citation Coordinator for the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. This position gives first-time misdemeanor offenders the opportunity to participate in intervention services at the earliest stage of delinquency. Ms. Manning is also an active Deputy Sheriff Reserve for the Gadsden County Sheriff's Office.

Never one to forget others, Denise has also dedicated herself to public service with programs for at-risk populations. She has established and facilitated several creative writing and poetry classes for youthful offenders already in the criminal justice system. Ms. Manning has received numerous commendations for Outstanding Service and Distinguished Service and has been highlighted for community service leadership in several print publications, on television, and on the web. It's no secret that Ms. Manning is an overachiever and she holds memberships in many social and civil organizations. She is the current president for the Greater Tallahassee National Council of Negro Women, a Commissioner for the Status of Women and Girls for Leon County, a Human Relations Council member for the City of Tallahassee, a National top leader for Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority and the list goes on....

Charismatic, direct, inspired and powerful, Denise Manning speaks to the core issues of overcoming hardship and achieving personal success – through courage, tenacity and imagination. Denise inspires others to reach the potential they've always imagined.



T. Denise Manning

*"I believe a person can never fail if they IMAGINE success."
-T. Denise Manning, 2009*

Two Worlds Apart: Civilian and Military Life

By: *Veronica Vasquez, FCSW Research Specialist*

Serving in the military is a life-altering event. Transition back into civilian life is unique to each person, depending on their experiences and the support they receive. Understanding the difference between civilian life, military life and the barriers they face when separating the two is imperative in order to recognize the appropriate services our war heroes need.

When returning back to civilian life after serving, things are relatively different, often leaving the veteran feeling overwhelmed, confused and isolated. Prior to serving, most women (and men) had jobs, relationships, families, friends and homes to return to each day. As a veteran, experiences such as war, deaths, and trauma leave the veteran feeling like a different person. Their transition from active duty back to civilian life can be challenging when separating the two. For female veterans, however, separating themselves from their life in the military and their life as a civilian is a completely different experience than for males. Men and women cope differently with the challenges of returning back home. Facing a myriad of difficulties, women are confronted with new barriers when entering back into civilian life.

Women are rising to the opportunity to serve their country by honorably and courageously joining the fight alongside their male comrades. Although men and women veterans share many similar challenges, veterans also face issues unique to their gender. With new positions and doors of opportunity opening up for women in the services, female troops

are experiencing significant and unique challenges when returning home. Florida's large percentage of female veterans makes it a key state in the work to improve resources for female veterans. According to Floridavets.org, Florida has the second largest veteran population, and the third largest female veteran population throughout the United States. It is becoming clear that the challenges women in the services face when returning from war and back to civilization, and their needs, are unique to their gender.

Organizations that serve veterans are making significant strides. Change is slow, however, and adequate care and services for the surge of female veterans is still lacking in many areas.

This section of the report highlights some of the challenges and needs unique to women veterans. Because most benefits and support programs have traditionally geared towards men, some women veterans are facing significant barriers when returning back from deployment. Society is slow to officially understand and recognize women's roles in the military. Images of war are usually associated with men, fighting side by side. As a result, women veterans have increased difficulty transitioning back to civilian life and separating their military life from the life they had as a civilian.



This section of the report highlights the needs of women veterans as well as identifies the challenges women face when making the transition from active duty back to their civilian life.

RESPECT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Like men, women have been very much part of this fight and despite many years of their service in the military, female veterans and troops feel that they are still not adequately recognized or respected for the work that they do. Due to military policy, their roles in the military are believed to have mostly kept them away from enemy lines. Prior to 2001, women in the military had rarely seen combat grounds. Recent wars in the Middle East have changed that, with women finding themselves fighting in marketplaces and alleyways, often blurring combat grounds and enemy lines. Like male soldiers, women make tremendous contributions and continue to make profound sacrifices. Female soldiers have shown enormous dedication and courage in defending their country, often sacrificing their own lives. According to MSNBC.com, Pentagon figures show that as of January 3, 2011, **110** women had been killed in the war in Iraq and, in the Afghan campaign, **24** women have been killed. This is a statistic that is often overlooked by society as most are still unaware that female soldiers are facing such danger.

Female vets sacrifice their life just as much as any male soldier. According to Kathy Dobie, female soldiers have driven fuel trucks and ordered supplies; manned machine gun turrets; cleaned wounds; guarded prisoners; followed orders from good commanders and lousy ones; barked orders, too, some of them; listened for the whistling sound of incoming; hit the dirt; threatened the local populace with the points of their weapons; kicked down doors; scanned rooftops and bridges for snipers; sat with their backs to the wall; sweated; cursed; grumbled; joked; and soldiered on. With women soldiers making the same sacrifices as men, a challenge women face is not receiving appropriate health care

or benefits, simply because society believes female troops are not affected by war.

Society's difficulty in recognizing women's integral part of our Nation's defense has robbed women from their honor for serving. For example, one female veteran reports placing a "veteran" bumper sticker on her vehicle and civilians automatically assumed she is driving her husband's/ boyfriend's car. It is easier for society to give recognition and respect to male soldiers than female soldiers simply because historically women have been nowhere near combat grounds. Women veterans often face ignorance and misconceptions about their own roles in the military. Pam Smith-Beatty did not think of herself as a veteran, for instance. Before considering herself a war hero and a retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, Veteran Smith-Beatty saw herself as a wife, a mother, a daughter, and many other things before a retired veteran. "I thought a veteran was an old guy who had shot people," said Veteran Smith-Beatty. "It is a common image, and because of it, many female veterans do not realize they are eligible for benefits", said Smith-Beatty, women veteran's program manager at James A. Haley VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION Medical Center in Tampa, Florida.

Women served their country before they could vote and we are still not properly giving them the support and recognition they deserve. Female troops are at a great disadvantage since their military assignments and records are less likely to reflect their actual service, their exposure to combat, or other traumatic events. By not recognizing our female warriors, not only are we doing a disservice to them but also abandoning them. With the lack of understanding and support, female veterans are left feeling isolated, confused, and very much alone.



According to MSNBC.com, Pentagon figures show that as of January 3, 2011, 110 women had been killed in the war in Iraq and, in the Afghan campaign, 24 women have been killed.

FAMILY

In addition to peer support concerns, women soldiers, like men, can experience challenges balancing military and family life. For female soldiers, however, balancing a military career and the role as mother can be both difficult and challenging. More than 30,000 single mothers have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, leaving their children behind. Once mobilized, family members, often children, find they need assistance with particular problems or need support. As a result, military deployments may cause great

stress within families. Case in point, Veteran Corry Neal watches over her four boys while her husband is in Japan with the U.S. Navy. She says many counselors do not understand the specific needs of military families. Tears stream down her face as she tells her moving story at the forum hosted by the Hillsborough County Commission on the Status of Women. Her four children, ages 11, 12, 13, and 15, deal with strong emotions, from pride to resentment. Veteran Neal said she has tried counseling but needs someone who

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Veteran's Spotlight: Cynthia Williams



Cynthia Williams

Cynthia is a 48-year-old African American woman who spent 20 years in the military and is the proud mother of three, and two young granddaughters. She is a domestic abuse survivor who is currently on parole after serving 5 years of a 10-year sentence at the Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar in San Diego, CA for voluntary manslaughter in the death of her husband. Despite the evidence of domestic abuse, the military would not allow her to use this information in her defense.

Growing up with little self-esteem, Cynthia endured relationships filled with violence and emotional abuse as she spiraled downward into deep depression and isolation. Cynthia was afraid to ask for help. Finally, in confinement she came to understand the cycle of domestic violence that had held her captive for so long. Cynthia took full advantage of the rehabilitation programs, and learned that she could make a difference by opening up and sharing her story with others.

Filled with hope for the future, Cynthia is enrolled at Chipola College to become a domestic violence advocate so that she can continue to help others by speaking out against domestic violence, using her life experience as a guide. By taking the lemons in life and turning them into lemonade, Cynthia finds that she is overcoming monumental obstacles daily, by sharing her story and embracing the fullness of life.

"I recommended that Cynthia Williams be a spotlight in the 2011 Annual Report because of her boldness and endurance to overcome the difficult situations in her life. Cynthia continues to help others who may have similar circumstances by being a spokesperson for domestic violence."

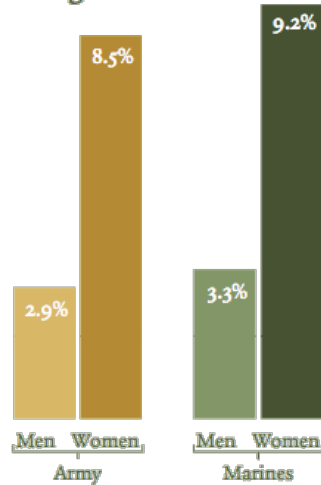
--Michele Manning, Assistant Director, Florida Commission on the Status of Women.

(Continued from page 24)

understands the uniqueness of military families. According to a study published in the *Journal Pediatrics*, children who have a parent deployed for military service are more likely to seek out treatment for mental and behavioral health issues. Furthermore, parenting reintegration after deployment can be just as difficult and challenging on the child as on their mother returning back from traumatic experiences. It is hard, as a mother, to resume the bond she once shared with her children. Renewing the relationship between mother and child can take a long time. Just as children face challenges, military marriages face difficulties as well.

According to Erin Mulhall, marriages of female troops are failing at almost three times the rate of male soldiers. Currently, little to no research depicts the cause of marital strain and high divorce rates among not only the women who serve but also among the female veterans. Stressors such as multiple deployments, mental health injuries, and gaps in family support programs, can be assumed to be the potential reason why marriages of female troops are increasingly leading into divorce. When military divorce data was broken down by gender, data shows female soldiers bear the burden of military divorce. Female veterans, for instance, often find when returning back from deployment, their husbands cannot understand their feelings of grief, anxiety

Female Troops Face Much Higher Divorce Rates



Source: Department of Defense data, FY2008, via the Associated Press

such as physical injury.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

In response to a growing need to understand the effects of military service on female veterans, it is important to understand the effects of military service on the physical health of our female veterans. With heart disease as the leading cause of death of American women and women veterans, it is important to recognize the risk factors of heart disease and the connection between women veterans and heart attacks. As a result, stress, anxiety, and depression affects more than the mind for many women exposed to the traumatic events that resulted from serving in the military. Symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression are often associated with a disorder called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD, (which will later be discussed in greater detail) is an anxiety disorder that occurs after exposure to a traumatic event, including sexual abuse and/

(Continued on page 26)

and anger. Thus, when a marriage is strained, the female veteran is juggling multiple stressors that include combat-related experiences, family disruption and separation, and the strain of deployment and reintegration. The returning female veteran, aside from having to deal with marital issues, may also be suffering from a host of issues,

Domestic Violence Fact

Domestic violence knows no gender or age barriers and occurs in all economic, racial, ethnic, religious, educational, professional, and societal levels.

(Continued from page 25)

or military combat. Thus, not only does PTSD cause emotional and psychological distress, but many studies point to PTSD being linked to hardened arteries, damaged blood vessels, and increased risk of death. According to Charlene Laino, WebMD Health News, PTSD appears to be a risk factor for atherosclerosis, a buildup of plaque in the arteries that can lead to a heart attack or stroke. Therefore, women seem to be at higher risk for a heart attack caused by post-traumatic stress disorder than men.

Too many women veterans are unaware that the number one leading cause of death in women is heart disease. Many women veterans do not recognize heart disease as their leading health threat and fail to understand the risk factors and symptoms associated with heart disease. Thus, it is vital to educate women veterans and health care providers about the link between heart disease and women veterans. In addition, there are several other important health issues women veterans should be aware of and have checked by physicians who understand the specific conditions of women.

Risk Factors For Cardiovascular Disease In Women Veterans

- **Age**- advanced age increases risk.
- **Hereditary**- including genetics and race. African American women are more prone to severe hypertension.
- **Cigarette and tobacco smoke** – smokers have twice the risk for heart attack and death than non-smokers. Second-hand smoke is also a risk factor.
- **High Blood Cholesterol Levels** – increased cholesterol levels are influenced by age, gender, hereditary, and diet.
- **High Blood Pressure** – causes the heart to work harder, thereby weakening it over time. This leads to stroke, heart attack or failure, or kidney failure. Risk increases in women who smoke, are overweight or have diabetes or elevated cholesterol levels.
- **Physical Inactivity** – lack of exercise increases risk. Any physical activity done regularly can help lower risk.
- **Overweight** – excess weight adds to the strain on the heart. It causes other diseases like diabetes. Being overweight by 10 or 20 pounds can make a difference in a woman's risk for heart disease.
- **Diabetes** – a diagnosis increases risk for heart disease and stroke. Once diagnosed it is critical to control and monitor.
- **Stress** – women veterans experience a variety of stresses ranging from daily living stresses and traumatic stress brought on by rape, domestic violence or war zone experiences. (See section on PTSD.)



Veteran's Spotlight: Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, USAF, Retired

Wilma L. Vaught, USAF, Retired, is President of the Board of Directors of the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Her last military assignment was as Commander of the US Military Entrance Processing Command, North Chicago, IL, where she served from June 1982, until her retirement in August 1985.

She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Women's History Museum and serves on the Virginia War Memorial Foundation Board of Trustees. Following retirement, she worked as a consultant with the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization as well as with industry. She speaks around the United States on leadership and management. She is a frequent guest on radio and television programs.

A native of Illinois, General Vaught earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana from which she received the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award in 1983; she also holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and an Honorary Doctorate of Public Affairs from Columbia College, SC. She is the first Air Force woman graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

During her military career, she held various positions in the comptroller field at Barksdale AFB, LA; Zaragoza AFB, Spain; McCoy AFB, Orlando, FL; Headquarters, Military Assistance Command, Saigon, Vietnam; Air Force Logistics Command, Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, OH; the Air Staff, The Pentagon, Washington, DC; and she was the Deputy Chief of Staff, Comptroller, Air Force Systems Command, Andrews AFB, MD.

General Vaught served as Chairperson of the NATO Women in the Allied Forces Committee from 1983 to 1985 and was the senior woman military representative to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services from 1982 to 1985.



Wilma L. Vaught, USAF, Retired, is President of the Board of Directors of the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation, Inc.

Florida is proud to be the first state to contribute to the Women's Memorial in Arlington Cemetery. General Wilma Vaught, who headed the memorial's foundation accepted the \$97,000 donation in 1998.

About Women Veterans

Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. veterans. The number of women veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA health care is in high demand by the women veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Department of Veterans Affairs understands the health care needs of women veterans and is committed to meeting these needs. Women veterans served and they deserve the best quality care.

GENDER SPECIFIC HEALTH CARE

Women veterans are not receiving the same quality of care as men are. As a result, they face unique health care issues. With the changing demographics of the military, female Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are turning to the VA health care services at a much higher rate. As a result, a number of women veterans have negative experiences with staff and/or medical personnel due to not having the experience or knowledge regarding the health conditions of women. In the past, women services like mammograms and PAP smears were not offered to women veterans. However, with more women needing health services, the VA acknowledges that women veterans are still yet underserved despite the advances throughout the years. Thus, the current challenges women veterans face are the significant barriers to gender specific health care. As a result, the availability and quality of VA health care for female veterans provides a minimum level of women's health services. In addition, most if not all VA hospitals are designed with male patients in mind. Thus, too few primary care physicians are trained in women's health. For instance, used to treating male veterans, many of the VA's practitioners are rusty or simply inexperienced when treating women.

Dr. Robert Dorr, chief of staff at the VA Medical Center in Saginaw, Michigan said, "I

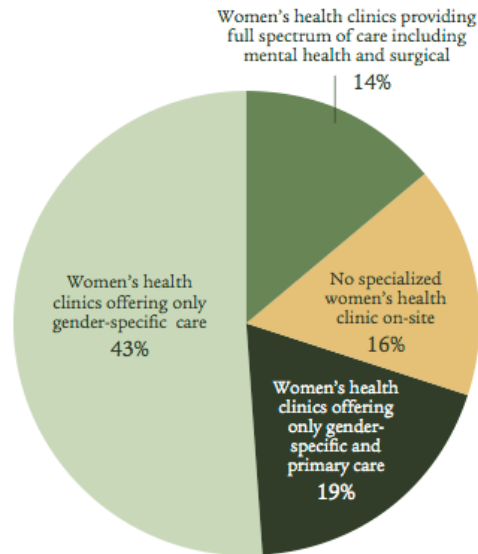
have forgotten since medical school how to do a lot of the women's specific care". When asked how he felt performing on female patients again, he replied, "There was anxiety," Dorr said. "There was a lot of nervousness. There was even some fear: 'Would I be able to take care of a female appropriately?'"

Furthermore, medical professionals working with veterans, in a distant past, have gone through years without having to see a female veteran. However, due to an influx of thousands of female veterans, avoiding topics like

gynecology and breast exams is no longer possible. According to Susan Donaldson James, ABC News, there has been very limited availability at some VA clinics for gender-specific health appointments for women.

As a result, female veterans often had to drive hours to get to another facility, or the VA had to pick up the tab for them to go to a nearby private doctor-if they opted to go at all. Thus, there is a clear need for more physicians trained in women's care in order to meet women's health needs throughout our sunshine state.

Types of Women's Health Clinics at VA Facilities



Source: FY2010 Independent Budget.

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Having vivid memories and flash backs from war can create mental anguish. Re-integrating with unseen injuries can make their transition into civilian life complicated and difficult on the veteran and their families. Thus, it is suggested that those that served in the military are at risk for mental health problems as a result of their traumatic experiences or injuries. Research suggests that about 25 to 30 percent of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan wars report symptoms of mental disorders.

These mental health issues may include:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Intimate partner and domestic violence
- Mood Disorders
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Substance abuse (using alcohol or drugs)

The presence of any of these mental health issues can affect health, inhibit relationships and cause further damages. (For example, substance abuse, homelessness, rising divorce rates, and suicide.) While isolation from family and friends is something all service members deal with, women in particular handle the experience of war differently.

With more female soldiers suffering mental anguish, female veterans are having to silently deal with the stress of war. Since combat is generally viewed as a man's domain, female soldiers have a hard time having others recognize their involvement in combat. The military and the Department of Veterans Affairs have worked hard to make

the public more aware of the increasing involvement of women in combat. However, society continues to remain ignorant to the psychological scars of such roles women play and the implication war has on them. For example, Colonel Carl Castro, director of the Military Operational Research Program at the Department of Defense said, "Female soldiers are actually handling and dealing with the stress of combat as well as male soldiers are." Thus, women, like men, deal with the stress of war and combat quite differently. Men, for instance, have time to readjust to civilian life. Women, on the other hand, have to immediately deal with the stress of combat while also resuming their roles as mothers or primary caregivers. Women veterans, therefore, are twice as likely as male veterans to have reported mental health problems. As a result of this historic shift, female veterans face lack of mental health benefits because of the unseen scars of war and society's inability to recognize female soldiers on combat grounds.

As a result, many female veterans have difficulty verifying combat stressors associated with mental anguish due to lack of documentation in their military records. Thus, it is important we start recognizing women's roles in war in order to understand that women, like men, succumb to the same demons of depression and suicide. By doing so, society can start treating female veterans with dignity and respect by acknowledging the specific needs female veterans need in order to get the appropriate care about their mental healthcare.

Florida Domestic
Violence Hotline:
1-800-500-1119
Florida DV
Hotline TTY
Number:
1-800-621-4202

Veteran's Spotlight: Lt. Col. Marie S. Knasiak



*Lt. Col. Marie S. Knasiak
(USA RET)*

Marie Knasiak was born in Chicago, Illinois on December 26, 1919. Her father was in the Army from 1911 to 1914, and was part of the American forces that built up the defenses on Corregidor Island in the Philippines. Marie learned from her father about duty to the country and felt that her family should contribute to the war effort. She reported to the 2nd WAC Training Center in Daytona Beach, Florida on January 12, 1943. After her initial training, she was assigned to Ft. Oglethorpe, GA for Officer Candidate School.

One of her first assignments was in 1944 at Ft. Meade, MD, where she was the Personnel Director of the first Personnel Center established by the War Department. She was awarded her first of four Army Commendation Medals for her efforts at Ft. Meade.

During the Korean War, Marie was the Detachment Commander, Medical Field Service School at Ft. Sam Houston, TEXAS. The war caused a 3-fold increase in the number of medical students at existing military medical facilities and Marie identified and resolved the problems by redefining the administration and organization with minimum turmoil.

After her retirement from military service, Marie was not finished with her service to her church and community. Since 1972, Marie has been a volunteer at St Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Port Charlotte, FL, serving as a lector and providing care and assistance to parishioners in need.

Marie also collected clothing, food, and household items for the Christian Missions in Immokalee, FL. She also delivered the items for the missions to those in need twice a month for 20 years.

Recently Marie was involved in the International Service Program called "Global Volunteers". For 6 years Marie volunteered her summers to travel to Poland, at her expense, to teach English to high school students. Marie taught boys, because she was the only one who could handle them.

For her long service to her country, Marie holds the Legion of Merit Medal, 1 Bronze Star Medal, 4 Army Commendation Medals, World War II Victory Medal, American Theater Medal, Army Occupation Medal, National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the Vietnam Service Medal.

With all these medals under her belt, she is also a member of the Women's Overseas League, the Military Officers Association of America, the WAC Veterans Association, the VFW, American Legion, Military Officers Association, and is a Life Member of the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 82.

Submitted by Charlotte County Service Officer David W. Donohew

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

Tormented by combat, some of our female veterans have to also deal with sexual trauma. With a risk of military sexual trauma, which can lead to PTSD, female veterans have to constantly look over their shoulders in fear of being sexually assaulted by their male colleagues. June Moss, a mother of two who was a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army shortly after the U.S. led the invasion of Iraq in 2003. She tried to make sure her colleagues saw her as a soldier rather than a woman. While on base, she experienced sexual harassment:

“A soldier from another unit would rub up against me, squeezing past me and pressing himself against me at every opportunity he got. It was like I was in a meat market,” she says. “I shaved my head because I didn’t want the attention but that only gave me more attention. I wanted my fellow soldiers to see me as having their back, not as a woman. It was sickening.” Ms Jones and her female colleagues would go to the showers in pairs, fearful of being sexually assaulted by male colleagues if they ventured out alone.

Dealing with the impact and trauma of sexual assault in the military continues to be a serious challenge for women veterans. Female veterans are facing double traumas of combat and sexual persecution. According to a 2008 RAND Study, female veterans who suffer from double trauma also suffer double rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder than their male counterparts. Women who have experienced MST are at a high risk for developing PTSD. Some studies have found that MST is more likely to lead to PTSD than other military or civilian traumatic events, including combat exposure. According

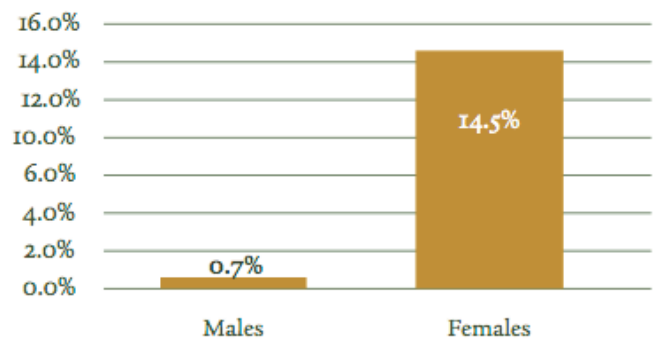
to Erin Mulhall, when reporting incidents of sexual assault or harassment, some women fear unauthorized repercussions from their unit. Other victims are concerned that in an effort to protect their safety, a commander will remove them from their unit, rather than removing the perpetrator. Furthermore, often the horrific circumstances force victims to

never come forward, leaving them forced to serve alongside their attacker.

The challenge women continue to face despite congressional hearings,

media attention, and the increasing number of women coming forward publicly about their trauma, is the slow establishment of programs to prevent and respond to sexual assault. As a result, it is important to take appropriate action to prevent female veterans from developing MST, which can eventually lead to major health problems.

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Screening Positive for MST at the VA



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Even though women are not strictly ‘supposed’ to be in combat roles or serve in assignments where the primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat, women are finding it hard to distinguish between combat grounds and non combat grounds. With no clear front lines, women are often in the middle of the action, in roles such as military police officers,

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pilots, drivers, gunners on convoys, etc. Thus, women, just like men, are fighting to survive:

Yolanda Jones, a logistics specialist in the U.S. Army Reserve, found her base in Taji, Iraq, was repeatedly hit by mortars and grenades. "You can experience combat inside an army base too. We couldn't walk anywhere without thinking we might be hit by IEDs [improvised explosive devices]. Day in, day out, I was escaping death."



According to the National Center for PTSD, some PTSD symptoms are more common in women than men.

With women at greater risk of PTSD, it is important to recognize that women, like men, are exposed to extreme traumatic experiences as well. As a result, PTSD is an anxiety disorder that results from exposure to extreme trauma; it is a recurring emotional reaction to a terrifying, uncontrollable or life-threatening event. Therefore, it is a disservice to our female veterans to not take into consideration their invisible injuries, ones as deep as PTSD.

According to military reasoning, because women are not permitted to serve in direct ground combat, women are not likely to suffer from combat-related trauma, in this case PTSD. As a result, women veterans are facing difficulty and resistance from the VA when being assessed and diagnosed for PTSD. However, with more and more female veterans being exposed to the front lines of combat on a regular basis, it is disturbing to hear stories about our female veterans having difficulty receiving treatment for PTSD.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Inspector General found that women were denied PTSD benefits at a higher rate than men. That's because the VA required a

combat badge or ribbon before authorizing compensation, something that women — restricted to noncombat jobs — couldn't earn. They and their male counterparts in noncombat roles were required to prove harm from a specific event.

According to the National Center for PTSD, some PTSD symptoms are more common in women than men. Women are more likely to be jumpy, to have more trouble feeling emotions, and to avoid things that remind them of the trauma than men. Women may take longer to recover from PTSD and are four times more likely than men to have long-lasting PTSD. Women with PTSD are also more likely to feel depressed and anxious, while men with PTSD are more likely to have problems with alcohol or drugs.

Symptoms of PTSD include:

- nightmares
- flashbacks
- intrusive thoughts
- sleep disturbances
- hypervigilance
- memory impairment
- depression
- anger
- numbing
- guilt
- shame
- foreshortened sense of future
- isolation



Veteran's Spotlight: Joan Lenart Whitfield

Joan Lenart Whitfield is a 70-year-old female retired RN with a BSN Degree. She joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1966 during the Vietnam "Conflict" at the age of 25 and began her military career with the rank of First Lieutenant. After completing Basic Officers Training at Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, she spent two months at William Beaumont General Hospital, EL Paso, Texas awaiting orders for Vietnam. Joan volunteered to go to Vietnam.

After receiving orders she spent one year at the 85th Evacuation Hospital, (working in combination SICU/PACU) Qui Nhon, Vietnam 6 days a week, 12 hour days. She completed her two-year tour of duty in Atlanta, GA at Ft. McPherson.

Upon returning to civilian life, she spent the next 39 years working full time in hospitals; for the most part in critical care areas: ER and trauma centers. During those years she also spent time teaching; in service education, continuing education, patient education and also opened and organized a new Social Services Department at St. Augustine General Hospital. While employed there she served on several boards:

- Inter Agency Council of St Johns County – President 1985
- Central Florida Home Health Services, Inc. – Advisory Board
- Good Samaritan Home Health Services, Inc. – Advisory Board

While employed as In-Service Education Coordinator, in June 1983 the Hospital Corporation of America sent Joan to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to be a consultant at King Fahad National Guard Hospital in Nursing Education for three months.

Since retiring in 2007, Joan remains active in the community. She volunteers at the St. Gerard Campus as a pregnancy counselor. She volunteers as Buckingham Smith Assisted Living Facility and at the Veterans' Homeless Stand Down yearly event. She stays busy helping others through the "Legion of Mary" organization in her Church.



JOAN LENART WHITFIELD

"Joan entered the US Army Nurse Corps at a time when it was most needed and something that she felt she had to offer to the effort in Vietnam as a "healer". Since her discharge from the U.S. Army she has continued to serve her community and the world with her knowledge she gained from her early career in the U.S. Army. She continues to stay involved in the community and with veterans' issues and most specifically, the homeless, less fortunate and women's issues."

-St. Johns County Service Officers

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

Veterans exposed to or in a vicinity of a blast or involved in even a minor military accident can suffer a form of TBI that may lead to long-term mental and physical health consequences. TBI is an injury to the brain from an external force that results in immediate effects such as loss or alteration of consciousness, amnesia, and sometimes neurological impairments. In addition, incidents such as explosions, which severely shake or compress the brain within the skull, vehicle accidents, multiple concussions throughout their tours of duty, blast injuries that result from mortar attacks/roadside or suicide bombs can all lead to TBI. The potential residuals of TBI fall into three main categories of impairment: cognitive, emotional/behavioral, and physical. TBI is classified as mild, moderate, or severe based on classification at, or close to, the time of initial injury using either the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS), length of loss of consciousness, or length of post-traumatic amnesia. Thus, symptoms of TBI include headaches, irritability, sleep disorders, memory problems, slower thinking, and depression. Since TBI can result in a broad range of physical, cognitive, behavioral, and social challenges, those who survive head injuries often suffer from a range of problems including:

- Hearing loss, vision, and speech problems
- Difficulty with memory, information processing, and attention/concentration
- Anger management issues
- High rates of depression, anxieties, and alcohol use

In severe cases, TBI causes permanent brain damage and requires lifelong care and

rehabilitation. More and more researchers are discovering that TBI affects women differently than it does men. Most notably, there seems to be a different pattern of post-concussive symptoms among female compared to male veterans with deployment-related TBI. According to Katherine Iverson, PhD, Clinical Psychologist in the Boston VA Healthcare System, while differences in how the genders react to combat trauma has been recognized for some time, there has been little study on TBI specifically. Women reported significantly more severe symptoms in all four domains: affective, somatosensory, cognitive and vestibular.”

Like men, women suffer a range of brain injuries during their military service. While male soldiers are 1.5 times more likely than female soldiers to sustain a TBI, women are also being exposed to military duties that increase their risk of sustaining a TBI. As a result, women veterans face the challenge of not having their unseen injuries recognized simply because women are thought to not be anywhere near combat grounds. Therefore, due to the traditionally male-dominated environment, women veterans are not being treated for TBI because their roles do not reflect their actual service, exposure to combat, or traumatic events. Women veterans, in addition, are denied benefits that may help treat their TBI due to the difficulty in verifying special assignments during military service outside their established military occupational specialty that exposes them to combat. Consequently, returning back to civilian life, many women veterans may appear fine on the outside but on the inside they are silently dealing with the varying degrees of TBI.

SUICIDE AND DEPRESSION

Depression and suicide are two leading issues when it comes to women and the military. They both are intertwined and will not be separated in this section. Depression plays a major role in the thoughts and actions when it comes to attempting suicide, thinking about it and actually completing it. This section will use prominent articles when discussing suicide to explain what is happening with the veteran population and some ways in which that issue is being alleviated by the VA. It is assumed that the action and intention of suicidal veterans are caused by certain experiences which lead to depression and eventually the decision to end their lives because they may not see any other way out of their situation.

In January of 2010 FloridaToday.com released an article about suicide rates amongst veterans. The article detailed that “suicide increased significantly amongst veterans between the ages of 18 to 29, who have left the military.” Although male veterans commit the most suicides, it has been properly noted by the VA that the number of women veteran suicide cases has increased significantly, especially those involved in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. It has been shown that some of those women who have committed suicide had these experiences:

- Been deployed more than one time
- Suffer from TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury)
- Have been treating themselves with alcohol or drugs

All of these factors and maybe more have lead to depression within the female vet population, which may have caused them to

decide to end it all. Service members described mental health as being a stigma that still haunts the military, according to the FloridaToday.com article. The rate increased to 26 percent from 2005 to 2007, which may have been due to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The VA took the initiative in 2007 to hire professionals who specialize in mental health to “stem the tide against suicide and veterans” and established a crisis hot line which has been recognized for liberating over 6,000 veterans and military members who suffered from depression and did not see any way out.

WCTV News in Tallahassee, FL released an article on October 27, 2010 which mentioned that the Department of Defense enlisted the help of Florida State University to find ways in solving the issues of veteran suicide. The Military Suicide Research Consortium was established with an award of 17 million dollars of federal grants to FSU and the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center. According to the article the consortium is the first of its kind to combine the efforts of civilians and the Department of Defense in “implementing a multidisciplinary research approach to suicide prevention.” Leading this project is Florida State’s Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor Thomas Joiner and Peter Gutierrez. Joiner is an internationally known suicide researcher and Gutierrez is a leading suicide expert and clinical/research psychologist with the VA’s Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center at Denver VA Medical Center. Both FSU and the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center will receive \$8.5 million in initial funding over a three-year span.

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As noted in the article; more than 1,100 members of the armed forces died by suicide from 2005 to 2009. What's startling about this number is that it is more than the number of servicemen and women killed in

Afghanistan from 2001 to 2010. Here is the million dollar question....Why Some But Not Others? This is another reason as to why reports are being created and attention is being called to the issue of suicide.



*LAURIE REID, LMFT,
CAP*



Veteran's Spotlight: Laurie Reid, LMFT, CAP

Serving in the United States Navy, Laurie Reid was one of the first females to deploy on an aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf following the Desert Shield and Storm campaigns. After her service to her country, Mrs. Reid earned a B.S. degree with a major in sociology, and an M.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. In addition, she is a Certified Addictions Professional and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Mrs. Reid is an expert in quality assurance, clinical processes, clinical documentation, as well as specialized Medicaid documentation regulations and often provides instruction at Seminole Behavioral Healthcare to other clinicians and clinical supervisors/managers on these topics. Although her official title is Director of Clinical Quality Improvement and Utilization Management, Mrs. Reid wears many hats and always reflects very positively on Seminole Behavioral Healthcare as well as her profession and behavioral health service industry. Mrs. Reid was formally recognized by the Seminole Behavioral Healthcare's Board of Directors for her organizational skills and initiative following the agency's 3-year accreditation. Mrs. Reid in her spare time is the president of a small business Breaking the Cycle Consulting Inc. which addresses issues of uncontrollable anger, abuse and violence for adolescents charged with domestic violence or battery through a ten week group format. Mrs. Reid works closely with the Seminole County Government Prosecution Alternatives for Youth (PAY) program. As a female veteran, Mrs. Reid is often called upon to speak at functions focusing on veteran issues including adolescents and families of military personnel. Mrs. Reid was honored by the Florida Council for Community Mental Health with the 2011 Direct Service Provider of the Year award, the highest honor for a clinician within the state of Florida.

Submitted by Seminole County Service Officer Ed Burford

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance use is another challenge women veterans face when returning back home. As a coping mechanism when dealing with stress, depression and anxiety, alcohol and other drugs become a way of escaping. This section on substance abuse will focus on women veterans and the role that alternative drugs play in helping them to cope with this pressure of serving their country. Articles from all over will be combined and incorporated in this section to validate claims on the issue that women veterans face when dealing with their addiction and what is gradually being done to solve this problem.

According to the Department of Veterans' Affairs Webpage under Women Veteran's Health Care; on average, more than 7 percent of Veterans annually report a substance use disorder. According to the Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse, and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) report:

- Younger veterans are more likely to have a history of substance abuse
- One-fifth of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are diagnosed with a substance use disorder

Though more men than women veterans are treated for substance abuse, the number of women veterans admitted to treatment programs has been on the rise. More than half of women veterans in these programs are treated for alcohol abuse and more than one-fifth for cocaine use, followed by opiates, marijuana, and other drugs.

Challenges, Treatment for Women

Women face a unique set of challenges associated with their military service that can lead to substance abuse. Studies indicate that:

- they are twice as likely as men to develop post-traumatic stress disorder
- twice as likely to have serious psychological distress
- and approximately one out of five women veterans reports military sexual trauma

Effective, scientifically-proven treatments for substance abuse problems are available through the VA. Sometimes substance abuse requires continuous care over a long period, while other times it can be resolved more quickly. Options include therapy, either alone with a therapist or in a group, as well as medications. Each VA facility has a Women Veterans Program Manager available to assist women veterans in getting the help they need.

HOMELESSNESS

Among the various concerns for Florida female veterans mentioned earlier, women veterans are also dealing with issues of finding affordable housing. After leaving the military, female veterans are more likely than men to experience severe housing cost burden, placing them at significant risk for homelessness. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, it is estimated that 6,500 female veterans, nationwide, call the streets home. Frightening as it may seem, female veterans are becoming homeless at a faster

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rate than male veterans. Thus, it is important, in order to get the necessary action to ensure homeless female veterans get the housing and service they need, to look at the challenges numerous female veterans are facing when returning back from deployment. As a result, female veterans in Florida face unique challenges. Nearly half of homeless veterans are located in California, Texas, New York and Florida.



Studies show women veterans are more likely to be homeless than non-veteran women

According to FloridaToday.com:

- Each night, there are an estimated 131,000 veterans who are homeless;
- Nearly 300,000 veterans each year will be homeless at some point; and
- of those figures, 15percent are believed to be women veterans.

According to Patrick Sherlock, executive director of Project Foot, a Florida group that helps homeless veterans, "In reality, the number of homeless women vets is probably much higher, maybe by a factor of one-and-a-half times. They don't count vets who are living in shelters. And they don't ask homeless people on the streets if they are veterans." Thus, Female veterans in Florida face unique challenges. Among the concerns for Florida female veterans are issues of finding affordable housing, the increase in numbers of female veterans returning with major psychological issues living on the streets and the numerous amount of women veterans who have children depending on them. Once homeless, women veterans face daily struggles to meet their basic survival needs. Thus, safety is an issue many homeless women face, not only for themselves but for their

children as well. For instance, several women describe being fearful while on the streets or in a shelter environment with men; others fear being victims of further physical assaults, while some female veterans fear for their children.

Homeless veterans deserve to have access to adequate resources to combat substance abuse and mental health disorders, which are debilitating problems that severely impact the veteran's quality of life. When Florida veterans do not have access to veterans' disability benefits, the chances of those veterans facing homelessness only increase. As a result, as the female veteran population continues to grow, so will the number who will be at high risk of becoming homeless. Studies show women veterans are more likely to be homeless than non-veteran women. Therefore, the challenge women veterans face is the increasing number of women veterans with children who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or risk of experiencing further abuse. Without improved services for women veterans, including those with children and those faced with physical and mental trauma, the risk of homelessness continues to remain an issue that demands a closer look. Despite the numerous challenges women face, female soldiers continue to enlist.

Women continue to honorably serve and make tremendous sacrifices. Yet, our nation continues to fail to notice them by not doing enough to support them once they are done serving and return back home. Changes must be taken to improve the quality of life for female troops and veterans. Female

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veterans should no longer have to feel isolated, alone and misunderstood. The military and VA must work aggressively to eliminate these challenges. Only with improved benefits and support systems can

our military grow stronger and our country more secure. It is time to recognize SHE 'who has borne the battle' and SHE who has made numerous sacrifices for the safety of our nation.

Veteran's Spotlight: Major Janice L. Quenga

Major Janice (goes by "J") Quenga is the Chief, Installation and Strategic Plans, 30th Space Wing, Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. She was responsible for overseeing many areas: 26 base operational and emergency management plans; updating long-range strategic plans; pinpointing legislative liaison issues; facilitating programming and budgeting requirements and other executive-level special projects in support of national space launches; ballistic; and aeronautical and test and evaluation programs for the Commander.

Her combat deployments during this assignment were as the International Security Assistance Force, Joint Command's Space Division Chief, Kabul International Airport, Afghanistan and the 601st Air and Space Operations Center's Space Strategic Planner and Watch Officer, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida.

Major Quenga was born in Agana, Guam. She entered the Air Force in 1991 following graduation from California State University. She served a tour in missile operations as Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Combat Crew Commander, Deputy Flight Commander Squadron Command Post Crew Commander, and alternate Guardian Challenge missile competitor for the 10th Missile Squadron, 341st Missile Wing, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. Following this assignment, she performed as the Chief and Executive Officer to the Director, Joint Reserve Manpower and Personnel Programs for Directorate of Manpower and Personnel, Headquarters United States Space Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. Later, Major Quenga excelled as an Atlas Air Force Launch Controller, Atlas Mission Planner, Satellite Operations Controller and alternate space lift competitor for the 2nd Space Launch Squadron, 30th Space Wing, Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. After a tour in Iraq, Major Quenga was hand-picked by the 45th Space Wing Commander as the Chief, Command Post, 45th Space Wing, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. She retired from the Air Force in December 2011.



Major Janice L. Quenga

"This vet is recently retired; she is a combat veteran who has accomplished quite a bit. Overcoming the hazards of 20 years in today's military says enough in itself."

-Edward Alexander

Florida Veteran's Resources

From www.floridavets.org

The following sites provide additional resources for veterans and their families.

Locate Military Records
<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/>

Federal Benefits for Veterans & Dependents Guide
http://www1.va.gov/OPA/publications/benefits_book.asp

Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide
<http://www.mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?l=1&m=1509>

Employ Florida Vets
<https://www.employflorida.com/portals/veteran/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
www.va.gov

eBenefits: Gateway to Benefit Information
<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>

VA Claims Information
<http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/>

Returning Service members
<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>

Returning Service members Mental Health Support
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/returningservicevets.asp>

National Resource Directory
<http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.gov/>

Post-9/11 GI Bill and Veteran Education Benefits
www.gibill.va.gov

VA Center for Women Veterans
<http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>

Women Veterans Issues
<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/topics/women/index.htm>

Women Veterans Health Care
<http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/about.asp>

Homeless Women Veterans
http://www.va.gov/homeless/for_women_veterans.asp

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
www.esgr.mil

Veterans Crisis Line – 24 Hour
Toll Free at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
www.mentalhealth.va.gov

National VA Homeless Hotline – 24 Hour
Toll Free at 1-877-424-3838
<http://www.va.gov/homeless/>

MyFlorida.com
<http://www.myflorida.com/>

Florida Veterans Foundation
www.FloridaVeteransFoundation.org

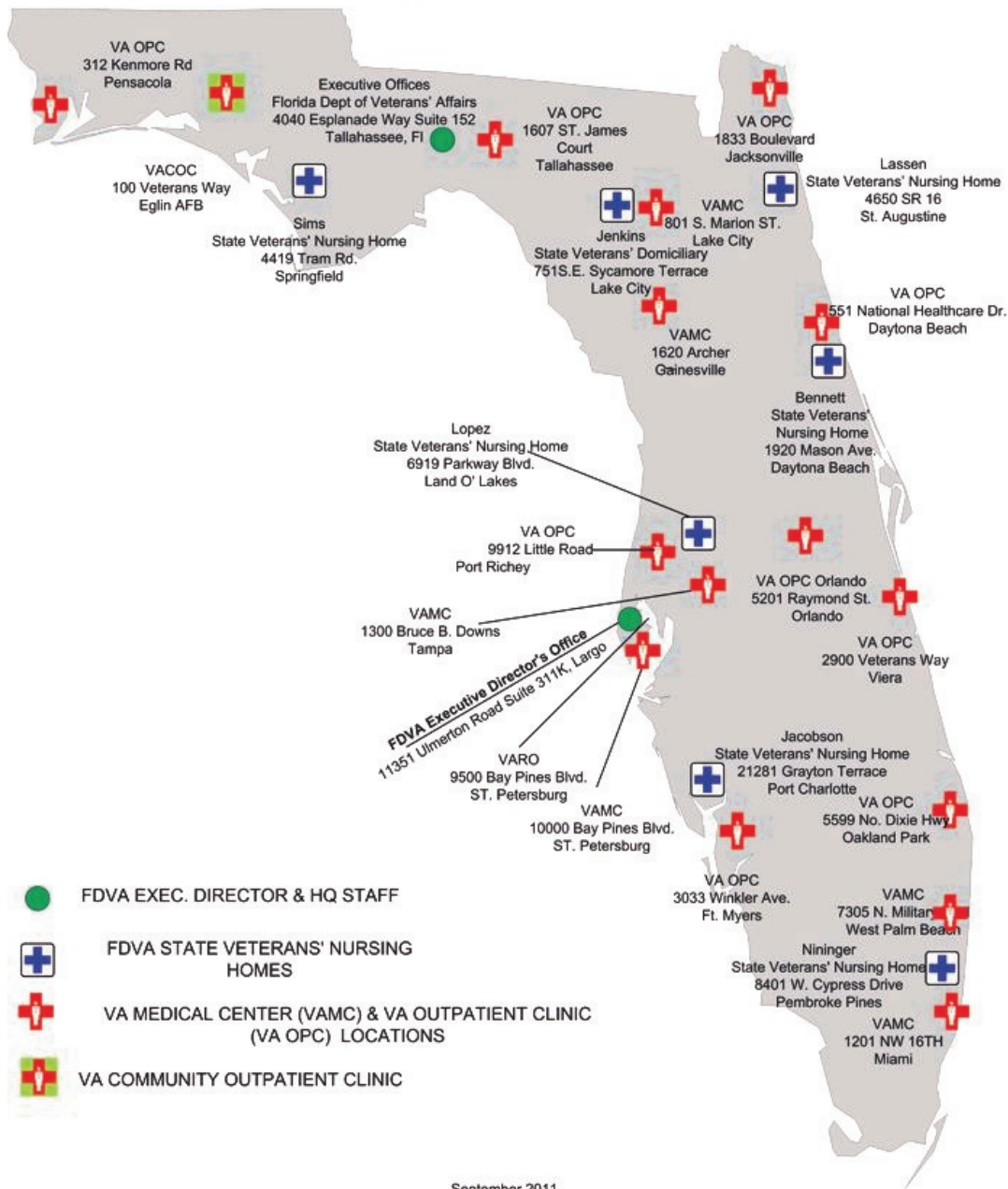
Florida Department of Military Affairs
<http://dma.myflorida.com/>

Florida Veterans' Business Assistance
www.floridasbdc.com
www.fptac.org

Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses
www.osd.dms.state.fl.us



Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) Veterans' Assistance Locations



Source: Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs <http://floridavets.org/>.

Florida Vet Centers

If you have served in a combat zone, Vet Centers are in your community to help you and your family with readjustment counseling and outreach services.

Bay County Vet Center
3109 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 101
Panama City, FL 32405
(850) 522-6102

Clearwater Vet Center
29259 US Hwy 19 North
Clearwater, FL 33761
(727) 549-3600

Clermont Vet Center
1655 East Highway 50, Suite 102
Clermont, FL 34711
(352) 536-6701

Pompano Beach Vet Center
10077 NW 29th Street
Coral Springs, FL 33065
(954) 357-5555

Fort Lauderdale Vet Center
713 NE 3rd Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304
(954) 356-7926

Fort Myers Vet Center
4110 Center Pointe Drive, Unit 204
Fort Myers, FL 33916
(239) 479-4401

Gainesville Vet Center
105 NW 75th Street, Suite 2
Gainesville, FL 32607
(352) 331-1408

Daytona Beach Vet Center
1620 Mason Ave., Suite C
Daytona Beach, FL 32117
(386) 366-6600

Jacksonville Vet Center
300 East State Street, Suite J
Jacksonville, FL 32202
(904) 232-3621

Jupiter Vet Center
6650 W. Indiantown Rd., Suite 120
Jupiter, FL 33458
(561) 422-1220

Key Largo Vet Center Outstation
105662 Overseas Highway
Key Largo, FL 33037
(305) 451-0164

Melbourne Vet Center
2098 Sarno Road
Melbourne, FL 32935
(321) 254-3410

Miami Vet Center
8280 NW 27th Street, Suite 511
Miami, FL 33122
(305) 718-3712

Okaloosa County Vet Center
611th Avenue, Suite G-1
Shalimar, FL 32579
(850) 651-1000

Orlando Vet Center
5575 S. Semoran Blvd., #30
Orlando, FL 32822
(407) 857-2800

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Palm Beach Vet Center
4996 10th Ave North Suite 6
Greenacres, FL 33463
(561) 422-1201

St. Petersburg Vet Center
6798 Crosswinds Drive North, Bldg. A
St. Petersburg, FL 33710
(727) 893-3791

Pensacola Vet Center
4504 Twin Oaks Drive
Pensacola, FL 32506
(850) 456-5886

Tallahassee Vet Center
548 Bradford Road
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 942-8810

Sarasota Vet Center
4801 Swift Road, Suite A
Sarasota, FL 34231
(941) 927-8285

Tampa Vet Center
4747 W. Waters Avenue, Suite 600
Tampa, FL 33614
(813) 228-2621

For more information on Vet Centers,
visit <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>

VA Medical Centers

Bay Pines VA Medical Center
10000 Bay Pines Blvd.
Bay Pines, FL 33744
(727) 398-6661 / (888) 820-0230

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital
13000 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612
(813) 972-2000 / (888) 811-0107

Malcom Randall VA Medical Center
1601 SW Archer Road
Gainesville, FL 32608
(352) 376-1611 / (800) 324-8387

Orlando VA Medical Center
5201 Raymond St.
Orlando, FL 32803
(407) 629-1599 / (800) 922-7521

Lake City VA Medical Center
619 South Marion Avenue
Lake City, FL 32025
(386) 755-3016 / (800) 308-8387

Note: A new VA Medical Center will open in
Orlando in late 2012.

Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center
1201 N.W. 16th St.
Miami, FL 33125
(305) 575-7000 / (888) 276-1785

West Palm Beach VA Medical Center
7305 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
(561) 422-8262 / (800) 972-8262

Federal Veterans' Benefits Timetable

From www.floridavets.org

120 days -- Veterans' Group Life Insurance

Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) may be converted to Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), a five-year term policy, renewable for life. VGLI may be converted to an individual policy with any participating insurance company. For more information, call toll free (800) 669-8477 or visit www.insurance.va.gov

180 days -- One-time Dental Treatment

The VA provides one-time separation dental care for certain service-connected dental conditions, if the certificate of discharge does not certify that the veteran was provided a complete dental examination and treatment prior to discharge. (38 CFR 17.161)

1 year -- Appeal

A veteran has one year from the date of the original notification of a VA decision to file an appeal.

2 years -- Insurance

A veteran with a new service-connected disability, but otherwise in good health, may apply to the VA for up to \$10,000 in life insurance coverage at standard rates. Veterans who receive a new rating of zero percent or greater are eligible for the coverage. The application must be made within two years from the date of being notified of a new service-connected status. The veteran must have received an other than dishonorable discharge and released from active duty after April 25, 1951. Call toll free (800) 669-8477 or visit www.insurance.va.gov

5 years -- VA Health Care for Combat Vets

Combat veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after Jan. 28, 2003, are eligible to enroll in the VA health care system for five years from the date of discharge or release. The enrollment period begins on the discharge or separation date of the service member from active duty service, or in the case of multiple call-ups, the most recent discharge date. Veterans, including activated Reservists and National Guard members, are eligible if they served on active duty in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998, and have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

10 years -- Montgomery G.I. Bill

Provides financial assistance to honorably discharged veterans who enlisted after June 30, 1985, and elected to participate within the first 12 months of service. Call toll free (888) 442-4551.

12 years -- Vocational Rehabilitation

As part of a rehabilitation program for service-connected, disabled veterans rated at 10 percent or more and having a serious employment-related handicap, the VA may pay tuition, books, expenses and a monthly living allowance. A new expanded housing benefit option is also available. For more information, call toll free (800) 827-1000.

15 years -- Post-9/11 GI Bill

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a federal education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty a minimum of 90 days after

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September 10, 2001. Public Law 111-32, the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, amends the Post-9/11 GI Bill to include the children of service members who die in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. For more information, call toll free (888) 442-4551 or visit the VA website at www.gbill.va.gov

Reemployment Rights

A veteran has a right to be reemployed in his/her civilian job or a comparable job with associated benefits had the veteran not been absent due to military service. For information, contact the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service toll free at (866) 487-2365 or visit www.dol.gov/vets. Public employees may contact FDVA at (727) 319-7400.

Medical Care

To the extent resources and facilities are available, the VA provides hospital care covering the full range of medical services to veterans. Eligible veterans may receive medical treatment at any VA Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic / Community Based Clinic in Florida.

G.I. Home Loan Guarantee

The VA may guarantee part of your loan for the purchase of a home, manufactured home, or condominium. In addition, veterans with conventional home loans now have options for refinancing to a VA guaranteed home loan as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008. For information, call (877) 827-3702 or visit <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/>

Burial Benefits

The VA provides honorably discharged veterans, spouses and dependents with burial in a National Cemetery at no cost. Cremated remains are also accepted. Eligible spouses and dependents may be buried if they predecease the veteran. The VA provides a headstone, marker or medallion for placement on a private headstone at a private cemetery. The VA does not make funeral arrangements. Call toll free (800) 697-6947 or visit <http://www.cem.va.gov/> for more information.

Donating Wisely

Many people want to donate money and assets to help veterans. To assist you, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services provides information on charitable organizations, including any complaints that may have been filed. For more information, call the Consumer Hotline at (800) 435-7352 or visit them on the web at <http://sapp.800helpfla.com/cspublicapp/giftgiversquery/giftgiversquery.aspx>. A good rule of thumb is to donate to organizations that you know are legitimate and well-established, to include the Florida Veterans Foundation or one of the State Veterans' Homes through their respective donation coordinators.

Florida Veterans' Benefits & Programs

From www.floridavets.org

Free Benefits Counseling

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs has Claims Examiners co-located with the VA Regional Office in Bay Pines, each VA Medical Center and many VA Outpatient Clinics. Assistance with claims is free and covers all state and federal veterans' programs. FDVA, through its Bureau of State Approving Agency, also evaluates and approves secondary and post-secondary education programs so Floridians can take advantage of federal veterans' educational programs such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill. For more information, call (727) 319-7400 / 7440.

Property Tax Exemptions

Any real estate owned and used as a homestead by a veteran who was honorably discharged and has been certified as having a service-connected, permanent and total disability, is exempt from taxation if the veteran is a permanent resident of Florida and has legal title to the property on January 1 of the tax year for which exemption is being claimed. (FS 196.081(1))

Any real estate owned and used as a homestead by the surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who died from service-connected causes while on active duty is exempt from taxation if the member was a permanent resident of this state on January 1 of the year in which the member died. (FS 196.081(4)(a))

If, upon the death of the veteran, the spouse holds the legal or beneficial title to the homestead and permanently resides there, the exemption from taxation carries over to

the benefit of the veteran's spouse until such time as he or she remarries, sells, or otherwise disposes of the property. If the spouse sells the property, an exemption not to exceed the amount granted from the most recent ad valorem tax roll may be transferred to the new residence as long as it is used as the primary residence and the spouse does not remarry. (FS 196.081(3))

Any real estate used and owned as a homestead by any quadriplegic is exempt from taxation. Veterans who are paraplegic, hemiplegic, or permanently and totally disabled who must use a wheelchair for mobility, or are legally blind, may be exempt from real estate taxation. Check with your local property appraiser to determine if gross annual household income qualifies. The veteran must be a resident of Florida. (FS 196.101)

Eligible resident ex-service members with a VA certified service-connected disability of 10 percent or greater shall be entitled to a \$5,000 property tax exemption. The ex-service member must establish this exemption with the county tax official in the county in which he or she resides by providing documentation of this disability.

The unremarried surviving spouse of a disabled ex-service member, who on the date of the disabled ex-service member's death had been married to the ex-service member for at least five years, is also entitled to this exemption. (FS 196.24)

Any partially disabled veteran who is age 65

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or older, who was a Florida resident at the time of entering military service, any portion of whose disability was combat-related, and who was honorably discharged, may be eligible for a discount from the amount of ad valorem tax on the homestead commensurate with the percentage of the veteran's permanent service-connected disability. Eligible veterans should apply for this benefit at the county property appraiser's office. (FS 196.082)

Service personnel entitled to homestead exemption in this state, and who are unable to file in person by reason of such service, may file through next of kin or a duly authorized representative. (FS 196.071)

Certification of Discharge or Separation

At the veteran's request, the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall record, without cost, certificates of discharge or separation from the Armed Forces. (FS 28.222) CAUTION: Once on file, documents become official court records and are open to the public. To remove a military discharge record from the official court record, submit your request to the Court Clerk's office. Record removal is permanent and certified copies will no longer be available.

"V" for Veterans Designation on Driver License

Florida's veterans can add a veteran designation to their driver license or identification card. To add the "V" to a license or ID card, veterans can visit any Florida driver license office, to include those operated by county tax collectors. Requirements: 1) present a discharge document which shows an honorable

discharge from active duty; 2) pay a one-time \$1 fee, in addition to the replacement or renewal fee; 3) visit www.GatherGoGet.com to ensure you have all other documents.

Veterans who need to obtain a copy of their DD-214 may request it online at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/

100 percent Disabled Veteran State ID Card

A disabled veteran ID card may be issued by the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs to any veteran who is a permanent resident of the state and is determined by the VA or Department of Defense to have a 100percent service-connected, permanent and total disability rating. (FS295.17) The card may be used as proof of eligibility for any state benefit except exemption of homestead property taxes. For more information, call (727) 319-7400 / 7440.

Driver License Fee Exemption

Any honorably discharged veteran who has a valid FDVA disabled veteran ID card or who has been determined to have a total and permanent service-connected disability and is qualified to obtain a driver license is generally exempt from all fees. However, a fee may be applied to drivers seeking to reinstate a license. (FS 322.21(7))

Handicapped Toll Permit

Licensed drivers who operate a vehicle specially equipped for the handicapped and are certified by a licensed physician or the VA as having permanent upper limb impairments/disabilities substantially affecting their ability to deposit coins in toll baskets, shall pass free through all toll gates.

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A window sticker from the Florida Department of Transportation must be obtained and displayed. (FS 338.155(3))

Disabled Veteran Motor Vehicle License Plate

An honorably discharged veteran who has been a resident of Florida

continuously for the past five years or who has established a domicile in Florida, as provided by FS 222.17, may apply for one free disabled veteran "DV" license plate for an owned or leased vehicle. The veteran must provide proof of a service-connected 100-percent disability rating or that the vehicle was acquired through financial assistance from the VA. Service charges may apply. (FS 320.084)

Free license plates with a wheelchair emblem are available for those veterans permanently confined to a wheelchair and who otherwise qualify for a DV plate. Service charges may apply. (FS 320.0842)

Please note: Parking spaces for persons with disabilities are for the exclusive use of individuals who have permanent or temporary mobility impairments. (F.S. 553.5041(3)). Disabled veterans who have been issued a "DV" plate may only park in designated handicapped parking spaces if they also have a mobility impairment. It is recommended that disabled veterans with a mobility impairment apply for the disabled parking plate with the international wheelchair accessibility symbol, instead of the "DV" plate to avoid possible fines and penalties.

No state agency, county, municipality or

agency thereof may charge the driver of a vehicle displaying a "DV" license plate any fee for parking on public streets, highways or in any metered parking space. There are 8 exemptions to this benefit, which can be found in FS 316.1964.



Motor Vehicle License Plates

The following military license plates are available upon application to the owner or lessee of a vehicle that meet the necessary qualifications:

- **Medal of Honor** -- Issued to any U.S. citizen who is a resident of Florida and who was awarded the Medal of Honor while serving as a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. (FS 320.0893)
- **Ex-POW** -- Issued to a resident of Florida who is a former prisoner of war, or their unremarried surviving spouse, who was a U.S. citizen serving with the U.S. Armed Forces or the armed forces of an allied nation or who was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and was not a U.S. citizen. (FS 320.089(2))
- **Gold Star** -- Honoring the family members of Florida service members who have been killed while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. The applicant must be a resident of Florida at the time of the service member's death, and directly related as spouse, legal mother or father, or stepparent who is currently married to the mother or father of the fallen service member. (FS 320.0894)
- **Florida National Guard, U.S. Armed Forces Reserve, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom** - Issued to a retired member of the

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Florida National Guard or the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve or to a former member of the U.S. military who was deployed and served in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom or in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. (FS 320.089)

- **Pearl Harbor Survivor** -- Issued to a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. (FS 320.089)
- **Purple Heart** -- Issued to a recipient of the Purple Heart medal. (FS 320.089)
- **U.S. Paratrooper** -- May only be purchased by current or former U.S. military personnel who, as part of their military duty, have been trained to jump from aircraft. (FS 320.0891)

Florida State Park Discount Passes

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection provides a 25-percent discount on annual passes to Florida’s 160 State Parks for all veterans, active duty service and reserve members. The pass is available for purchase at any Florida State Park staffed ranger station.

Honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities, surviving spouses, and Gold Star Parents of military veterans who have fallen in combat will receive a lifetime family annual entrance pass at no charge. The free annual pass can only be obtained at a staffed ranger station. For more information, call (850) 245-2157 or visit www.FloridaStateParks.org

Hunting and Fishing

The Military Gold Sportsman’s License is available for a reduced fee of \$20 to any resident who is an active or retired member of the U. S. Armed Forces, U. S. Armed Forces Reserve, National Guard, U. S. Coast Guard, or the Coast Guard Reserve upon submission of a current military identification card. The license is only available at tax collector’s offices. (FS 379.354(4)(i))

State hunting and fishing licenses and permits shall be issued without fees for five years to any veteran who is a resident of the state, who is certified or determined to be totally and permanently disabled by the VA, or by any branch of the Armed Forces, or who has been issued a valid disabled veteran identification card by FDVA. The license can be reissued upon request every five years. More information about hunting and fishing licenses can be found at <http://myfwc.com/> (FS 379.353)

New legislation in 2011 honors the service of injured war veterans by providing special outdoor recreational opportunities for them. The Division of Forestry is designating one or more areas of state forests as Wounded Warrior Special Hunt Areas. With funding from the Friends of Florida State Forests Program, active duty members and veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces with combat-related injuries will have access to specialized hunting areas that are specially adapted to assist their needs. (FS 589.19)

Commission as a Notary Public

The state’s fee shall not be required for a

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commission as a Notary Public to a veteran with wartime service and who has been rated 50 percent or more for a service-connected disability. Other fees may apply. (FS 117.01 (2))

Occupational License Taxes

A disabled wartime veteran who is unable to perform manual labor and is a permanent Florida resident shall be exempt from this tax up to \$50. The unmarried spouse of a deceased disabled veteran is also entitled to this exemption. (FS 205.171)

Disabled Veterans' Exemption from Fees

Total and permanently disabled Florida veterans are exempt from county and municipality building license or permit fees when making certain improvements to their residence in order to make the dwelling habitable or safe. Restrictions apply. (FS 295.16)

Education Benefits for Veterans and Families
Florida provides four-year college educational opportunities for dependent children and spouses of deceased or total and permanently disabled veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces through Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans and Service members. (FS 295.01) For more information, visit www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/factsheets/CDDV.htm or call toll free at (888) 827-2004.

Dependent children of service members Missing In Action or Prisoners Of War may also be eligible for tuition benefits. For more information, call toll free at (888) 827-2004.

Florida waives undergraduate-level tuition at

state universities and community colleges for Florida recipients of the Purple Heart and other combat-related decorations superior in precedence to the Purple Heart. Visit www.FloridaVets.org/pdf/ph_waiver.pdf for details on this waiver and specific eligibility criteria. (FS 1009.26 (8))

For more information, call (850) 245-0407.

Florida National Guard members have several programs at their disposal to offset the cost of college tuition. For more information, call (904) 827-8595.

Tuition Deferment

Any veteran or other eligible student covered under Title 38, U.S.C. is allowed one tuition deferment each academic year; an additional deferment may be authorized when a delay in benefits occurs. (FS 1009.27)

High School Diplomas for Veterans

The Florida Legislature has enacted laws in which eligible World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans who, as a result of being inducted into any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and unable to complete their high school education, can be awarded a State of Florida High School Diploma. For more information, call (850) 245-9029 or visit <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/veteran-diploma.asp>

Florida's Women Veterans

The Sunshine State is home to more than 140,000 women veterans. For information and a comprehensive list of resources concerning women veterans' issues, visit <http://www.womenshealth.va.gov/> and <http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>

Florida Veterans' Homes

From www.floridavets.org

The **Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans' Domiciliary Home** in Lake City (Columbia County) opened to residents in 1990. The recently renovated 150-bed Assisted Living Facility provides a special combination of housing, personalized supportive services and incidental medical care to eligible veterans. Veterans must be able to feed and dress themselves and in need of assisted living care. Call (386) 758-0600 for more information. Address: 751 SE Sycamore Terrace, Lake City, FL 32025.

The **Emory L. Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home** in Daytona Beach (Volusia County) opened to residents in 1993. The recently renovated 120-bed facility provides skilled nursing care to its veteran residents. Call (386) 274-3460 for more information. Address: 1920 Mason Avenue, Daytona Beach, FL 32117.

The **Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home** in Land O' Lakes (Pasco County) opened to residents in 1999. The 120-bed facility provides skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Call (813) 558-5000 for more information. Address: 6919 Parkway Boulevard, Land O' Lakes, FL 34639.

The **Alexander "Sandy" Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home** in Pembroke Pines (Broward County) opened to residents in 2001. The 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease.

Call (954) 985-4824 for more information. Address: 8401 West Cypress Drive, Pembroke Pines, FL 33025.

The **Clifford C. Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home** in Springfield (Bay County) opened to residents in 2003. The 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Call (850) 747-5401 for more information. Address: 4419 Tram Road, Springfield, FL 32404.

The **Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home** in Port Charlotte (Charlotte County) opened to residents in 2004. The 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Call (941) 613-0919 for more information. Address: 21281 Grayton Terrace, Port Charlotte, FL 33954.

The **Clyde E. Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home** in St. Augustine (St. Johns County) opened to residents in 2010. The 120-bed facility offers skilled nursing care and can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's disease. Call (904) 940-2193 for more information. Address: 4650 State Road 16, St. Augustine, FL 32092



25 Frequently Asked Questions from Women Veterans

From Center for Women Veterans, www1.va.gov/womenvet/

The most frequently asked questions from women veterans, along with the answers, can now be found on the Center's Web site www1.va.gov/womenvet/. "These 25 questions are the ones we hear most often," said the Director of the Center for Women Veterans. "Too many women veterans don't know that they are eligible for the full range of VA benefits. Too many are unaware of special programs for them." The Director of the Center for Women Veterans notes that the information will be helpful to male veterans as well. Topics include services available to women veterans; information about gender-specific services (including Pap smears, mammography, and prenatal and child care); evaluations for nursing home care; and employment options for women veterans.

General Information

1. What services are available to women veterans?

A full continuum of comprehensive medical services, including health promotion and disease prevention, primary care, women's gender-specific health care; e.g., hormone replacement therapy, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility (excluding in-vitro fertilization), acute medical/surgical, telephone triage, emergency and substance abuse treatment, mental health, domiciliary, rehabilitation and long term care. To enroll in VA health care or find a facility, visit MyHealththeVet@va.gov or www.va.gov/health. VA researchers at many VA facilities also conduct medical research on women's health.

2. How do I access the system for health and benefits services?

Veterans can apply for VA health care

enrollment by completing VA Form 10-10EZ, "Application for Health Benefits." The 10-10EZ may be obtained by visiting, calling or writing any VA health care facility or Veterans' benefits office. You can also call the VA Health Benefits Call Center toll-free at 1-877-222 VETS (1-877-222-8387) to determine your eligibility or access the form from the Health Administration Eligibility Reform Web site: www.va.gov/elig. For VA benefits, refer to Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents at www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp. This booklet discusses the variety of Federal benefits available to veterans and their dependents and survivors, such as:

- Compensation and Pension
- Montgomery GI Bill (Education)
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
- Veterans Group Life Insurance, and
- Home Loan Guaranty

Additional information and application forms can be obtained at VA's Web site: www.va.gov. The Veterans Online Application (VONAPP) <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>, allows you to complete and submit application forms on-line. You may also call the VA nationwide toll-free number, 1-800-827-1000, for specific benefit information.

Another resource for veterans to use to receive information and services on VA benefits is called eBenefits. eBenefits is an

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online portal for Service Members and veterans to access their personalized DoD and VA information. Some features of eBenefits include checking the status of your claim, reviewing payment history and requesting your personnel file from DoD; however, you will need to obtain a premium eBenefits account.

A premium eBenefits account allows you to access your personalized information and use other personalized features through the portal by obtaining a DS Logon. If you are a veteran and would like to receive a DS Logon for your premium eBenefits account, please go to any VA Regional Office with two forms of identification. You can go to our Web site at www.va.gov to obtain a list of VA Regional Offices. Service members and retired veterans do not need to go to a VA Regional Office and may use their DoD CAC or myPay account PIN to obtain their premium eBenefits account by going to the Web site below.

For more information on eBenefits, please visit www.eBenefits.va.gov.

3. Does VA provide maternity benefits?

VA provides maternity benefits to eligible women veterans. Public Law 111-163 authorizes VA to furnish health care services, for not more than 7 days, to a newborn child of a women veteran who delivered the child in a VA facility or in another facility pursuant to a VA contract for such care.

Children born to women veterans who served in Vietnam may also be eligible for monthly monetary benefits, medical care, and

vocational training if they have certain birth defects linked to their mother's service.

Contact the nearest VA regional office on the nationwide toll-free number, 1-800-827-1000, for information and eligibility requirements, or visit VA's home page at www.va.gov.

Veterans Health Services

4. How can I receive gender-specific services, including Pap smears, mammography, prenatal and childcare?

Apply for VA health care enrollment by completing VA Form 10-10EZ which may be obtained by visiting, calling, or writing any VA health care facility or Veterans' benefits office. You can also call toll-free 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387) or access the form on the Internet at www.va.gov. The provision of health care to non-Veteran children is limited to those instances where specific authority is given to VA by law. Contact your local VA health care facility and ask to speak with the Women Veterans Program Manager (white pages of the telephone directory under U.S. Government, Department of Veterans Affairs).

5. How can I obtain emergency assistance with payment of my delinquent utility bills, rent, mortgage, etc.?

Your state Department of Veterans Affairs can best assist veterans in this situation. You can find the number of your state's Department of Veterans Affairs in the blue or white pages of your local telephone directory. Also, local veterans service organizations, churches, and community organizations may be able to assist veterans in need.

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6. How long does it take to get a clinic appointment?

If you are a new enrollee and/or new patient rated less than 50 percent service connected requiring care for a service connected disability, you will be scheduled for a primary care evaluation within 30 days of desired date. If your outpatient appointment cannot be scheduled within this timeframe, VA will arrange to have you seen within 30 days at another VA health care facility or obtain the services on fee basis, under a sharing agreement or contract at VA expense.

If you are a veteran who is 50 percent service connected or higher and is an already established patient (not new), your request for an appointment will be reviewed by a VA medical provider who will determine a medically appropriate timeline for an appointment. A clinic visit will be scheduled or rescheduled, based on the medical provider's review. You will be contacted by telephone or through correspondence of your appointment.

7. Where can I get inpatient psychiatric care as a woman veteran?

Most VA Medical Centers have inpatient mental health programs. Contact your VA Primary Care Provider or the local Mental Health Program office for assistance. If you already have a therapist and need inpatient care, please discuss your concerns with your therapist.

There are programs that offer specialized care for trauma in residential or inpatient settings for veterans who need more intense treatment and support. Some of these programs serve women only or have women-

only treatment cohorts.

There is also a hotline to provide emergency support and resources to homeless veterans. The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans is 1-877-4AIDVET (1-877-424-3838)

8. Where can I get treatment for conditions related to sexual assault or sexual harassment I experience while in the military?

You may be eligible for Military Sexual Trauma (MST)-related care, even if you are not eligible for other VA services. Every VA facility provides free care for mental and physical health conditions related to MST. Veterans may be eligible for service connection or disability compensation for injuries or illnesses related to MST. To receive care, ask your VA provider for a referral for MST services, contact the MST Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center, or contact your local Vet Center (www.va.gov).

9. What kind of specialized services are available for women veterans who have experienced a trauma?

Every VA health care facility has providers knowledgeable about treatment for the aftereffects of trauma. Contact the Women Veterans Program Manager at your local health care facility for more information. Vet Centers provide counseling for combat veterans who are experiencing readjustments difficulties (www.vetcenter.va.gov). Additional information can also be found at www.ncptsd.va.gov.

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10. How do I get evaluated for nursing home care?

If you have never been seen at a VA health care facility, you must first enroll for benefits. Then, you must enroll in a primary care clinic and ask for an evaluation for nursing home care. The evaluation will be done either by the primary care provider or a geriatrics care team.

11. What is the process of getting quality of care issues addressed?

Contact the Women Veterans Program Manager or Patient Advocate at your local VA health care facility (white pages under U.S. Government, Department of Veterans Affairs or www.va.gov).

Veterans Benefits

12. How do I get my disability compensation claim reevaluated?

You may request a reevaluation of your claim anytime that you believe your condition has changed or worsened. Submit the request to reopen or reevaluate your claim to the VA Regional Office by either letter or statement or on VA Form 21-4138, "Statement in Support of Claim," www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4138-ARE.pdf. You may also reopen your claim via the toll-free telephone number, 1-800-827-1000.

Your request should include the following information:

- Name
- VA claim number, Service Number, or Social Security Number

- Day and evening contact information
- Current address
- Statement explaining change requested
- Any new and pertinent medical evidence that supports your request

A Women Veterans Coordinator is available at each VA regional office to assist women veterans.

13. How and where do I apply for home, business, or car loans?

VA Home Loan Guaranty Program provides loan guaranties to service members, veterans, reservists, and un-remarried surviving spouses for the purchase of homes, condominiums and manufactured homes, and for refinancing loans. Some of the ways a VA loan guaranty can be used include:

- Buy a home
- Buy a residential condominium
- Build a home
- Repair, alter, or improve a home
- Refinance an existing loan
- Buy a manufactured home with or without a lot

You must complete VA Form 26-1880, "Request for a Certificate of Eligibility for VA Home Loan Benefits," www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/vba-26-1880-ARE.pdf and submit it to the VA Eligibility Center along with acceptable proof of service as described on the instruction page of the form.

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The Center for Veteran Enterprise partners with the Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration to provide information, assistance, and mentoring for veterans who would like to start their own business. See www.vetbiz.gov for additional information.

VA does not provide assistance for automobile purchases, except for certain veterans and service members who need special adaptive equipment. To apply, contact a VA regional office (1-800-827-1000) or a VA medical center.

14. How do I obtain GI Bill education benefits?

Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30) Benefits end 10 years from the date of your last discharge or release from active duty. If your benefits expire mid-term, your benefits are extended to the end of the term or semester. (Example: Your benefits expire in November but the course ends in December. You will be paid for December.)

The delimiting date can be extended past your 10-year period if you were prevented from attending classes.

If your benefit eligibility is based on two years of active duty and four years in the Selected Reserve, you have 10 years from your release from active duty, or 10 years from the completion of the four-year Selected Reserve obligation to use your benefits, whichever is later.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is a new education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. For more information, call toll-free 1-

888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) or visit the VA GI Bill Web site at www.gibill.va.gov.

What is the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship?

Public Law 111-32, the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, amends the Post-9/11 GI Bill (chapter 33) to include the children of service members who die in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. The benefit is effective August 1, 2009; the same day the Post-9/11 GI Bill takes effect. Eligible children attending school may receive up to the highest public, in-state undergraduate tuition and fees, plus a monthly living stipend and book allowance under this program.

Homeless Services

15. How do I contact a coordinator for options for women veterans who are homeless with children?

Contact the local VA homeless coordinator (or point of contact), Social Work Services department, or Women Veterans Program Manager at your local VA medical center or regional office. A listing of Homeless Veteran Coordinator offices, by state, can be found at www.va.gov/homeless. There is also a hotline to provide emergency support and resources to homeless veterans and veterans facing the possibility of homelessness. The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans is 1-877-4AIDVET (1-877-424-3838).

Burial Benefits

16. Am I eligible for burial benefits? What are my options?

If you served in a branch of the military and

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were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, you may be eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery or a State Veterans Cemetery.

Female veterans married to a veteran are entitled to their own separate grave, headstone or marker, burial flag and Presidential Memorial Certificate. However, they may choose to be buried in the same gravesite as their spouse.

To locate the nearest VA National Cemetery or State Veterans Cemetery, visit: www.cem.va.gov. For more eligibility information call 1-800-827-1000. For information regarding burial at Arlington National Cemetery, visit www.arlingtoncemetery.org.

Locating Military Records

17. How do I locate my military records or those of a relative?

To obtain copies of your military records and/or "Report of Separation from Active Military Service" (DD Form 214 or equivalent), you must submit a "Request Pertaining to Military Records" (SF 180) to the records custodian of your branch of service. Addresses for each service's records custodian are found on page 2 of the SF 180. The SF 180 requires a signature and must be submitted either by mail or fax. Contact the National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100, or fax requests to (314) 801-9195. The Web site is www.archives.gov/research_room/vetrecs/index.html.

Locating Other Veterans

18. How do I locate a buddy whom I served with in the military?

The Privacy Act obliges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as a Federal agency, to protect the privacy of veterans' personal information. Therefore, VA cannot release personal information about a veteran in its records system without that person's permission. VA can, however, forward a message from you to the veteran, providing VA has a current address on record.

Write your message to your friend and place it in an unsealed, stamped envelope. Include a note to VA explaining who it is that you are trying to reach and add as much identifying information as you have. Put all of this in another envelope and address it to the nearest VA Regional Office.

If the veteran is in VA records, your message to the veteran will be sealed and the envelope will be sent to the address on file for the veteran. It is then up to the veteran to contact you. This process is designed to protect the privacy of veterans, as required by law. If you have questions, you may call VA at 1-800-827-1000.

You may also contact the Women In Military Service for America Memorial (WIMSA) located at the ceremonial entrance of Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA, at www.womensmemorial.org or by telephone at 1-800-222-2294.

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National Guard, Reserves, and Uniformed Services

19. Where can I find information regarding benefits and services for National Guard, Reserves, and Uniformed Services?

Current and former members of the Selected Reserve who served on active duty may establish veteran status and may therefore be eligible for VA benefits, depending on the length of active military service and the character of discharge or release. Members of the National Guard activated for federal service during a period of war or domestic emergency may be eligible for certain VA benefits, such as VA health care, compensation for injuries or conditions connected to that service and burial benefits. Activation for other than federal service does not qualify Guard members for all VA benefits. Title 38, Section 3.7 of the Code of Federal Regulations identifies individuals and groups considered to have performed active military, naval, or air service.

Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom Veterans: VA provides five years of free health care for veterans who served in certain combat locations during active military service, beginning on the date of separation from active duty. This benefit covers all illnesses and injuries except those clearly unrelated to active military service. For more information call 1-877-222-8387. Every VA medical center has a team standing ready to welcome OEF/OIF Service members and to help coordinate their care (<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/Library/pubs/CombatVet/CombatVet.pdf>).

Employment

20. How do I access employment options for women veterans?

Some job Web sites for veterans include the following:

Information regarding veterans employment in the Federal government can be found at www.fedshirevets.gov. Information regarding veteran employment specifically within the Department of Veterans Affairs can be found at www.va.gov/vecs.

Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Human Resources Management:

www.va.gov/ohrm

Department of Labor Veterans site:

www.dol.gov/vets

CareerOneStop: www.careeronestop.org

You may also wish to research job opportunities through www.monster.com

Women Veterans Research

21. Where do I find research studies and surveys on women Veterans?

The Office of Research and Development at VA Central Office oversees research within the Veterans Health Administration through its four service areas:

The Medical Research Service provides knowledge of the fundamental biological processes to form an understanding of disease pathology, diagnosis, and treatment.

The Cooperative Studies Program applies the knowledge gained from medical research to patients by determining the effectiveness of novel or unproved therapies using multi-center clinical intervention trials.

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The Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) contributes to improving the quality, effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility of health care services for veterans.

The Rehabilitation Research and Development Service addresses the minimization of disability and restoration of function in veterans disabled by trauma or disease.

Some important VA research Web sites to know are: Web site for the HSR&D: www.hsrd.research.va.gov/.

For HSR&D studies: www.hsrd.research.va.gov/for_researchers/womens_health/

22. How and where do I find historical information on women Veterans?

Contact the Women In Military Service For America Memorial (WIMSA) located at the gates of Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, VA, through their Web site: www.womensmemorial.org.

23. How do I locate statistics on women Veterans by state and nationally?

VA provides statistics and demographic information on various Veteran populations at the following Web site: www.va.gov/vetdata. Additional statistics by state can be found on the same Web site.

24. Where do I locate legislation on women's and related issues?

You may access legislative information and follow up on Congressional bills through the Thomas Web site <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

25. How do I get the names of local Veterans in my area to interview for a school project?

Veterans Service Organizations are available in most communities. Telephone book yellow pages will list local veteran groups under "Veterans" or "Veteran Service Organizations." Examples of organizations include AMVETS (American Veteran), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), The American Legion, and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW).

WIMSA can also help arrange for members to either speak at civic or educational events or to be interviewed about the Women's Memorial, a specific era, or women in the military. Contact the Public Relations Department, at 1-(800) 222- 2294 or (703) 533-1155.

WIMSA also has volunteer opportunities if you are interested in speaking about the Women's Memorial, a specific era, or women in the military. Contact the Public Relations and Education Department at www.womensmemorial.org.

Benefits and Health Care Contacts

Reference	Phone	Website
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	1-800-827-1000 TDD 1-800-829-4833	www.va.gov www.vba.va.gov
Veterans Health Care Eligibility/Enrollment	1-877-222-8387	www.va.gov/healtheligibility
St. Petersburg VA Regional Office, Bay Pines	1-800-827-1000	www.benefits.va.gov/stpetersburg
Florida National Guard Transition Assistance	(904) 823-0319 (904) 827-8668	www.floridaguard.army.mil
Military Funeral Honors		www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil
Barrancas National Cemetery, Pensacola	(850) 453-4108/4846	http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/barrancas.asp
Bay Pines National Cemetery	(727) 398-9426	http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/baypines.asp
Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell	(352) 793-7740	http://www.cem.va.gov/CEMs/nchp/florida.asp
Jacksonville National Cemetery	(904) 358-3510	http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/jacksonville.asp
Sarasota National Cemetery	(941) 861-9840	http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/sarasota.asp
South Florida National Cemetery, Lake Worth	(561) 649-6489	http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/southflorida.asp
St. Augustine National Cemetery	(352) 793-7740	<i>Closed to new interments</i>
Returning Veterans	1-800-827-1000	http://www.oefoif.va.gov
TRICARE	1-800-444-5445	www.tricare.mil
Gulf War Veterans	1-800-749-8387	www1.va.gov/gulfwar
Women Veterans	(850) 609-2740	www1.va.gov/womenvet
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve	1-800-336-4590	www.esgr.mil
National VA Homeless Hotline	1-877-424-3838	http://www1.va.gov/homeless/
VA eBenefits Portal - Online Benefits-Related Tools and Information	1-800-827-1000 1-800-983-0937	https://www.ebenefits.va.gov
VA Home Loan Guaranty Services	(888) 244-6711	www.homeloans.va.gov
National Veteran Crisis Hotline	1-800-273-8255, Dial 1 for veterans	www.mentalhealth.va.gov
Florida Relay Service - <i>For those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind, or speech impaired</i>	Dial 7-1-1	www.ftri.org

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Jake Willens, "Women in the Military: Combat Roles Considered", 7 August 1996

Part II



Florida Commission on the Status of Women

2011 Annual Report

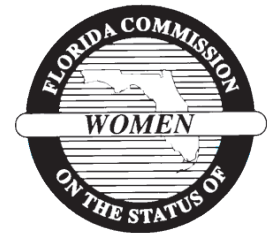
The Florida Commission on the Status of Women

Mission

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to empowering women in achieving their fullest potential, to eliminating barriers to that achievement, and to recognizing women's accomplishments.

About the Commission

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) is established in the office of the Florida Attorney General, and consists of 22 members. The Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President of the Senate, Attorney General and Commissioner of Agriculture each appoint members to the Commission. Each member serves for a term of four years. No member may serve more than eight consecutive years.



Our Mandate

As required by Section 14.24, Florida Statutes, the Commission is mandated to study and make recommendations to the Governor, Cabinet and Legislature on issues affecting women. These recommendations are presented in the form of an annual report, which is distributed during the first quarter of each year. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- socioeconomic factors influencing the status of women;
- the development of individual potential;
- the encouragement of women to utilize their capabilities and assume leadership roles;

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- the coordination of efforts of numerous organizations interested in the welfare of women;
- the identification and recognition of contributions made by women to the community, state and nation; and
- the implementation of recommendations to improve working conditions, financial security, and legal status of both sexes.

Commission Priorities

The Commission studies and makes recommendations on various issues including domestic violence, employment and education, family, welfare reform, gender equity, health care, and the judicial system.

Publications

- 1992 Annual Report "Women in the Workplace"
- 1993 Annual Report "Women's Health Care"
- 1994 Annual Report "Justice and Human Rights; How They Apply to Women"
- 1995 Annual Report "Welfare Reform in Florida"
- 1996 Annual Report Benchmark Study
- 1996 Publication "Women and Health, A Status Report"
- 1997 Annual Report "Women and Economic Development"
- 1998 Annual Report "A Definitive Study on Young Women Ages 12-18 in Florida"
- 1999 Annual Report "Reflections and Projections: Women in Florida"
- 2000 Annual Report "A Study of Women's History Education in Florida's Public Schools"
- 2001 Annual Report "Prevention by Intervention: Girls in Florida's Juvenile Justice System"

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- 2002 Publication “Creating Change Challenging Tradition: Florida Women Public Officials”
- 2002 Annual Report “A Passion to Play! 30 Years of Women’s Athletics in Florida”
- 2003 Annual Report “Women and Money: Practical Money Skills for Women”
- 2004 Annual Report “Legally Yours: A Guide for Florida Women”
- 2005 Annual Report “Florida Women Mean Business”
- 2006 Annual Report “Life Issues of Florida Women: Mid-life and Beyond”
- 2007 Annual Report “Smart Surfing: Protecting You and Your Family from Cyber-crime”
- 2008 Annual Report “Good Health for a Lifetime”
- 2009 Annual Report “Thriving in Tough Economic Times”
- 2010 Annual Report “Political Pearls: A Comprehensive Analysis on Florida Women in Public Office
- 2005—2011 “Summary of Florida Laws Affecting Women”
- 1999, 2000, 2004, and 2011 FCSW Calendar
- 2001, 2002 and 2003 Women’s History Calendar
- Women’s Hall of Fame Brochure

History of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women



1961

President John F. Kennedy created the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW).



1964

Florida Governor Farris Bryant created the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) to study laws and regulations pertaining to women in Florida and make recommendations to the legislature based on their findings.



1966

The Commission presented its first report to Governor Farris Bryant.



1967

Florida Governor Claude Kirk announced the appointment of 14 new members to the COSW, bringing the total number of commissioners to 24.



1971

Governor Reubin Askew reestablished the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women by executive order.

Governor Reubin Askew appointed an executive director to help coordinate the Commission's activities.

1974



The Commission's budget is cut and its fate between 1977 and 1978 are not known.

1977

Governor Bob Graham reactivated the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women (still referred to as the COSW) by means of Executive Order 79-60.

1979



The first Florida Women's Hall of Fame ceremony and reception was held by the Commission at the Governor's Mansion in Tallahassee in May of 1982.

1982

Governor Lawton Chiles lobbied the Florida Legislature to statutorily create the Florida Commission on the Status of Women after he took office in 1991. The leading sponsor in the House of Representatives for CS/CS/HB 109 was Representative Elaine Gordon, while Senator Carrie Meek sponsored the companion bill, SB 1324. The Commission's legislative authority now exists in Section 14.24, Florida Statutes. Since 1991, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women has been fully supported by the Governor, the Cabinet and the Florida Legislature.

1991



2011 FCSW Year in Review

This section briefly highlights the work and accomplishments of the Commission in 2011

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women engages in numerous activities each year in order to empower women of the State of Florida to achieve their fullest potential.

Much of the work of the Commission takes place through its committees. The standing committees of the Commission include: Annual Report, Bylaws, Finance and Budget, Legislative Advocacy, and the Women's Hall of Fame/Women's History Committee. In addition, the Commission established several ad-hoc committees to work on special projects, including the Awards, Mentoring Task Force and Recognition Task Force and the Public Outreach Task Force. Committees meet on a regular schedule by teleconference to coordinate the work of the Commission.

Following is a diary highlighting many of the Commission events and accomplishments.



Pat Gleason *inducts* the following members to serve as officers for 2011-2012: Nancy C. Acevedo, Chair; Laurie Pizzo, Vice-Chair; Laura McLeod, Treasurer; Amy Kryak, Secretary; Barbara Wall, Member at Large; and R. Jai Gillum, Member at Large.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women held a successful and productive 1st Quarterly meeting on March 23, 2011, at the Tallahassee Community College Main Campus. The Commission also held its annual election of officers, who were sworn in by Pat Gleason of the Office of the Attorney General during a ceremony during the meeting.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women had the honor of participating in a number of exciting and informative conferences this spring, including the *Women's Leadership Conference* at the University of Florida, the *Women's History Month Celebration* at Tallahassee Community College and *Behind Closed Doors* sponsored by the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. These conferences offered not only a wealth of new information, but an opportunity to educate the public and inform them about the important work of the Commission.

Commission Chair Nancy C. Acevedo served as the Keynote Speaker at the Opening Night Banquet of the 30th Model UN program at Bethune-Cookman University. The theme of the Program was "The Elimination of Social Barriers Against Women." During the conference held on February 17-18, student participants discussed topics such as improving access to health services for women in conflict and post-conflict situations, making the justice system more accessible to women, and HIV/AIDS and women. The group simulated the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

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The 2011 Summary of Florida Laws Affecting Women and Families, was published by the FCSW Legislative Committee. This report is an annual publication designed to encourage women from across the state to become educated about the legislative process and new laws that affect Florida's families. The 2011 Summary of Florida Laws Affecting Women and Families is available on the Commission's website, www.fcsw.net.ing,



August 26 is Women's Equality Day - the anniversary of the day that, 91 years ago in 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting women the right to vote. The Florida Commission on the Status of Women was pleased to participate in the Sarasota and Manatee Commissions on the Status of Women's Annual Women's Equity Luncheon on Saturday, August 20, 2011 at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota. Nearly 500 women were in attendance at the celebration. FCSW Commissioner Dr. Mona Jain, and staff members Kelly Sciba, Michele Manning, and Veronica Vasquez represented the Commission at the celebration.

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women released its 2010 Annual Report *Political Pearls: A Comprehensive Analysis on Florida Women in Public Office*, focusing on the achievements women have made, and challenges they face in running for election. It is the Commission's hope that the information acts as a catalyst in increasing women's interest in public service. In addition, the Commission is proud to serve as one of more than 10 members of *The 2012 Project Florida* coalition, helping to get the word out around our state. *The 2012 Project* is a national, non-partisan campaign to increase the number of women in Congress and state legislatures by taking advantage of the once-in-a-decade opportunities of 2012.



Commission Chair Nancy C. Acevedo with Shannon Miller.

The Commission held its second meeting of the year in Jacksonville, Florida on June 10, 2011 and was addressed by Shannon Miller, Olympic Gold –Medal Gymnast and women's health advocate. Ms. Miller shared with the Commission her story regarding her battle with ovarian cancer and the importance of educating young women about proper health screenings. In addition, the issue of battling childhood obesity was discussed.

Commission Chair Nancy C. Acevedo and FCSW Assistant Director Michele Manning represented the Florida Commission on the Status of Women (FCSW) at the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) during its 41st Annual Conference held July 20-23, 2011 at the Wyndham Phoenix in Phoenix, Arizona. Hosted by the Phoenix Women's Commission, the conference theme was "Renewable Growth, Sustained Purpose Women Challenging the Future."

The FCSW was awarded for their ongoing work with the "NACW's Healthy Bones." In addition, the FCSW received national recognition for their "Mentoring Program" and the "Gender Bias in the Media, Roundtable Discussions," that have been conducted in various locations statewide.

The Commission honored Dr. Kamala Anandam of Weston, the Honorable Brenda Carey of Longwood, Eunice Nuekie Cofie of Tallahassee, Amanda C. Evora of Bradenton, Betty Gissendanner of Port Charlotte, Donna Parker of Winter Park, Patricia A. Snow of West Palm Beach, Judy Wiseman of Niceville, Jennifer L. Berrian of Tallahassee, Dominique Gelin of Oviedo and Erica Lindegren of Sarasota with a FCSW Florida Achievement Award for their work in improving the lives of women and families in their communities. They received recognition in a special luncheon ceremony during the third quarterly meeting of the Commission on Saturday, September 10, 2011, at W Hotel in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. In addition to the Achievement Award from the Commission, each received a congratulatory letter from Governor Rick Scott. The awards ceremony included a very special Keynote address by Simone Champagnie, the Director of Alumni Relations in the Office of Advancement at Broward College.

"Learn Lead Succeed: Young Women's Leadership Forum" was held on September 10, 2011, following the third quarter meeting in Ft. Lauderdale. The Forum was organized by the Commission's Mentoring Committee in order to better serve and mentor young women and girls. Special guest speaker Dr. Stephanie Haridopolos spoke to an audience of more than twenty young women about leadership and pursuing their dreams.

The Commission was recognized on November 15, 2011 by the Florida Cabinet with a resolution in honor of our 20th Anniversary. The Commission was established in 1991, and has worked diligently for Florida's women and families since that time. The fourth quarterly meeting was held on November 16, 2011 and we were honored to be addressed by Cynthia Williams regarding domestic violence and the military.



Members and Staff of the Commission receive the Cabinet Resolution.

Florida Women's Hall of Fame



The Florida Women's Hall of Fame began in 1982 under the aegis of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women. A total of 27 women were selected as members of the Hall in 1982, 1984 and 1986. In 1992, legislation was passed that created a permanent Florida Women's Hall of Fame. Since 1993, up to three women have been inducted into the Hall annually pursuant to Section 265.001, Florida Statutes. Nominations to the Hall may be made between April 1 and July 15 of each year.

To obtain a nomination form or review member biographies, visit the Commission's web site at www.fcsww.net or contact the office at 850-414-3300. The Commission appreciates the public input that assists in honoring meritorious women and in educating citizens on the significant and varied accomplishments of women in Florida's history.

2010/2011 Florida Women's Hall of Fame Inductees



Mary Brennan Karl
1890-1948



Anna I. Rodriguez
1957-

The Hall of Fame recognizes and honors women who, through their works and lives, have made significant contributions to the improvement of life for women and for all citizens of the state of Florida.

Florida Women's Hall of Fame Members 1982—2010

2009/2010 Inductees

Louise H. Cortelis
Senator Gwen Margolis
Betty Schlesinger Sembler

2008/2009 Inductees

Louise H. Courtelis
Senator Gwen Margolis
Betty Schlesinger Sembler

2007/2008 Inductees

Justice Barbara J. Pariente
Dr. Pallavi Patel
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

2006/2007 Inductees

Marylly VanLeer Peck
Peggy A. Quince

2005/2006 Inductees

Caridad Asensio
Tillie Kidd Fowler
Lucy W. Morgan

2004/2005 Inductees

Shirley D. Coletti
Marion P. Hammer
Judith Kersey

2003 Inductees

Sarah Ann Blocker
Gloria Estefan
Mary R. Grizzle

2002 Inductees

Victoria Joyce Ely, R.N.
Senator Toni Jennings
Frances Langford Stuart

2001 Inductees

Jessie Ball DuPont
Lenore Carrero Nesbitt
Lynda Keever

2000 Inductees

Chris Evert
Paula Fickes Hawkins
MG Marianne Mathewson-Chapman, Ph.D.

1999 Inductees

Althea Gibson
Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin, OP, Ph.D.
Dessie Smith Prescott

1998 Inductees

Helen Gordon Davis
Mattie Belle Davis
Christine Fulwylie-Bankston

1997 Inductees

Alicia Baro
Carita Doggett Corse
M. Athalie Range

1996 Inductees

Marjorie Harris Carr
Betty Castor
Ivy Julia Cromartie Stranahan

1995 Inductees

Evelyn Stocking Crosslin, M.D.
JoAnn Hardin Morgan
Sarah 'Aunt Frances' Brooks Pryor

1994 Inductees

Nikki Beare
Betty Mae Jumper
Gladys Nichols Milton

1993 Inductees

Betty Skelton Frankman
Paulina Pedroso
Janet Reno

1992 Inductees

Jacqueline Cochran
Carrie P. Meek
Ruth Bryan Owen

1986 Inductees

Annie Ackerman
Rosemary Barkett
Gwendolyn Sawyer Cherry
Dorothy Dodd
Marjory Stoneman Douglas
Elsie Jones Hare
Elizabeth McCullough Johnson
Frances Bartlett Kinne
Arva Moore Parks
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
Florence Barbara Seibert
Marilyn K. Smith
Eartha Mary Magdalene White

1984 Inductees

Roxcy O'Neal Bolton
Barbara Landstreet Frye
Lena B. Smithers Hughes
Zora Neale Hurston
Sybil Collins Mobley
Helen Muir
Gladys Pumariega Soler
Julia DeForest Sturtevant Tuttle

1982 Inductees

Mary McLeod Bethune
Helene S. Coleman
Elaine Gordon
Wilhelmina Celeste Goehring Harvey
Paula Mae Milton
Barbara Jo Palmer



2011 FCSW Commissioners

NANCY C. ACEVEDO



Commissioner Nancy C. Acevedo of Winter Springs was last appointed to the Commission in 2008 by former Speaker of the House Marco Rubio. Commissioner Acevedo is currently an Intelligence Analyst with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office/ Domestic Security Unit. She is a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico and the Inter-American University, and holds a Ph.D. in Education. In 2007 she graduated from the SCSO Community Law Enforcement Academy and in 2009 was re-appointed to the Seminole County Sheriff Citizens Advisory Council for the Response to Resistance Council. She is the President of the Florida Crime Intelligence Analyst Association (FCIAA), an active member of the International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA) and the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA). Commissioner Acevedo currently serves as Diplomat to the Florida International Business Council and as a political activist in the Central Florida area. In 2004 she was appointed by the former Governor Jeb Bush to the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and in 2006 she received a Presidential appointment to the U.S. Small Business Administration National Advisory Board.

CLAUDIA KIRK BARTO



Commissioner Claudia Kirk Barto currently serves as the President & CEO of Junior Achievement of the Palm Beaches. Commissioner Barto has numerous years of non-profit leadership experience, most recently Executive Director of the Lupus Foundation of America Southeast Florida Chapter. She has also served at the Palm Beach Office of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Palm Beach Area Chapter, and United Way of Palm Beach County. Commissioner Barto grew up in Palm Beach where philanthropy is a way of life. She currently serves on Florida Atlantic University's Women's Studies Advisory Board.

She received her degree in communications from Florida State University. In April 2000, she was appointed to the Florida Commission on the Status of Women by Comptroller Bob Milligan and recently reappointed by Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson. Commissioner Barto lives in West Palm Beach with her two sons, Wen and Kirk, and daughter Marina.

DOROTHY BENDROSS-MINDINGALL

Commissioner Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall of Miami was appointed to the Commission in 2008 by Speaker of the House Marco Rubio. She is a former classroom teacher, principal and current adult education administrator. After graduating from Miami Northwestern Senior High School, she matriculated at Tuskegee (Alabama) Institute, Nova University, Barry University and Florida International University, completing Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and several Master-level certifications. Commissioner Bendross-Mindingall is a former State Representative for District 109. She has previously served as the first chairperson of the Governor's Commission on African American Affairs. Commissioner Bendross-Mindingall recently opened a learning center within a Miami-Dade housing project, designed to get even more parents off welfare, and armed with the skills needed to stay focused and productive.



TONIE BENSE

Commissioner Tonie Bense was appointed to the Commission in September 2011 by CFO Jeff Atwater. She is owner and director of Tonie's Dance Workshop in Panama City, Florida, is a dance educator and avid dance enthusiast. Her studio has been in operation since 1976 and it has grown to two locations and over 600 students. A successful businesswoman, Tonie travels the country participating in and teaching at dance seminars and conventions ensuring that she stays up with the latest dance trends. Tonie is a native of Meridian, Mississippi and graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. Panama City has been her home since 1974 where she continues to be active in numerous community service projects including the "Special Needs for Special Kids" at Pediatrics Plus, and the "Spirit of Women" Board at Gulf Coast Medical Center. Commissioner Bense is also a past Board Member of Mentor for Bay Education Foundation, Bay Arts, and Gulf Coast Community College. She is married to Allan Bense and they have three children and four grand girls.



BERTICA CABRERA-MORRIS

Commissioner Bertica Cabrera-Morris of Orlando was appointed to the Commission in 2007 by Speaker of the House Marco Rubio. In 1993 she started Bertica Cabrera Consulting Firm - a public relations, marketing and governmental affairs consulting firm of which she is the principal and sole proprietor. Commissioner Cabrera-Morris attended the UCLA Banking Academy of Los Angeles and made the transition to the financial world through employment with the First Interstate Bank of Los Angeles, followed by employment with the Independence Bank of Encino.

Currently, she is an active member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and also serves on the Arts Council for Central Florida. Commissioner Cabrera-Morris was appointed to the Board of Trustees for Valencia Community College in 2005 and was re-appointed in 2007 for a 4 year term.





LOURDES CASTILLO DE LA PEÑA

Commissioner Lourdes Castillo de la Peña was appointed in 2008 by Attorney General Bill McCollum. Commissioner Castillo de la Peña was born in New Jersey and moved to South Florida at the age of five. She graduated from St. Thomas University in 1991, and studied at the Universidad de Maria Cristina in El Escorial, Spain. Commissioner Castillo de la Peña married Leoncio E. de la Peña, a prominent international banking attorney, in 1997, and has three daughters and one son.

Commissioner Castillo de la Peña founded the boutique public relations firm LMC Communications in 1994 as the first of its kind in South Florida with a unique specialization in the Latin American market. She has represented a highly sought-after client roster including Paramount Pictures, Bausch & Lomb, Toy Manufacturer of America, People en Español, BMI, Fashion Week of the Americas, and Fisher Island Club & Resort. She is also owner and publisher of Nuestros Hijos, Latin America's premier parenting magazine.

Commissioner Castillo de la Peña also serves numerous charitable organizations. When Castillo de la Peña's father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, she worked tirelessly to raise awareness among the Hispanic Community. Her significant contributions in this area were recognized by Governor Jeb Bush, who appointed her to the State of Florida Alzheimer's Disease Advisory Board in September 2001. In 2005, she was honored with the Mercy Ambassador Award for all her efforts.

Since becoming a mother of four, Commissioner Castillo de la Peña has been focused on children's issues. She founded the Miami Children's Hospital XOXO (Hugs and Kisses), a group consisting of young professionals, parents and local leaders raising considerable amount of money to support the functions of the Hospital. She is currently serving on the Board of Friends of the Orphans, the U.S. component of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos. She has served on several other Boards, such as The National Alzheimer's Association, The Republican National Senatorial Committee, and on the advisory board for Miami Children's Hospital, Spectrum Committee of the American Red Cross, Fisher Island Philanthropic Fund, Miami City Ballet and Angels of Mercy. From 2002-2004 she served on the Board of Miami-Dade County Historical Advisory Board.

SHARON DAY

Commissioner Sharon Day of Fort Lauderdale was appointed to the Commission in 2008 by Governor Charlie Crist. Sharon is a retired executive with marketing, group health insurance and re-insurance experience. She is an entrepreneur who has built and sold numerous businesses and is a strong supporter of small business. Commissioner Day serves on the Broward County Housing Authority as Chairman of the Commission and is Broward County's State Committeewoman and Florida's Republican National Committeewoman. In 2000, she was appointed to serve on the Committee for Election Reform for the State of Florida by Governor Bush. In 2006, she was appointed to act as Florida's representative on the 2008 Republican Convention Committee on Arrangements and was selected to be Chairman of the 2008 Republican Convention's Special Events.



ANASTASIA GARCIA, Esq.

Commissioner Anastasia Garcia, Esq. of Coral Gables was appointed to the Commission in 2004 by Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson. Commissioner Garcia is an attorney practicing in the area of Matrimonial Law. She is also a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator. Commissioner Garcia earned her J.D. in 1992 from the George Washington University National Law Center. Commissioner Garcia has served on various boards including the Cuba Museum, where she currently serves as secretary. Commissioner Garcia is the owner of the Law Offices of Anastasia M. Garcia, she is a partner in Lakes Title Services LLC and she is a shareholder and corporate counsel for Dade Steel Sales Corporation.





R. JAI GILLUM

Commissioner R. Jai Gillum is the Director of Appointments for the Office of Boards, Commissions and Residual Markets for Florida CFO Alex Sink. Originally from Montgomery, Alabama, R. Jai attended Florida A&M University and received a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master of Public Health (MPH). Commissioner Gillum lives in Tallahassee with her husband, Tallahassee City Commissioner Andrew Gillum. Commissioner Gillum is very involved in the Tallahassee community and currently serves as a board member for the Friends of the Leon County Public Library, the Brokaw-McDougall House, Junior League of Tallahassee and the National Selective Service System. Additionally, she is the Chair of the BE\$T Project Leadership Team for the United Way of the Big Bend and is a member of both Leadership Tallahassee and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Recently, Commissioner Gillum was named one of the “25 Women You Need to Know” by the *Tallahassee Democrat* (March 2010).



SUSANNE HEBERT

Commissioner Hebert of Clearwater received her first appointment in November of 2003 to the Commission by Senate President Jim King. A graduate of the University of Florida in Ornamental Horticulture, Susanne is a past president of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Florida Nurserymen and Grower's Association. Currently an executive with Macy's – Florida, Susanne is active in a variety of community activities. She is a board member and vice chairman of the Feather Sound Municipal Services Taxing District, and currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tampa Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, where she enjoys helping talented young musicians realize their dreams.

MONA JAIN , M.D., Ph.D.

Commissioner Mona Jain has had a lifelong focus on education and health, and is a former Fulbright Scholar and National Science Foundation Scholar. Since 1961, she has been an educator and administrator in American, British, and Indian education systems, has worked for educational opportunities for all students (pre-K to University), especially continuing education for non-traditional, mature students. Dr. Jain also served as Adjunct Professor and Director of Children and Families Health Services for Manatee County Head Start Program. Now retired after 45 years as an educator and health professional, Dr. Jain is actively involved in numerous local, state, national, and international community, civic and professional organizations/associations.



Throughout her career, Dr. Jain has been recognized for outstanding professional and community involvements including: Community Service Award from the American Medical Women's Associations; the 2001 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of South Florida; Jewish Family and Children's Services "Women of Valor"; Kappa Delta Sorority "Women of Achievement"; USF Women and Philanthropy "Community Leadership Award"; recognition from the United Negro College Fund for her distinguished career in education; received a Proclamation and recognition from the Sarasota County Commission and City of Bradenton; and Leadership and Professional Awards from the American Association of University Women and Delta Kappa Gamma International. Dr. Jain has also been honored by placement in American and International "Who's Who". Recognition of her commitment and dedication is not limited to the United States. During her visit to India, her country of birth, she was granted a private audience with the International Humanitarian Mother Teresa. Commissioner Jain received her first appointment to the Commission in 1991 and the second appointment in 1993 by the late Governor Lawton Chiles, and subsequently her third appointment in 2002 and fourth appointment in 2006 by Senate Presidents John McKay and Tom Lee.

DEBORAH JALLAD

Commissioner Deborah Jallad of Winter Park was appointed to the Commission in 2007 by Attorney General Bill McCollum. She is the President/Chairman of Accredited Holding Corporation and Accredited Surety and Casualty Company., Inc. – a Florida-based insurance company holding system specializing in the underwriting of non-contract surety bonds that was founded in 1959. With more than 40 years experience in non-contract surety bonds, Commissioner Jallad has been actively involved in developing industry standards and lobbying for reform. She works closely with Accredited's political consultants, state and national bail associations, and legislatures to increase safety for bail agents and the public. Accredited is the nation's only insurance company owned by women that specializes in bail bond underwriting. Commissioner Jallad has earned numerous awards for both her community service and professional expertise.



GLORIOUS JOHNSON



Commissioner Glorious Johnson of Jacksonville was appointed to the Commission in 2008 by Governor Charlie Crist. She has been an elected official since 2003. Prior to becoming an elected official, Commissioner Johnson was an educator, in which she taught music in the public school system. Later, she became an instructor at the college level, teaching business courses. She received her Bachelor Degree from Jacksonville University in Music as a concert pianist, her first Master Degree was from Nova Southeastern University (Ft. Lauderdale, FL.), in School Administration and Supervision; and her second Master Degree came from Teachers College/Columbia University (New York City), majoring in Educational Administration/Organizational Leadership.

JODY JOHNSTON



Commissioner Jody Johnston has been CEO of Girl Scouts of West Central Florida since its inception on October 1, 2007. The council serves nearly 30,000 girls and 10,000 adult volunteers in Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Marion, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sumter counties. She was previously CEO of councils in Florida, Ohio and Alabama. Commissioner Johnston is a lifetime member of the Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff (AGSES), the national professional development and advocacy organization for employed Girl Scout staff. She recently completed a term as president of the board and was previously a member at large; in 2008 she was inducted into the AGSES Hall of Fame. As president she moved the organization forward with a strategy to develop its members to meet and lead the future of Girl Scouting. Jody was named among "Who's Who in Tampa Bay Business" (Non-profits category) by the Tampa Bay Business Journal and was a finalist in its "Business Woman of the Year" recognition. In 2009 she was named Executive Woman of the Year by the Network of Executive Women. She completed two years as a Denali Fellow in its Social Entrepreneurship program, and participates in several executive development groups, including the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay's CEO Leadership Program. Commissioner Johnston will retire from Girl Scouts at the end of 2009 and will work as a consultant/owner of JKJ Consulting Services, LLC, specializing in consulting and coaching for nonprofit agencies.

AMY KRYAK

Commissioner Amy Kryak of Port St. Lucie was appointed to the Commission in 2008 by Senate President Ken Pruitt. She is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the Keiser University College of Golf. She is also the Founder of Lost Art Entertainment, Inc., a marketing consulting firm. An entrepreneur and business owner since 1986, Kryak has won more than 200 awards for creative excellence in advertising, along with the prestigious ANGEL award for public service. She was Soroptimist Business Woman of the Year in 2002 for St. Lucie County; she has served as president of the Port St. Lucie Business Women and is a former board member of the Treasure Coast Advertising Federation. Commissioner Kryak is a former Assistant Dean at Indian River State College and former Director of the college's Small Business Development Center. In addition to her successful business and education career, Commissioner Kryak and her husband are co-founders of Never Leave a Child Unattended®, a public education campaign founded in 1993 to help prevent injury and drowning of children which results from children not being supervised.



GENEAN HAWKINS MCKINNON

Commissioner McKinnon of Winter Park received her first appointment in April of 2011 to the Commission by Speaker of the House Dean Cannon.

Genean Hawkins McKinnon is President of McKinnon Associates, Inc., a strategic consulting firm specializing in governmental arenas. Founded in 1983 the company has successfully represented clients at the federal, state and local levels. Active in her community, Ms. McKinnon serves (or served) on the Florida Federal Judicial Nominating Commission (Senator Martinez appointment), Florida Bar Grievance Committee 9th Circuit, Brigham Young University Alumni Board, Winter Park Florida Hospital Board, Mennello Museum of Art Board, Hamilton Holt Board at Rollins College, and is a member of Tiger Bay.



Commissioner McKinnon graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Humanities. She and her husband Joel live in Winter Park in their home that was built in 1883. Commissioner McKinnon graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Humanities. She and her husband Joel live in Winter Park in their home that was built in 1883. They have five children and ten grandchildren.



ALCI MALDINADO

Commissioner Alci Maldonado of Lakeland was first appointed to the Commission in 2008 by Governor Charlie Crist. She is an Interior Designer but dedicates much of her time to charity. She is a long time volunteer of the United Methodist Church, especially with its Music Ministries to Children. Commissioner Maldonado has also volunteered with the Boy Scouts of America, has served as the Lakeland Senior High School Band Parents Head Chaperone and was a Board member of the Florida State University Parents Association. A veteran Republican activist, she has served on political campaigns at all level of politics. She has volunteered, worked with, advised or has been the manager of political campaigns for over thirty years in Florida and has also worked with the Massachusetts Republican Party as a volunteer.



JOANNE MCCALL

Commissioner Joanne McCall was appointed to the Commission in 2010 by CFO Alex Sink. Hard work, determination and teamwork play a fundamental part in Joanne McCall's role as Vice President of the Florida Education Association (FEA). She believes those values have motivated her as a leader, as a mom, and as a teacher. Her role as Vice President is focused on making FEA the best it can be by activating and increasing the membership base.

During Joanne's tenure as FEA Vice President, she's helped establish financial stability, membership growth, and groundbreaking bipartisan partnerships with political forces in Florida. The accomplishments are many, but the successes she's most proud of have made an impact in the classrooms around Florida. Joanne's career in education began as a speech language pathologist at North Sumter Primary School in Sumter County. While in that role, she also managed many responsibilities with her local FEA affiliate.

Joanne balances her role as Vice President of FEA with her responsibilities as mom to sons, Spencer and Trevor, and pet Labradors, Cash and Gator. Her boys are avid motocross racers, so Joanne and her husband Robin, split their free time between the race track and following the Florida Gators.

NANCY PEEK MCGOWAN

Commissioner Nancy Peek McGowan of Jacksonville, was appointed to the Commission in 2008 by Attorney General Bill McCollum. A conservative activist since 1990, she has a passion for public policy. Married to P. Ted McGowan, and mother of 5 children, Nancy began a career in politics in the United States Senate as a legislative intern while attending the U.F. in Gainesville, where she obtained a B.A. in Political Science in 1982. She's served on school P.T.A. boards, twice commissioned as a Respect Life Coordinator for the Diocese of St. Augustine, a 28 year lector in the Catholic Church, President of San Jose Country Club Swim Team 2006, serves on the Executive Board of the Justice Coalition, a victims' rights organization in Jacksonville. Nancy is currently President of the Conservative Republican Forum of Jacksonville, and is a member of the Republican Executive Committee of Duval County. She was the Duval Co-Chair, Mitt Romney for President 2008, 2010 State Finance Team, Marco Rubio for U.S., Senate, Duval County Co-Chair, Women for Marco Rubio for Senate, State Co-Chair, Social Conservatives Pam Bondi for A.G., State Co-Chair, Social Conservative for Mitt Romney for President 2012. Nancy was recognized with an award from the Justice Coalition, along with Sen. Steve Wise and State Rep. Dick Kravitz for her roll in moving the Final Closing Arguments legislation out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. She gave the pro-side of the argument against former Judiciary Senate Chairman, John Grant. The bill came out of committee 8-0. The State of Florida now has Final Closing Arguments in a jury trial for the first time in 150 years. H.B. 147 was signed into law by Gov. Jeb Bush on June 7th, 2006. Nancy also authored the original legislation for the Mandatory Physical Fitness Act for Florida public schools signed into Law by Gov Charlie Crist in 2007.



LAURA MCLEOD

Commissioner Laura McLeod of Tallahassee was last appointed to the Commission in 2006 by Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson. Commissioner McLeod, a native of Orlando, Florida, began her professional career in the field of health prevention, education and treatment. This encompassed her career for over a decade, as well as opening her first business in management consulting and personnel placement in health care. Commissioner McLeod then entered association management for a statewide, not-for-profit association where she implemented a statewide drug prevention/education program for which she won a national education award. Commissioner McLeod most recently was a governmental consultant for fifteen years and is now Executive Director for the Florida Association of DUI Programs.



RAMOLA MOTWANI

Commissioner Ramola Motwani was appointed to the Commission in 2010 by CFO Alex Sink. She is the Chairwoman and CEO of Merrimac Ventures, a real estate management, investment and development company with interests all over the U.S. and India. Current projects include the Trump International Hotel and Tower on the Fort Lauderdale Beach.



Commissioner Motwani began her career in the U.S. with an import/export business she started with her late husband Bob Motwani in St. Charles, MO. In the mid-1980's, they expanded the business into hotels by purchasing numerous properties on the Fort Lauderdale Beach. They owned and operated (among others) the Merrimac and Gold Coast Beach Resort Hotels on the Fort Lauderdale Beach from December 1986-October 2004, at which point she partnered with Donald Trump to make way for the five-star Trump International Hotel and Tower on the Fort Lauderdale Beach (currently under construction). As a Development Partner in the 298 – unit condominium hotel, Ramola handled the acquisition, design and entitlement process, and is currently active in managing local representation and public relations.

Commissioner Motwani is very active in the Fort Lauderdale community and has been a major component in beach development and re-development issues. She was instrumental in securing major sponsors to assist with the cost of updating the wave-wall fiber optic lights, secured funding for fireworks on the beach and spearheads the annual holiday lights on the beach effort.

She currently sits on the Advisory Committee for the Business Improvement District on the Fort Lauderdale Beach, is an appointed member of the Beach Redevelopment Advisory Board which advises the Fort Lauderdale City Commission, and is the Former Chair of the Beach Council, a group she has actively participated in as a Chamber of Commerce Trustee for over 20 years.

Her civic-minded affiliations include being a volunteer with the Citizens Volunteer Corps, Trustee of the South Florida Hindu Temple for 12 years, Vice President of the India – U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and past president of the Sindhi Association of S. Florida. Ramola was born and raised in India and received her law degree from the Government Law College located in Mumbai, India. She recently won the 2006 Chamber Women's Circle of Excellence Award for Hospitality and the 2007 Salute to Business Award.

LAURIE PIZZO

Laurie Pizzo, from Spring Hill, was appointed to the Commission by Attorney General Bill McCollum in 2007 and reappointed in March 2012 by Speaker of the House Dean Cannon. Commissioner Pizzo has been a Multi-Million \$\$ Real Estate Producer since 2004. She has completed her AHWD, GREEN and GRI designations in her profession as a REALTOR® and proudly works with Keller Williams Realty- Elite Partners. She is an appointed member to several committees for the Florida REALTORS® that deal with Public Policy. She is very involved with Governmental Affairs both with the Hernando County Association of REALTORS® and the Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce. Commissioner Pizzo serves on the Community Advisory Council for HCA Oak Hill Hospital and the Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity of Hernando County. For many years she has fundraised and/or ran grassroots campaigns for many political candidates in Hernando County. Commissioner Pizzo is also a 2007 graduate of Leadership Hernando for the Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce and a 2007 graduate of Hernando County Association of Realtors Leadership Development Program. She loves to travel, kayak, the gym and her 3 wonderful felines. She is a bit of an adventurer and has skydived, whitewater rafted, swam with stingrays and dolphins. This is just a sampling of her bucket list.



CINDY HARTLEY ROSS

Commissioner Cindy Hartley Ross is a Lakeland, Florida native. She has been married to Dennis Alan Ross since 1983 and they have two children, Shane and Travis. They are all members of First Presbyterian Church, and have enjoyed traveling to 49 United States and several countries together as a family.

Community service has been a way of life for Cindy since serving as a hospital volunteer in Middle School. Mrs. Ross is in the 12th year serving her alma mater Polk State College as a Trustee. Additionally she serves on the PSC Foundation, is immediate past president of the PSC Alumni Association, and represents PSC in the Florida Association of Community Colleges (FACC) and the national organization Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) where she assisted in educating and persuading legislators to retain and increase the Perkins and Pell Grants and also supported development of a national course title and numbering system synonymous for all colleges, public, private, Community Colleges and Universities to benefit transfer students.



Cindy is President of Polk Arts Alliance, and is editor for its Art-i-facts magazine. She serves on the Board of Governors for the Polk Museum of Art; Polk County Tax Collector's Kids Tag Art Board; Florida House – Washington DC, Lakeland Council; the Advisory Boards of Habitat for Humanity and Junior League of Greater Lakeland; and is a past board member, currently an Ambassador for Girls Inc. At George Jenkins High School (GJHS) she is President of the Academic Booster Club, serves on the Athletic Booster Club, Eagle Football Booster Club and was the GJHS volunteer of the Year 2008/09. Mrs. Ross was awarded the Kids Count Award in 1997/98; Rochelle School of the Arts Volunteer of the Year 2006/07 and Presidents Volunteer Service Award in 2007/08. Cindy Ross has been a member of the Republican Women's Club of Lakeland, Federated for 25 years. She has attended 3 Republican National Conventions serving as a Delegate (2000) and Alternate Delegate (1996). Cindy believes strongly in America's electoral process. "Giving, sharing and helping others brings an amazing feeling of comfort, joy and peace to my inner self as I try to please God in all that I do."



NATASHA SIMON

Commissioner Natasha Simon of Tallahassee was appointed in March 2011 to the FCSW by House Speaker Dean Cannon. She is originally from Wildwood, Florida. Natasha graduated from Florida State University with a BS in Psychology and a minor in Special Education. Upon graduating from FSU, she taught Middle School Special Education in both Osceola and Leon counties.

Commissioner Simon currently serves on the Board of Directors for Boys Town North Florida, a non profit, publicly-supported organization that reaches out to help fragile children and families in need. She is a member of Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated, an African-American organization of mothers who nurture future leaders through chapter programming, community service, legislative advocacy and philanthropic giving. Along with her husband, Simon co-founded The Corey Simon Success Center in 2003, a nonprofit after school mentoring program that serves at risk youth in the city of Tallahassee.

Commissioner Simon is the owner of Accessible Transport, Inc., a non-emergency medical transportation company. She is happily married to Corey Simon, and they are the proud parents of a son, Corey Simon, Jr.

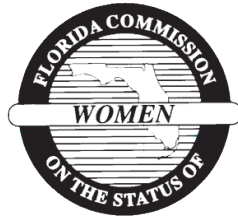


BARBARA WALL

Barbara Wall has lived in Okaloosa County since 1992. After moving to Florida, she became actively involved in politics. She is past President of the Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated, Silver Sands Republican Women and the Florida Federation of Republican Women. Barbara works within the community as Past Chairman of the Northwest Florida State College Institute for Senior Professionals, and serves on The Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women. She is on the Executive Leadership team for the American Heart Association Heart Walk and is currently the Chairman of the Okaloosa County Republican Executive Committee. Past involvement includes serving on the Boards of Director for the Youth Village and Twin Cities Women's Club. In 2007, she was inducted into the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women Hall of Fame.

COMMISSION STAFF

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