Battlemind to Home Symposium IV: 
Information from the 
Center for Women Veterans 

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Associate Director, VA Center for Women Veterans 
November 6, 2013
Overview

- Congressional Mandate/Organizational Chart
- VA Priorities
- Our Mission – What we Do
- Women Veterans Demographics/History/Usage
- Women Veterans Challenges
- VA Initiatives to Address Challenges
- Gender-Specific Programs

- Health Care/Mental Health
- Women Veterans Call Center
- VA Changing Culture
- Maximize Available Resources/How Women Veterans Can Obtain Local Assistance
  - eBenefits
  - DoL VETS
  - Journal of General Internal Medicine
- Summary-Where We Are Going
- How to Contact the Center
Who Knew?
November 1994, Public Law 103-446 required VA to create The Center for Women Veterans, to monitor and coordinate VA programs for women.
VA Priorities

- VA’s priorities: **access, backlog, homelessness.**
  - Improving access to benefits and services for eligible Veterans:
    - Promoting eBenefits registration to facilitate access to documentation and information.
    - Diversifying outreach materials to include more images of women in receipt of VA health care and services.
    - Establishing the Women Veterans Call/Hotline Line.
  - Aggressively attacking the claims backlog:
    - Using disability benefits questionnaires (DBQs) to shorten time needed to gather succinctly gather information needed to assess disabilities. (News release published March 22, 2012.)
    - Implementing a National deployment of a paperless claims processing system.
Ending Veteran homelessness:

- VA continues success on historic 3 year plan (2015).
- VA’s continuum of care includes services for special populations who may be at greater risk for homelessness, such as women and Veterans with families.
- Programs incorporate outreach to increase awareness of VA’s initiatives and prevention, temporary and transitional housing, and permanent housing with supportive services.
- Supportive Services Veteran Families (SSVF) is VA’s primary prevention program, designed to help Veterans and their families rapidly exit homelessness, or avoid entering homelessness.
- Women Veterans make up eight percent of homeless Veterans population.
Monitor and coordinate VA’s administration of health care and benefits services, and programs for women Veterans.

Serve as an advocate for a cultural transformation (both within VA and in the general public) in recognizing the service and contributions of women Veterans and women in the military.

Raise awareness of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.
Women are one of the fastest growing subpopulations of Veterans. Based on active duty and recruiting numbers, the percentage of female Veterans is projected to increase.

Of the 21.9 million living Veterans (over all number going down), 2.27 million women Veterans (VetPop as of 9/30/13)—10.4 percent of the total Veterans population (this percent is rising).

- By 2020, they are estimated to be 12.4 percent the total Veterans populations.

Median female Veteran’s age is 49; the median male Veteran’s age is 64 (as of 9/30/12).
History of Women in the U.S. Military

1945
WWII ends:
Women = 2.3% of Active Duty

1967
Women’s Armed Services Integration
Act modified
• 2% restriction lifted
• Senior ranks opened to women

1973
All-Volunteer Force begins
• Military recruits more women

1980
Women = 8% of Active Duty

1991
Gulf War I:
Women = 11% of Active Duty

September 11, 2001

TODAY
Women = nearly
15% of Active Duty;
18% of Guard/Reserves

Source: America’s Women Veterans: Military Service History and VA Benefits Utilization Statistics, Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Nov. 23, 2011;
http://www.va.gov/VETDATA/docs/SpecialReports/Final_Womens_Report_3_2_12_v_7.pdf
Women VHA Users Doubled Since 2000

FY00: 159,000

FY12: 360,000
As Women Veteran Population Increases, Total Veteran Population Declines

Sources: [VetPOP 2007](#) and [VetPOP 2011](#) ADUSH for Policy and Planning
Women Veterans Challenges

- Women Veterans:
  - Are unaware of their Veterans status; they often do not self-identify as Veterans.
  - Do not apply for VA’s benefits and services, since they are not aware that they are Veterans.
  - Are sometimes limited in access to VA’s gender-specific care and have to use fee-based care and contracts.
  - Experience a lack of child care options, limiting their ability to make appointments at VA, to acquire gainful employment and to pursue educational goals.
  - Exhibit lower utilization of VA; outreaching to women Veterans who live in rural areas and on American Indian Reservations, and who are low income, or elderly can be a challenge.
  - Lack of transportation to and from appointments.
VA Initiatives to Address Challenges

- Joint outreach to educate and raise awareness about eligibility. Encouraging Veterans to sign up for eBenefits at: www.ebenefits.va.gov.
- Enhancement of Center for Women Veterans’ Web site to educate about VA’s programs, and utilization of social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, VA Blog, Twitter, etc.
- Collaboration with VA Administrations, and other Federal agencies to address disparities in care and availability of services. VHA established the Office of Health Equity to address issues.
- Creation of pilot programs (drop-in programs in Northport, NY; Buffalo, NY; and Tacoma, WA) to determine the feasibility of VA providing child care options for women Veterans.
- Usage of fee based care and contracts, when appropriate.
- Implementation of newborn care coverage and caregivers.
- Utilization of transportation options, such as Disabled American Veterans vans, taxi and other voucher programs.
- Sponsoring joint hiring fairs with universities, various federal, state, private, and other organizations.
Gender-Specific Programs
General Care

- Health evaluation and counseling
- Disease prevention
- Nutrition counseling
- Weight control
- Smoking cessation
- Substance abuse counseling and treatment

Gender-Specific Primary Care

- Cervical cancer screens (Pap smears)
- Breast cancer screens (mammograms)
- Birth control
- Preconception counseling and care
- Maternity & newborn care
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine
- Menopausal support (hormone replacement therapy)
- Emergency services for women Veterans

Health Care Available for Women Veterans

5/2013
Mental Health Care

- Evaluation and assistance for depression, mood, and anxiety disorders
- Intimate partner and domestic violence
- Military sexual trauma
- Elder abuse or neglect
- Parenting and anger management
- Marital, caregiver, or family-related stress
- Post-deployment adjustment or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
Where to Get Help: Women Veterans Call Center

Women Veterans Call Center

A call center aimed at increasing women Veterans' knowledge, enrollment, and utilization of VA services available to women Veterans

- Outgoing call center provides women Veterans with information on VA health care services, benefits and eligibility
- Incoming call center, 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636), receives and responds to questions from Veterans, their families and caregivers about the many VA services and resources available to women Veterans
Where to Get Help: Women Veterans Program Manager

• At each VA Medical Center nationwide, a Women Veterans Program Manager is designated to advise and advocate for women Veterans, and coordinate all the services they need.

Visit the **Women Veterans Program Manager** (WVPM) at the closest facility. To identify your closest WVPM, call **1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)**.
Changing VA Culture
VA Cares for the Whole Woman

Mother, daughter, sister, wife, partner ... veteran.

VA cares for the whole woman.

- Primary care
- Reproductive care
- Mental health care
- Sensitive to women veterans' needs and experiences

VA's national network ensures that your medical history goes where you go.

Department of Veterans Affairs
Culture Change Through Communications

- Women’s Health Services is leading a VA-wide communication initiative to enhance the language, practice and culture of VA to be more inclusive of women Veterans.
Please don’t call me mister.
Think twice about how you address her.
It’s our job to give her the best care anywhere.

Mr. Conner, we’re ready for you now...Mr. Conner...?
Maximize Available Resources

FAQs and Fact Sheets

Women Veterans Health Care

Social Media Messaging

Women Targeted Health Campaigns

Information Videos
(internal/external)

A Profile of Women Veterans Today

Rethink Veterans: Who is the Woman Veteran?

Who are today's women veterans? The image shows a profile of women veterans today, highlighting their diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Did you know?

- Women veterans are the fastest growing cohort of American veterans. They make up 11% of the total veteran population.

- Women veterans are more likely to serve in the compression of the military than men veterans.

- Women veterans are more likely to be of minority race and ethnicity than men veterans.

- Women veterans are more likely to have a higher education level than men veterans.

- Women veterans are more likely to have a higher income than men veterans.

Women Veterans of OEF/OIF/OEF

- Women veterans of OEF/OIF/OEF are more likely to be of minority race and ethnicity than men veterans.

- Women veterans of OEF/OIF/OEF are more likely to have a higher education level than men veterans.

- Women veterans of OEF/OIF/OEF are more likely to have a higher income than men veterans.

- Women veterans of OEF/OIF/OEF are more likely to have a higher employment rate than men veterans.

- Women veterans of OEF/OIF/OEF are more likely to have a higher health status than men veterans.

Women Veterans Population Growth

The Best Care Anywhere

The Best Care Anywhere

Women Veterans Health Care

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Social Media Messaging

Women Targeted Health Campaigns

Information Videos
(internal/external)

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

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Information Videos
(internal/external)

5/2013
Maximize Available Resources

DEPRESSION
TROUBLE SLEEPING
WEIGHT CHANGE
ANXIETY
PHYSICAL PAIN
MEMORY LOSS

Sexual trauma can make you sick.
Let VA help.

You served, you deserve the best care anywhere.

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Make HIV testing routine. Let VA help.

Don’t let pain control your life. Let VA help.


REMEMBER YOUR PROTECTIVE GEAR
Prevent skin cancer. Let VA help.

It's not easy to come back from addiction. Let VA help.

LIVE SMOKE-FREE Let VA Help.
Women Veterans - U.S. Department of Labor Service (VETS) - Windows Internet Explorer provided by Veterans Affairs

Women Veterans - U.S. Department of Labor Service (VETS)

United States Department of Labor

Veterans' Employment & Training Service

DOL Home > VETS > Women Vets

Women

Veterans' Employment

Across the nation, 2.2 million women veterans comprise 10 percent of the overall veteran population. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) developed the women veteran initiative to ensure our programs are positioned to meet the needs of the nation's fastest growing veteran population. The following data reflects the 2012 annual employment data for women veterans, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation of Veterans - 2012 report.

Unemployment - 2012 Annual

- 8.3% Women Veterans
- 6.9% Male Veterans
- 7.7% Women Non-Veterans

Gulf War-Era II Veterans

- 12.0% 2011
- 9.5% 2012
- 12.4% 2011
- 12.5% 2012

Latest News

- TIP: Be sure to identify yourself as a "veteran" because you may gain access to resources you were unaware existed!
- View our Video on Women Veteran Employment Listening Session
- Review the flyer for the Women Veteran Employment Listening Session
- Learn how a Washington, D.C.-based developer team took on our Women Veteran Data Challenge during the National Day of Civic Hacking in an updated video. The White House blog discussed the nationwide event.
- Listen to the recent interview on DOL’s initiative for women veterans on Federal News Radio on June 28, 2013.
Industries and Age Comparison

Industries

Most women veterans are employed in the following industries:

- 28.4% Government
- 23.5% Education and Health Services

Women Veterans Vs Non-Veterans by Age Range

Unemployment status numbers for women veterans compared with non-veterans by age range:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>Women Veterans</th>
<th>Non-Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 56</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment Tips

Paul Palazza
Actor Director
Office of Diversity and Inclusion Veteran Employment Program Manager
U.S. Department of Labor

Finding and applying to federal positions relevant to your military experience or education:

To determine what federal positions you would qualify for based on your military experience please use the Military Skills Translator Tool which will allow you to cross reference Federal Positions related to your military occupational specialty. In addition to identifying those positions that are related to your military occupation it will provide you with links to current open vacancies in that field that you can apply to.

MY NEXT MOVE

The United States Department of Labor

GOLD CARD

Designed for U.S. veterans who are current job seekers: The interactive tool helps vets learn

The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive services they

Inside DOL
American Job Center (AJC) & Career OneStop
Professional Development Resources
Find a Mentor, Be a Mentor
Department of Labor & VA Resources

Designed for U.S. veterans who are current job seekers: The interactive tool helps vets learn about their career options. The site has tasks, skills, salary information, job listings, and more for over 900 different careers. Veterans can find careers through keyword search: by browsing industries that employ different types of workers; or by discovering civilian careers that are similar to their job in the military.

The Gold Card provides unemployed post-9/11 era veterans with the intensive services they need to succeed in today's job market. An eligible veteran can present the Gold Card at her/his local American Job Center to receive enhanced intensive services including up to six months of follow-up.

The Veterans Job Bank Search Widget is the latest tool developed by NVD.gov to help streamline the job search process for the military and Veteran communities. The Widget gives users the ability to search for jobs from military-friendly employers worldwide based on keyword, military occupation code and/or location.

Freedom of Information Act | Privacy & Security Statement | Disclaimers | Important Web Site Notices | Plug-ins Used by DOL

U.S. Department of Labor | Francis Perkins Building, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210

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11/7/2013

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• Access to care and rural health
• Primary care and prevention
• Mental Health
• Health concerns associated with military deployment
• Complex chronic conditions/aging long-term care
• Reproductive health
Summary - Where We Are Going

- Continuously promoting recognition of women Veterans’ service, and the contributions of women in the military, e.g. “Her Story” campaign, “the Right Place” PSA, and “Please Don’t Call Me Mister” campaigns.
How to Contact the Center

Staff Members:
- Ms. Elisa Basnight, JD, MPA
- Dr. Betty Moseley Brown
- Desiree Long
- Shannon Middleton
- Michelle Terry

Address:
Department of Veterans Affairs
Center for Women Veterans (00W)
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420

Phone: 202-461-6193
Fax: 202-273-7092

Website: www.va.gov/womenvet
Email: 00W@mail.va.gov
Information for Transitioning Service Members
Introduction of Transition Goals Plans Success (GPS):

- The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was a discontinuous set of activities.
- The Departments of Defense (DoD), VA, Labor (DOL), Education (ED), and Homeland Security (DHS); the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Small Business Administration (SBA) collaborated to redesign the TAP program into a comprehensive, mandatory program.
- TAP was renamed to the Transition GPS program.
  - Transition GPS standardizes the transition services that Servicemembers receive before separation, to make them ready for employment, higher education, career technical training, or entrepreneurship.
Redesigned Transition Assistance Program

- Transition GPS offers a cohesive, modular, outcome-based program that provides opportunities and aids in successful transition into a “career ready” civilian.

- Highlights of Transition GPS include:
  - DoD pre-separation counseling.
  - Department of Labor (DOL) employment workshops.
  - VA benefits briefing.
  - Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP).
  - DOL Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) briefing for Guard and Reserve components.

- Includes a transition checklist for active duty, National Guard and Reserve components, focusing on: **education and training**, **employment and career goals**, **financial security**, **health and well being**, **and housing and relocation**.
Redesigned Transition Assistance

Education and Training:


Redesigned Transition Assistance

Education and Training:
- More information can be found at the following websites:
  - New Post 9/11 GI Bill
    [http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH33/CH33_Pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH33/CH33_Pamphlet.pdf)
  - Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)
    [http://gibill.va.gov/benefits/montgomery_gibill/active_duty.html](http://gibill.va.gov/benefits/montgomery_gibill/active_duty.html)
  - Navy, Army, or Marine Corps College Funds:
    - Navy: [https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/nta.cfm](https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/nta.cfm)
    - Army: [https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/education/ACF.html](https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/education/ACF.html)
    - Marine Corps:
      - [http://www.military.com/education/content/money-for-school/marine-corps-education-programs.html](http://www.military.com/education/content/money-for-school/marine-corps-education-programs.html)
Redesigned Transition Assistance

Employment and Career Goals:

- **VA for Vets** job search: Translates your military skills, experience and training to learn about the civilian career options that best use your capabilities, [www.VAforVets.VA.gov](http://www.VAforVets.VA.gov).

- Visit the following sites to learn more on employment:
  - [http://www.fedshirevets.gov](http://www.fedshirevets.gov)
  - [http://www.goDefense.com](http://www.goDefense.com)
  - [http://www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)
  - **DoL**: [http://www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)
  - [http://www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com)
  - [http://www.HelmetsToHardhats.org](http://www.HelmetsToHardhats.org)
  - [www.bpwfoundation.org](http://www.bpwfoundation.org)
Financial Security:

- Why this is important?
  - Financial well-being and the security of loved ones are concerns that are top of anyone’s priority list
  - Should be considered in detail, before leaving the military.
  - Financial security, life insurance, and legal matters are often linked.
  - Make sure your financial and legal affairs are in order prior to embarking on a new chapter in life.

- Transition budgeting steps for personal finances:
  - List Your Income.
  - List Your Expense.
  - Prioritize Your Expenses.
  - Assign Budget Responsibilities.
Transition budgeting steps for personal finances (continued):
- Establish a Monthly Budget.
- Identify Additional Sources of Income.
- Seek Help if Necessary.
- Obtain an Up-to-Date Credit Report.

Health and Well Being:
- Check Out Non-Retirees Transitional Health Care Options:
Redesigned Transition Assistance

- Check Out Non-Retirees Transitional Health Care Options (continued):
  - Review and Choose Your Retiree TRICARE Medical and Dental Coverage Options - and submit your enrollment forms for one of the following programs:
    - TRICARE Prime.
    - TRICARE Extra.
    - TRICARE Standard.
    - TRICARE Retiree Dental Program.
  - To learn more visit: http://tricare.mil/mybenefit/ProfileFilter.do?puri=%2Fhome%2FMedical.
Redesigned Transition Assistance

Housing and Relocation:

- Visit the Relocation Assistance Program Office: learn about relocation options, entitlements, and how to get assistance.
- Arrange for a housing pre-inspection: If living in government housing, contact the housing office to schedule a pre-inspection and obtain termination information.
- Plan a “house hunting” trip: schedule a trip to the community where you intend to move to determine your future housing options.
- Contact your “new” state’s Veterans’ Services Office: see what benefits the state offers; pre-determining you eligibility for state veteran benefits can reduce the time for processing benefits later.
- Arrange for transportation counseling: once you know where you plan to live, contact your transportation office for further assistance.
Redesigned Transition Assistance

Housing and Relocation:

- Arrange to stop and/or start utilities: contact current and future utilities providers, to ensure that cable, electric, water, gas, garbage, sewer, and phone services are stopped or started as needed.
- Submit change of address form: be sure to process change of address as soon as you know your new address, to ensure you do not fall behind on payments.
- Review and complete the “Financial Checklist for a Military Move:” provides detailed information on per diem, allowances, reimbursable expenses, and cash advances associated with relocating.
- Finalize travel arrangements: contact travel providers and confirm reservations, as appropriate.
Transition Offices for the Military

- Army -- located in the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) office.
- Air Force -- located in the Airman and Family Readiness Center.
- Navy -- located in the Fleet and Family Support Center.
- Marine Corps -- located in the Marine Corps Community Services office.
- National Guard -- State Transition Assistance Advisors.
How Women Veterans Can Obtain Local Assistance

- WVCs at every VA regional office: [www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash-1](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash-1)
- Homeless Veterans coordinators: [www.va.gov/homeless/index.cfm](http://www.va.gov/homeless/index.cfm)
- eBenefits website: [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)
- Minority Veterans program coordinator at every VA healthcare facility, regional office, and national cemetery: [www.va.gov/centerforminorityVeterans/](http://www.va.gov/centerforminorityVeterans/)
- Other coordinators such as OIF/OEF, mental health, MST, Vet Center, etc.