



Wisconsin Women Veterans News



Volume 2, Edition 3, Fall 2011

This newsletter is brought to you by the Women Veterans Outreach Coordinator to reach out to all our women veterans, active duty, National Guard and Reservists. Please stay tuned for future news from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Women Veterans Coordinator. If you have a story, please e-mail the Women Veterans Coordinator Carolyn Morgan.



Contact her at:
WomenVets@dva.state.wi.us

Or mail items to:
Women Veterans Coordinator
WDVA
P O Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843

Check us out on FACEBOOK at:
[Women Veterans of Wisconsin](#)

Look us up at:
www.WisVets.com/WomenVets

“Honoring Women Veterans” is Theme for Veterans Day 2011



Thank you, women veterans, for your service!

As Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, I had the honor of addressing the 5th Annual Women Veterans Conference last month at Fort McCoy, which was very successful. It was great to see so many women veterans of all age backgrounds come together to share experiences.

This year, Veterans Day on November 11th falls two months to the day after the 10-year anniversary of “9/11.” Since 2001, over one million U.S. service men and women have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, with just over 32,000 from Wisconsin. These service members, our newest veterans, will face some of the same familiar challenges as have veterans of previous conflicts, whether male or female. In addition, there are new hardships with this economy and finding jobs that make use of their skills while affording housing for themselves and their families.

With 9/11 there has been a paradigm shift and a new population of women warriors. Women veterans are one of the fastest growing veteran populations. About 18 percent of current military service members are women, with about 4,000 active duty service members from Wisconsin. Of the state’s nearly 408,000 veterans, around 28,000 – or seven percent – are women. Women veterans may face unique challenges of their own, including child care issues, military sexual trauma, and physical ailments like musculoskeletal difficulties resulting from military service.

WDVA provides advocacy and outreach to women veterans and their issues. Carolyn Morgan is the new Women Veterans Outreach Coordinator for the department, and she is encouraging interaction among women veterans on the website’s social media. As the numbers of women veterans grow during the 21st Century through our “9/11” women veterans, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will continue to look to new ways to serve all of you and ensure you receive the benefits and services you’ve earned.

Thank you for your service, and let’s remember on Veterans Day November 11th to honor all who have served our nation.

Woman Veteran of the Year



Nominations for 2012 can be submitted any time during the year.

Thank you to all who submitted nominations for 2011 Woman Veteran of the year. If you wish to nominate someone for 2012, please go to www.WisVets.com/Forms#WDVAB0218, or contact our Women Veterans Coordinator and she will mail you a copy. All nominations for 2012 must be received in Madison by September 30, 2012.

Greetings Sisters,

I am honored, pleased and excited to have this opportunity to serve Wisconsin Women Veterans as the new Women Veteran Outreach Coordinator. I started my military career with the Wisconsin Air National Guard in 1980, went active duty Air Force in 1985 – 1993 and was deployed to the United Arab Emirates in 1990 in support of Operations Desert Shield/Storm, after which I returned to Wisconsin and served with the Wisconsin Air National Guard until 1996.

My vision as outreach coordinator is that all Wisconsin women veterans will have a way to meet other women veterans and have our voices heard through the yearly Women Veterans Conference, social networking and veteran specific community events. I look forward to and am committed to meeting and assisting all veterans throughout the state. I will continue to bring Woman Veterans and their issues to the forefront of individual consciousness.

I encourage each and every woman veteran to not only reach out to me at (608) 266-1312 or Carolyn.morgan@dva.state.wi.us but to reach out to other women and ask them if they have ever worn a military uniform.

Sincerely,

Carolyn

"How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and She-roes!" Maya Angelou

Women Veterans & Homelessness

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, July 21, 2011)

(This article is from an Arlington National Cemetery's Women in Military Service for America Memorial, July 20, 2011 press conference in reference to the federal VA's "Trauma Guide")

"It's a secret," said Lisa Bolling. "Women veterans are more likely to become homeless because women veterans are more likely to experience trauma in the military -- rape, molestation, things of that sort."

Bolling is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. She was homeless for a while, living in temporary shelters. Now she lives with post-traumatic stress disorder which she attributes to sexual assault, and says that she is one of many female veterans with a similar story to tell.

"Majority of the time, the commander is a man," Bolling continued. "You think that if you tell [about a rape] you're going to be retaliated against, so you stuff it. And when you get out of the military you don't really have the self esteem to go out and look for a job. It's just a downward spiral and you end up on the street."

The Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor reports women veterans are four times more likely to be homeless than civilian women. They are also four times more likely to be homeless than male veterans. There were more than 10,220 female veterans in shelters between October 2008 and September 2009.

"As we realize that women are four times more likely to become homeless than men veterans -- we always hear about homeless men, but, I mean, look at the rate of homelessness -- women are much more vulnerable," said Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.), co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus. "When we realize that women are nine times more likely to exhibit post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, making them much more likely to have problems with drugs and alcohol, lower economic and educational outcomes, difficulty maintaining stable homes, we understand why the Women's Bureau has been so adamant."

Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, Moore, and retired Brig. Gen. Wilma L. Vaught celebrated the release of a new web tool Wednesday at Arlington National Cemetery. "Trauma-Informed Care for Women Veterans Experiencing Homelessness: A Guide for Service Providers," or simply the "Trauma Guide," will help service providers -- from hospitals to non-profits -- help society's most vulnerable (and fastest growing) group of veterans re-integrate into civilian life.

This master resource of research, concrete best practices, plus self-assessments for providers can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/wb>, and is the result of listening sessions at homeless shelters across the nation this year. Each woman veteran shared a unique story.

Vaught, who is now one of the most decorated military women, said she was relegated to a job with few responsibilities when she returned from Vietnam. After serving with the U.S. Military Assistance Command, or MACV, she was assigned to a command that was reorganizing, and she explained the reduced workload made her unhappy.

"I am not a person who does nothing well," she said. "And I got very frustrated with this whole thing. The only way I could think to get out of it was to volunteer to go back to Vietnam."

But Vaught quipped she would have risked serious injury doing that -- if her mother found out.

Continued from page 3

Vaught said the spiral downward to homelessness from the kind of unhappiness she experienced is easy to understand. She shared her story to show that even without sexual assault or other traumas, the transition back home for women packs great challenge – challenge historically ignored or grouped with men’s.

She explained the result of this: It is hard to get women veterans to identify as veterans. If they were not in combat, they downplay their service.

“These women are invisible,” said Moore of homeless veterans. “And one of the reasons they are invisible is that they don’t dare share their trauma and the shame and the blame associated with it. They don’t dare risk people not caring.”

Moore asserted the importance of developing such a tailored resource as the new trauma guide -- the first of its kind -- separate from what the Department of Veterans Affairs provides.

She added it is what is done with the guide that counts, urging providers that “once this is rolled out there, not to have little programs sitting in your waiting rooms for people to collect, but to actually engage, getting the training, being able to identify that woman that is so in need.”

Generally, there was a loud call from all speakers for homeless women veterans to own their experiences.

Vaught, for one, made her opinion clear with a call to register, to identify as a veteran.

One way to do that is to register with the Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation, or WIMSA, which maintains a data base of women veterans and displays it at the memorial near the entrance of Arlington National Cemetery.

“I know there are some of you who are veterans or are active-duty servicewomen who are not registered. Let me warn you! You must do that or I will chase you down and it will not be pleasant,” she said.

Vaught’s underemployment after Vietnam parallels Bolling’s situation now. Solis told the crowd at Arlington more.

“The fact is women of our military master some of the most advanced technologies, run some of the most complex and expensive operations and have extensive experience managing hundreds of their colleagues,” she said. “In these challenging times, we can’t afford to lose that kind of talent.”

Continued on page 6

National Resource of the Quarter

The following resource is provided to steer you toward organizations and agencies that have programs to help homeless women veterans. You should also seek assistance from your local Department of Social or Human Services. Check your local phone book for contact information.

All Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and many Readjustment Counseling (Vet) Centers have a designated Women Veterans Program Manager to help women veterans access VA benefits and healthcare services. To find the VA medical center nearest you, call 1-877-222-8387.

Woman Veteran of the Year 2011



(Submitted by John Adams)

Oconto County Veterans Service Officer Holly Hoppe (left) is presented with the 2011 Woman Veteran of the Year Award by WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos, at the Women Veterans Conference at Fort McCoy on September 24th.

5th Annual Woman Veterans Conference 2011

This year's conference was a great success. Thank you to all of the committee members, Miranda Cross-Schindler, Tegan Griffith, Ellen Healey, Angie Joseph-Gaffke, Nicole Lillis, Joni Mathews, Nora Meissner, Julie Murray, Connie Schauer, Deborah Severson and Amy Childers for all their hard work.

A special thanks to Gundy Metz and Cheryl Adams for keeping things going during the transition of the Women Veterans Outreach Coordinator position.

We'd like to thank our guest speaker and presenters; LTC Retired Pat Anderson, Regina Singletary, Yvette Pino, Capt Kristin Boustany, Dory Carskadon, Kathy Wollmer, Mary Liz Murphy, Dr. Sara Edwards & Dr. Sally Leong, Jill Klayman, Sister Linda McClenahan, Andy Hendrickson, Dive Heart and Krista Loomis.

More photos can be viewed on our facebook fan page, [Women Veterans of Wisconsin](#), and our WDVA [Women Veterans](#) webpage. Special thanks to John Adams for taking photos at this year's conference.



Continued from page 4

The Secretary of Labor identified the full cost of veterans being homeless and either under or unemployed. She referred to Bolling, who did technical work with planes in the military, but returned to work as a crossing guard in Washington, D.C.

Bolling became homeless when her 18-year-old foster daughter died of cancer, flaring her PTSD symptoms. Both Vaught and Solis spoke almost interchangeably about homelessness and either unemployment or underemployment, citing “a vicious cycle.”

“We need to make sure they know that recovery is possible,” assured Solis. “Like Lisa says, we need to make sure that all female veterans know that ‘if you keep fighting, it will eventually wear down.’”

The trauma guide is one step to the right kind of help, and should help cut a common occurrence of providers (and veterans) not knowing who is responsible for what, officials said.

“I think this guide is important because many women who suffer trauma -- A, they don’t know about any services that are available. B, if they do, they find maybe a little here, a little here, a little there. This guide will bring it all together,” Bolling said, after the ceremony. “It’s like a one-stop shop.”

Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation Inc. reports women are more likely to serve in the Army than in any other service. A roster of U.S. Army sexual assault response coordinators, or SARCs, can be found online to help Soldiers at <http://www.sexualassault.army.mil/sarc-roster/>. Military OneSource (1.800.342.9647) also provides a range of services, including a suicide-prevention hotline.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 10, 2011

- **WDVA Wisconsin Veterans Museum:** [Wounded Warriors](#)

November 11, 2011 [VETERANS DAY](#)

- **WDVA [NWVMC](#):** Veterans Day Program at the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery at 1:00 p.m.
- **WDVA [WVH-King](#):** Veterans Day Program at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King in the Marden Multi-Purpose Room at 10:30 a.m.
- **WDVA [WVH-Union Grove](#):** Veterans Day Program at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove in the Boland Hall Multi-Purpose Room at 11:00 a.m.

December 7, 2011 [PEARL HARBOR DAY](#)

- **WDVA [WVH-King](#):** Pearl Harbor Day Program at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King

December 10, 2011

- **Doc Dentice:** [23rd Annual Christmas with the Vets](#) at Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee

April 13-15, 2012

- **[Vets Journey Home](#):** [Vets Journey Home weekend](#) to be held at VFW Post 1318 in Madison

April 18, 2012

- **WDVA [WVH-King](#):** Volunteer Recognition Banquet to be held

May 5, 2012

- **WDVA [WVH-King](#):** May L. Luchsinger Memorial Committee Meeting to be held

May 18-20, 2012

- **[Vets Journey Home](#):** [Vets Journey Home weekend](#) to be held at Camp Bird in Crivitz

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Wisconsin Resource for the Quarter

The following resource is provided to steer you toward organizations and agencies that have programs to help homeless women veterans. You should also seek assistance from your local Department of Social or Human Services. Check your local phone book for contact information.

**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN**

Kathy Wollmer – Chairwoman, Homeless Women Veterans Project Coordinator

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