

# **Army veteran becomes first woman to lead big three veterans service organization**

**Army veteran, daughter of Buffalo soldier becomes first African American woman to lead national veterans organization.**

NEW ORLEANS – Retired Army veteran Delphine Metcalf-Foster was elected National Commander of the nearly 1.3 million-member DAV (Disabled American Veterans) today at the organization's 96th National Convention.

She becomes the first woman veteran, as well as African-American female, to assume the organization's highest post. She is also the first female elected to lead one of the country's major veterans service organizations.

Metcalf-Foster followed in the footsteps of her father, a Buffalo soldier, by pursuing a career in the U.S. Army. Her military career included service with the U.S. Army Reserve, 689th Quartermaster Unit, 6253rd Hospital Unit and 6211th Transportation Unit, Letterman Army Medical Center. She retired after 21 years of service with the rank of first sergeant in 1996.

Metcalf-Foster was injured in January 1991 while serving in Saudi Arabia in support of Desert Storm/Desert Shield. She was medically evacuated to Germany for care and treatment.

A Vallejo native, Metcalf-Foster has been active within the DAV Department of California, becoming the first woman commander in the state. She also completed a four-year appointment as a member of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in November 2015.

In her acceptance speech to thousands of DAV members, Metcalf-Foster credited women veterans from past eras as a source of inspiration, including Pvt. Cathay Williams, who was born into slavery and later concealed her gender in order to enlist in the Army. She also highlighted fellow Gulf War veteran Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum, whose Black Hawk was shot down during a rescue mission. Along with two other soldiers, Cornum survived the 140-mile-per-hour crash, but with two broken arms, a bullet to the shoulder and knee damage before being taken captive.

“General Cornum once said about the difficulties she experienced in life—to include the helo crash and period served as a prisoner of war—that ‘no matter how bad it gets, it will always get better,’” said Metcalf-Foster. “This resonated with me as I began my own road to recovery following Desert Storm. It has not always been the smoothest path, but it is one that led me to DAV and for that, I am grateful.

“When a man or woman raises their hand and says ‘send me’ when our nation calls, no one knows better than the members of DAV that they’re writing a blank check to our country, and the ultimate payment could be their lives,” continued Metcalf-Foster. “For those who have sacrificed for our country and their survivors, we must insist on a strong VA and healthcare system to meet their needs. I look forward to continuing DAV’s nearly century-old mission of service as National Commander.”

#### **About DAV:**

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill; linking veterans and their families to employment resources; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-

profit organization with nearly 1.3 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U. S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).