

What Has DAV Done for Women Veterans?

DAV is the leading veterans' service organization in promoting the needs of women veterans and continuously works to ensure that gender-specific programs are implemented in VA's health care services, compensation and other benefits programs. DAV's Interim Women Veterans Advisory Committee meets during National Convention and Mid-Winter Conference to help set the agenda on the needs of women veterans. To ensure women's unique experiences and sacrifices in serving our nation are properly recognized, DAV actively seeks out and recruits women veterans to add to the 63 women who serve in our National and Transition Service Officer corps.

DAV avails itself of every opportunity to serve and support women veterans, and using funds generously donated by the American people to sponsor numerous initiatives around the country to highlight the needs of women veterans, such as:

- Supporting the founding of the Women In Military Service to America (WIMSA) Memorial at the entrance of Arlington National Cemetery, in addition to numerous other WIMSA activities.
- Testimony before Congress on issues related to women veterans.
- Co-sponsored all of VA's Women Veterans Summits.
- DAV provided support for the Business and Professional Women's Foundation mentoring program for women veterans.
- Passage of DAV resolution supporting improvements of VA's women's health care programs and services.
- Independently launched the "Stand Up For Women Veterans" advocacy campaign, which in part resulted in legislation being passed (Public Law 111-163) that 1) authorized a study of barriers to health care for women veterans, 2) established a pilot program for counseling women veterans in retreat settings, 3) established a child care pilot for veterans undergoing intensive counseling or in need of health care services at VA, and 4) authorized VA to furnish health care services to newborns of women who receive VA maternity care.
- Coordinated Capitol Hill screening of the film LIONESS, and a Q&A panel with the filmmakers and the women featured in the documentary which helped to educate legislators about women who serve in wartime deployments and what programs and services are needed when they come home.
- Coordinated Capitol Hill screening of the documentary SERVICE: When Women Come Marching Home and Q&A panel with the filmmakers and women in the film which follows eight women veterans as they manage TBI, homelessness, traumatic amputation, PTSD and MST. The goal was to educate legislative assistants, Members of Congress, policy makers in VA and DoD staffs, and other veteran advocacy groups.
- Co-sponsored the 2012 and 2013 SWAN (Service Women's Action Network) Summits on Military Sexual Violence.
- Granted funds to the filmmakers of SERVICE through DAV's National Service Foundation to underwrite the nationwide PBS broadcast of the film, and additionally sponsor 12 screenings across the country with DAV NSOs present and available to answer veterans' questions and assist with filing disability claims.
- Published two special edition Stand Up For Women Veterans magazines showcasing stories of women veterans and their resilience and courage in rehabilitating and recovering from their injuries, wounds and traumatic experiences sustained during military service. The magazines were provided

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free of charge upon request and were shipped to VHA facilities, Women Veteran Program Managers, and DAV Departments.

- Developed and produced two DVDs featuring women veterans titled, “Honoring Our Women Veterans,” and “Women Veterans: Making Our Voices Heard” which is first in an ongoing series.
- Developed and implemented a gender neutral MST Module for training of DAV’s National Service and Transition Officers.
- Annual contributor of the Women Veterans article in the Independent Budget, a policy document for veterans. www.independentbudget.org
- In 2014 DAV commissioned a study to look at women veterans transition issues. The Report: *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home* identifies gaps in federal services and highlights recommendations for improvements in federal laws, regulations, policies and programs to improve the lives of women veterans as they transition from military service to civilian life especially those who have served during wartime.
- Hearings were held in 2015 in the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees examining access to, and quality of care and services for women veterans at the VA.
- The DAV Women Veterans Report was the basis for 10 legislative proposals in the 114th Congress to improve and expand services and benefits for women veterans.
- Women Veterans legislation enacted into law during the 114th Congress include provisions to improve suicide prevention efforts for women veterans (Public Law 114-188), continuation of VA’s pilot programs for child care and counseling in retreat settings for women veterans newly separated from service, and homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children reintegration program (Public Law 114-228).
- In conjunction with the release of our women veterans Report in late September 2014, DAV hosted a Capitol Hill “Lunch & Learn” event with a 20 minute screening of the documentary *Journey to Normal: Women of War Come Home* and panel discussion with the women in the documentary, military behavioral health specialists and the film maker to better understand the unique challenges women veterans face and what resources are needed to help them successfully transition home.
- DAV conducted 25 TV and radio media interviews to highlight *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home* report and transition challenges facing women veterans, particularly wartime veterans.