



FIGHTING FOR WOMEN VETERANS

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) is proud to be a leading national advocate for women veterans who have been forever changed in military service. The fight to ensure women veterans have access to comprehensive, timely, quality health care based on gender-specific needs and to ensure they receive the benefits they've earned is critical. **Women, the fastest growing demographic in our community, now make up more than 10% of the veteran population, and there are now over 1 million women enrolled in VA health care.** We must keep our promise to them and ensure they receive the benefits and health care they earned as a result of their military service.

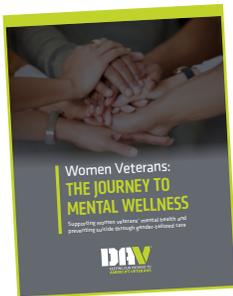
Here are just some of the ways DAV fights for women veterans:

- Utilizing resolutions adopted by nearly 1 million members across the country, DAV regularly advocates for legislation focused on improving care and access for women veterans. DAV-backed legislation enacted since 2019 includes:
 - **Deborah Sampson Act (Title V of Public Law 116-315)** — This bill, included in the omnibus Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act, included 28 provisions strengthening services for women veterans. The law required establishment of environment of care standards and inspections of women's clinics at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, expanded legal services for women veterans, mandated improvements in the VA's women veterans call center and prosthetic services for women, improved staffing and training requirements for women's health providers, required the establishment of a comprehensive VA policy to end sexual harassment and assault in VA facilities, and dedicated \$20 million to retrofit VA medical facilities with appropriate spaces for women veterans.
 - **Protecting Moms Who Served Act (Public Law 117-69)** — This bill dedicated \$15 million to the VA's maternity care coordination program and required a comprehensive study on maternal mortality and severe complications among women veterans.
 - **Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans in Combat Environments (SERVICE) Act (Public Law 117-133)** — This bill expanded eligibility for mammography screenings to veterans who served in certain locations during specified periods, including those who served at sites known to have burn pits.
- One of DAV's top **critical policy goals** continues to be ensuring equity in VA care, services and benefits for women veterans.
- DAV has **testified in front of Congress** regarding the unique challenges, needs and contributions of women veterans 40 times since 2019.





■ When the VA launched its **anti-harassment campaigns**, including the White Ribbon Campaign—designed to eliminate sexual assault and harassment within VA health care settings—DAV did its part to educate the veteran community about the importance of treating all veterans with respect and dignity. DAV delivered that message and relevant information to its members and audiences through video messages, *DAV Magazine* and a special DAV podcast. DAV also maintains an online resource page for women veterans and regularly reports personal stories related to military sexual trauma, or MST.



■ In February 2024, DAV released **Women Veterans: The Journey to Mental Wellness**. The report is a comprehensive assessment of the unique factors contributing to the alarming rate of suicide among women veterans and how the system charged with their mental health care can and must do better. It is the third in a series of reports dedicated to the challenges women veterans face after service. The first, **Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home**, was released in 2014 and uncovered glaring gaps in health care, housing, employment and community support services for women veterans, along with a failure to confront sexual assault in the military. In 2018, DAV released a follow-up report, **Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead**, that focused on unique transition issues women faced following war-time deployments and adjustments needed in programs and services to ensure their successful rehabilitation.



■ **DAV's Interim Women Veterans Advisory Committee** meets during DAV's annual national convention and mid-winter conference to help set the organization's agenda on women veterans. The convention also includes seminars and workshops specifically for women veterans.

■ **DAV** regularly engages with policymakers and is a consistent source of testimony before Congress on issues related to women veterans. Staff and advocates also frequently participate as panelists and speakers at virtual and in-person events dedicated to better serving and recognizing women veterans.



■ DAV makes a concerted effort to welcome women veterans into its ranks and make sure they are represented. In 2017, DAV became the first of the three largest veterans organizations to elect a woman—Army veteran **Delphine Metcalf-Foster**—to lead its more than 1 million members. In 2023, DAV members elected Army veteran **Nancy G. Espinosa**, the first Hispanic woman to serve as national commander. Also in 2023, South Dakota Army National Guard veteran **Kim Hubers** was recognized as DAV's Disabled American Veteran of the Year.



■ DAV developed and implemented a **gender-neutral MST module** for training its national and transition service officers who are tasked with advocating for earned veterans benefits. Recognizing that their unique perspectives and experiences are crucial in advocating for all veterans, women veterans comprise roughly 25% of DAV's national and transition service officers. They help serve a veteran population of which approximately 10% are women.



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