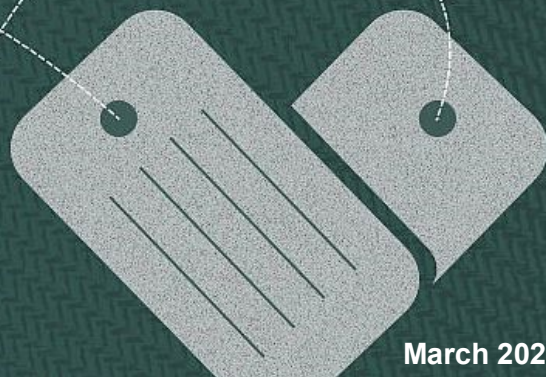


VALOR

VETERAN ★ ALLIANCE



March 2021

Inside this issue:

VCO Update	2
Veteran's Voice	3
Warriors of the North	3
Student Veteran Spotlight	4
Call to Action	4
The Drop Zone	5
Coming Up	5
Career Corner	6
Women Military Leaders	7

Colleagues and friends,

March is Women's History Month. It is a month in which we reflect upon women's advancements and contributions. Over the centuries, women have broken barriers, stereotypes, and other limitations in efforts to pursue equal rights and opportunities. One of these barriers was a woman's ability to serve equally in the military.



Craig Schwinden, VALOR's Student Veteran Representative, highlights three noteworthy women military leaders in honor of Women's History Month in his article this month (page 7). You will also note that the **Call to Action** (page 4) is also focused on women veterans and the specific challenges they face. VALOR is proud to have a number of women veterans on its Advisory Board and as Allies.

Currently, there are over 200,000 women on active duty in the military and over two million women veterans. The number of women in the Army has grown from about 2 percent in the 1970s to roughly 15 percent today, with women serving in nearly all combat units and in leadership positions (*In a Changing Military*, February 26, 2021). It is interesting to see the ways the military has incrementally evolved to meet the reality of an increasing number of women in the military. The VA has identified women as the fastest growing group in the veteran population and estimates that women will be 18 percent of the veteran population by 2040 (*Women Veterans Today*, 2016).

Women who serve in the military face a number of concerning challenges beyond the possibility of physical injuries, such as gender-based discrimination, military sexual trauma, a heightened incidence of PTSD, and a greater likelihood than non-veteran women to be homeless or die by suicide. Women veterans are also more likely to use firearms as a method of suicide. There has been increased focus on the impacts of service on women over the past decade to include the differences in the ways in which they handle trauma and stress relative to men. As we honor women veterans' specific contributions this month, may we also remember that we still have much work to do regarding meeting their needs.

As always, please reach out to me or Jim Stoddard should any questions or issues arise. Thank you all for your commitment to VALOR and our student veterans at NDSU.

Carol Cwiak, J.D., Ph.D., VALOR Faculty Liaison



Board Members

Brad Aune
Carol Cwiak
Chris Hanson
Calie Lindseth
Corey Malko
Shelby Moen
Jill Motschenbacher
Jonathan Ross
Craig Schwinden
Andrea Smith
Jerry South
Jim Stoddard
Amy Tichy
Chase Tozer
Nicole Veselka
Lonnie Wangen
Thomas Webb





VCO Update
Jim Stoddard

You can visit Jim on campus at the Veterans Educational Training Office in Ceres 329; or by phone at 701-231-9706; or by email at james.stoddard@ndsu.edu.

NDSU Resources

- Education Benefits
ndsu.edu/veterans/
211 Ceres Hall
701-231-7985
- Tutoring
ndsu.edu/ace/tutoring/
Lower Level of the West Dining Center
701-231-5554
- Student Health
ndsu.edu/studenthealthservice/
1707 Centennial Blvd.
701-231-7331
- Counseling
ndsu.edu/counseling/
212 Ceres Hall
701-231-7671
- Registration
ndsu.edu/registrar/
110 Ceres Hall
701-231-7981

Big news first: NDSU's Student Government has approved my request to purchase four Brody Privacy Work Lounge study stations to be installed in the current veteran study/meeting space (Ceres 319)! These study pods are ergonomically designed, which is so necessary for our student veterans with damaged bodies, and come with wrap-around privacy screens that will hopefully increase one's sense of personal security within the open study/meeting space. This purchase will total a bit over \$11K, and we should have them in place before the end of June (we'll do some publicity when they are installed). If/when we relocate the center, this furniture can easily come with. This is part of our effort to improve the veteran space we have as much as possible, while looking ahead to a more population-appropriate space.

Student Government also approved my request to buy a larger air conditioner for that space. This part of Ceres Hall doesn't have central air conditioning, so the room is currently cooled by a window AC unit that doesn't have sufficient output for our room size. It gets very warm at certain times of the year. The new AC unit (about \$2K) will be a little quieter (still very noisy!), but should adequately cool the space.

This is very preliminary, but potentially exciting: I was approached by the president of a charitable foundation that is considering making a donation to NDSU to help meet unmet financial need among students that are survivors/dependents of veterans that were either killed in action or 100% permanently disabled. I'm working with the NDSU Financial Aid and Scholarships office to determine if that need exists at NDSU, and we'll respond with some data to the foundation. The donation would be \$25K, provided the partner school would commit to matching that amount, so we're also exploring with the NDSU Foundation about raising a match.

Mark your calendar for the next webinar in the VA VITAL program's series on educating faculty and campus staff on student veteran issues on March 17, 2021 at 1 PM. The topic will be the Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) program. PAVE is a peer support program that connects incoming student veterans on college campuses with senior student veterans who are formally trained as Peer Advisors. PAVE is a program of the University of Michigan, and currently is in place at 47 campuses nationwide. Financial commitment from partner institutions is very minimal; it would be great to start a PAVE chapter here at NDSU! I'll send out more info in a mass e-mail invitation. This will be VITAL's last webinar until the fall semester. If you missed the last session (Fostering a Military-friendly Environment on Campus), a recording is available on the VET website: https://www.ndsu.edu/vet/ally_training_and_information/.

We're still doing our semi-monthly informal lunchtime Zoom meetings for the NDSU military community. Thanks to those who have participated! We'll continue to do these on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month this semester (11:30 – 12:30, drop in/out as needed) until we can safely meet in person for a similar event. No agenda; just a chance to meet with each other and to chat informally with faculty and staff allies. March's meetings are on the 10th and 24th if you're able to drop in for a few minutes: <https://ndsu.zoom.us/j/96244525563?pwd=SnlVeTJZWxJsQlJnaUhwQ0FRaHVEZDz09>.

The Symposium on Military-Connected Students (SMCS) just concluded, and a lot of great information and research related to best practices for supporting veteran and military-affiliated college students was presented. Topics covered were relevant to many areas within the Student Affairs field that support military students. I'll be posting as many of the shareable materials as I can here, where last year's materials are as well: https://www.ndsu.edu/vet/ally_training_and_information/.

"Freedom is never free." ~Maya Angelou



Veteran's Voice

Craig Schwinden

VALOR Student Veteran Representative

Hello Student Veterans!

I started last month's Veterans' Voice commenting on how much improvement we have seen in the COVID numbers both in the state of North Dakota and here on campus at NDSU. So far, the numbers are not only holding up, but continue to improve. This is good news, but let us make sure we are still doing every-

thing we can to keep ourselves and each other healthy and at the same time, keep the numbers going down. Thank you!

This month, I need to fill you in on an important activity. Bison Student Veterans, in conjunction with Blaze Pizza, are having a fundraiser. The date of the fundraiser is Thursday, March 11th from 4–8 PM. Blaze Pizza has agreed to donate 20% of the proceeds back to the Bison Student Veterans organization. Please support this fundraiser if you can. For more information, see page 5 of this month's newsletter.

Also, if you are not registered with the Veterans Administration or know someone who is not, please get over there and get in their system. You may not think you have any benefits coming to you, but you

just don't know. An excellent example of this is the COVID vaccine. If you are registered with the VA, you can get your COVID vaccine shots regardless of your age or health status. This is obviously a nice benefit...don't lose out. It is not that difficult to register.

Finally, this month we feature a soldier as our Student Veteran of the Month - Jonathan Ross. Jonathan was a world traveler while in the Army and now is making his mark on our campus and in the classroom here at NDSU. Thank you for your service, Jonathan! HOOAH!

As always, please don't hesitate to email me with subjects or ideas for articles. We always have room in our newsletter for a good story about student veterans. You can e-mail me at craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu.



Belated birthday wishes to Ray Curtis of Minot, North Dakota who recently celebrated his 104th birthday (February 11th). Ray enlisted in U.S. Army in January 1941 and is a World War II veteran. He has been alive long enough to experience 19 U.S. Presidents and 22 North Dakota Governors. Ray has five daughters, 10 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. His wife of over 60 years, Ellen, passed away in 2014. Read more about Ray [here](#).

Warriors of the North

Fargo Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System and the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County in Moorhead, MN, in a joint effort, are partnering on a creative art exhibit with a series of public events featuring local veterans' journey in trauma recovery in the fall and winter of 2021 and 2022. They are recruiting veterans who may be interested in becoming involved in one or more of several projects:

- A four-session virtual veterans writing workshop series, led by veteran facilitator Wendell Affield will be held in August (exact dates have yet to be determined). Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should contact Amy Tichy at (218) 766-8795 or via email at amy.tichy@gmail.com.
- A local veteran artist is recruiting for veterans from all wars who have experienced military trauma and would be willing to sit for a photo shoot, while sharing their military experiences. Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should call Dr. Ken Andersen at (701) 371-4735 or via email at k.andersen.studio@gmail.com.
- A local veteran musician is looking for veterans interested in being paired with local songwriters, and local musicians who would like to be paired with a veteran to assist in putting a difficult military experience or trauma to words and music. Veterans interested in participating in this opportunity should call Dan Hudson at (701) 306-6870 or via email at dthuddy73@gmail.com.



Jonathan Ross with his family

Name: Jonathan Ross

Major/Minor: Political Science/Geography

Originally from: Bath, Maine

Current city: Fargo, ND

Career plans after college: I am planning to attend a graduate program to pursue a Master of Public Policy degree. I would like to get into either education policy or environmental policy.

Military service: I joined the active duty Army right after high school and served from 2000 to 2007. I deployed to Iraq three times. I went to Uzbekistan/Afghanistan once and I spent a year in South Korea. I also served in Kosovo and climbed "Big Duke" three times.

Military awards: The Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation, Army Commendation Medal (two oak leaf clusters), Army Achievement Medal (1 silver - 3 bronze oak leaf clusters), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (1 bronze star), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal (1 oak leaf), NATO Kosovo Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Army Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and Humanitarian Service Medal.

NDSU activities/engagement: I am a complex manager for Residence Life. I am also a Bison student veteran and part of VALOR.

College scholarships, awards, etc.: Dean's List Fall 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020. Recipient of the Criminal justice and Political Science Scholarship 2019, the Ann and Tom Riley Scholarship 2019, the A. Glenn Hill Scholarship 2019, the Terrance and Margaret Meyers Scholarship 2019, the Delsie Holmquist Scholarship 2020, and the Trinka and Duane Rogne Scholarship 2020.

An interesting tidbit about the veteran: I have traveled to 52 to 54 different counties (depending on your definition of a country). I am married with three children who keep me very busy outside the classroom.

Favorite experience/memories/etc. at NDSU: At NDSU I feel more like a person and less like a number.

CALL TO ACTION: **LEARN MORE ABOUT CHALLENGES SPECIFIC TO WOMEN VETERANS**

Women who serve face a number of specific challenges, such as gender-based discrimination, a heightened incidence of PTSD, and a greater likelihood than non-veteran women to be homeless or attempt suicide (see <https://vawnet.org/sc/challenges-specific-female-veterans> and <https://www.nawrb.com/women-veterans/>). Women veterans are also more likely to use firearms as a method of suicide. This month, learn more about the issues women veterans face, the challenges that exacerbate their mental and physical wellbeing, the ways in which they respond to these issues (as opposed to the way male veterans respond), and the importance of locking weapons up to reduce lethal suicide attempts. Craig Bryan, executive director of the National Center for Veterans Studies, in talking about the epidemic of veteran suicide notes: "[Research suggests that the use of gun safes and other locking devices can reduce the likelihood of suicide...encouraging the use of storage and locking devices could have a significant impact on military suicides.](#)" Learn more about the challenges women veterans face—see the list of resources on page 8.



The Drop Zone: Delivering BSV news “on-time, on-target”

Chase Tozer, BSV Vice President

Another month down. I personally am already counting down the days until Spring Break. The Bison Student Veterans have been busy, participating in different events around campus. To start, we had a good turnout for the first meeting of the month and enjoyed a social hour a few weeks later. It is so great to connect with you all, learning about what you’re doing with school and the exciting and different things outside of the classroom. Our focus for these coming months is to spread the word about the student veterans in the community. If you know of NDSU student veterans with a great story, please reach out. We’d love to highlight them!



Chase Tozer

There are two events this month that I would like to acknowledge. First off, we have been participating in the Student Voice Project. This is a gathering of representatives from diverse student populations to address issues around campus and most importantly brainstorm solutions. This month’s topics included diversity and COVID progress going forward. This experience has been important to our specific student veteran population, addressing some of our needs and getting to put some of our personality into the NDSU community. The second event was the SVA National Convention! It was an exciting experience, although I’m sure we didn’t get the full experience from Zoom. There were multiple key speakers as well as interesting breakout groups to help chapters around the country. As officers and some members attended, we have our notes, will compare, and hopefully compile for the implementation of a plan going forward. If you are interested in the details, feel free to ask.

Lastly, we are planning a fundraising event at Blaze Pizza on March 11, 2021! This is our second fundraising opportunity this year and we are hoping it will be just as fruitful. It will be from 4:00 -8:00 PM. Please come out and show your support! Spring is almost here. Keep your head up and progress forward. If you need anything, please reach out to one of our officers specifically or to the BSV email.

COMING UP

March

Navy Reserve Birthday	March 3
Hug a GI Day	March 4
Seabee Birthday	March 5
K9 Veterans Day	March 13
American Legion Birthday	March 15
Rosie The Riveter Day	March 21
Medal of Honor Day	March 25
National Vietnam War Veterans Day	March 29

April

Month of the Military Child	Month of April
Military Saves Month	Month of April
Gold Star Spouses Day	April 5
National Former POW Recognition Day	April 9
Air Force Reserve Birthday	April 14
Purple Up! Day	April 15
Army Reserve Birthday	April 23
National Military Brats Day	April 30

May

Month of the Military Caretaker	Month of May
National Military Appreciation Month	Month of May
Silver Star Service Banner Day	May 1
VE Day	May 8
Children of Fallen Patriots Day	May 13
Armed Forces Day	May 15
Memorial Day	May 31



Enjoy yourself and support our cause at a special fundraising event for:

Organization name: Bison Student Veterans
 Date: March 11th (Thursday)
 Time: 4PM to 8PM
 Location: 1443 42nd Street South, Fargo, ND 58103
 Order Mode: In-Restaurant, Blaze Pizza App, Blazepizza.com

Blaze Pizza will donate 20% of proceeds from your meal back to our organization.

TWO WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR ORGANIZATION:

In-Restaurant: Bring in this flyer or show it on your phone before paying.

Online Orders: Orders must be placed online via the Blaze Pizza App or blazepizza.com. Enter code **1243A** into the "Promo Code" field at checkout to have your transaction count toward the fundraiser. If entered correctly, you'll see a \$.01 discount applied to your check which confirms that 20% of your transaction will be counted into the total donation.

VALID FOR PICKUP, CURBSIDE & CARRYOUT ONLY. Not valid for deliveries.

For orders on blazepizza.com or Blaze Pizza App
PROMO CODE: 1243A



VALID FOR ONE-IN, PICKUP, CURBSIDE & CARRYOUT ONLY THROUGH THE BLAZE PIZZA APP & WEBSITE. For online orders, only transactions that have the promo code applied during the time and date specified above will be counted toward the donation total. Donation amount excludes proceeds from tax and gift card purchases. Excludes 3rd party delivery or phone orders. Alcoholic beverages excluded. Event proceeds void if flyers are distributed in or near the restaurant.



Career Corner

Jerry South, Assistant Director, Career Coaching, NDSU Career and Advising Center



Hello my fellow Veterans! As a retired Air Force veteran, I know first-hand the challenges associated with exploring and preparing for the next chapter of life after the military. I struggled finding a job as I was preparing for retirement. Having completed my college degree and closing out a 23-year career, I thought it would be easy to find a job. Boy was I wrong. I had no idea how to translate my military experience into civilian terms, what types of jobs to look for, how to look for them, how to prepare my application materials or how to interview for any opportunity given. So, I wanted to start this section with an overview of the Career and Advising Center and all the services and resources we have available to you. This is information I did not have available to me upon my graduation from college.

The NDSU Career and Advising Center offers services to help all students, all grade and degree levels. Our goal is to help all students align their major with their interests thus preparing them for a successful career after graduation. It starts with advising, exploring, then coaching students through the process from day one of college up to 5 years after graduation. For the undeclared or undecided students, or those having trouble with contacting their program advisor, we have a team of Academic Advisors who can help with major exploration, changes, and class scheduling. Our coaching team offers services that range from career exploration, resume, CV, and cover letter development, interviewing, graduate school application materials, personal statements, to job search and negotiation strategies to name a few. We also manage an internship program where you can elect to work within your industry for academic credits which will build that critical experience needed to give you the edge above some of the competition. Our office hosts Career Fairs, employer engagement and networking opportunities. And finally, we offer workshops for classrooms and student organizations to help inform and help you identify and develop the skills employers are seeking.

A majority of these services can be done in person or online as well. We run a Zoom studio and a physical studio space that is open Monday thru Friday, 9 AM-4 PM. The link to the Zoom studio can be found on our webpage: Career-Advising.NDSU.edu. Our physical location is in Ceres Hall, suite 306. We also have appointments available on Navigate if you would prefer. Had I known how difficult and how much stress was involved with entering the next chapter of my life after retirement, I would have started the process much sooner. We are here to offer you that leg up, to help you get started thinking and preparing for your future after college. It is never too late to start, but the sooner you do, the easier it is in the long run.

Upcoming events which can be found in CAREERLINK, the NDSU Job Board and Career Management System. You can look in this system for all kinds of employment opportunities ranging from part-time, work-study, internship/Co-Op, On-Off Campus and full-time opportunities. Employers are frequently adding more workshops and presentations, so be sure to log into CAREERLINK regularly to check for updates. Here are a few to put on your schedule: ABC Discussion with Aldevron – March 9; 2021 Online Part-Time Jobs Fair – March 24; and, Bioeconomy Networking Fair – March 25.

We Get Through This Together

It has been a long and very stressful year due to the pandemic and its impacts. Social isolation, stress, and economic uncertainty has resulted in increased anxiety and despair. If you are struggling, don't suffer in silence. Reach out to family, friends, or the Veterans Crisis Line to talk. We get through tough times like this by helping each other.



“We rise by lifting others.” ~ Robert Ingersoll

Women in Uniform Show They Have What it Takes to Lead

Craig Schwinden

The 117th Congress currently seats the most women it ever has at 144. 120 of these seats are in the House of Representatives and another 24 are in the Senate. The 120 women in the House represent the largest number of seats held by women to-date. The largest number of female senators serving in a Senate term is 25. Of course, we can't forget that history was made January 20th when the first woman was sworn in as the Vice President of the United States. With the arrival of March, which is Women's History Month, we here at VALOR would like to highlight some of the outstanding women who have served in uniform.



Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody

(Photo courtesy of U.S. Army)

Ann E. Dunwoody became the first woman in the Armed Forces to achieve the rank of four-star general. General Dunwoody enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1974 and she was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Women's Army Corps in 1975. Her first assignment was as supply platoon leader, 226th Maintenance Company (Forward, Direct Support), 100th Supply and Services Battalion, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Gen. Dunwoody made her largest impact as commander of Army Material Command (AMC). While head of AMC, Gen. Dunwoody commanded over 69,000 troops and civilians spread across all 50 states and 145 countries.

According to then Army Chief of Staff, General Ray Odierno, "It was Ann's most recent role, as commander of the AMC, in which she unified global logistics in a way [that has never] been done. She capitalized AMC's fundamental logistics functions to maximize the efficiency and services they provided of supply, maintenance, contact support, research and development, base and installation support, and deployment and distribution." At her retirement ceremony in 2012, Gen. Dunwoody said, "...over the last 11 years I've had the honor to serve with many of the 250,000 women who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan on battlefields where there are no clear lines, battlefields where every man and woman had to be a rifleman first. And today, women are in combat, that is just a reality. Thousands of

women have been decorated for valor and 146 have given their lives. Today, what was once a band of brothers has truly become a band of brothers and sisters" (*Seven Famous Women Veterans*, n.d., Military.com).

U.S. Marine Corps Captain Katie Higgins was the first, and thus far, the only, female pilot to be a part of the U.S. Navy's Flight Demonstration Team, The "Blue Angels". Capt. Higgins commanded and flew the Blue Angels' C-130T Hercules affectionately known as "Fat Albert". When she finished her two-year tour, she had over 1,000 hours of flight time demonstrating "Fat Albert's" and the C-130's capabilities to an estimated 11 million people.

On her use of the hashtag, #flylikeagirl, Captain Higgins stated, "The hashtag "fly like a girl" is empowering. It's positive. And being able to fly to the caliber of a female pilot is something to strive for. To me, it shows that the cockpit is a great equalizer. Both men and women can do equally awesome jobs, and in the end, there is no distinction between genders when it comes to performance. All of us are pilots with the same goal: get as many landings as take-offs." She also has a special quote she uses to get her through life, "Calm seas don't make a skilled sailor." She goes on to say, "What I mean by that is, it's not the easy times in your life, and it's not the smooth sailing or the calm seas that shape you as a person. Instead, it's those rough seas; those storms that you have to weather that shape you. For me, they shaped me as a Marine, as an officer, and eventually as an aviator. They can shape you outside the military as a mom, as a sister, as a father, as a brother. It's the hard times in life, and how you deal with those, that help shape you into a better person" (*Fly Like a Girl Captain Katie Higgins is First Female Blue Angels Pilot*, n.d., Risen Magazine).



Maj. Katie Higgins Cook

(Photo courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps)

Lastly, I recognize a personal favorite of mine. While stationed at Pope Air Force Base, I had the opportunity to work for, and with, the office of the 22nd Air Force Commander, Lieutenant General Stayce Harris. I eventually had the opportunity to meet her in person and she is a top-notch warrior and person. She retired in 2019 after nearly 3 years as the U.S. Air Force's Inspector General. Lt. Gen. Harris carried a Command Pilot rating with over 2,500 hours in the C-130H, KC-135R, C-141B/C, T-38 & T-37. On August 19, 2016, when she pinned on her third star, she became the first African American female to gain the rank of Lieutenant General in the U.S. Air Force. Lt. Gen. Harris has also commanded flying squadrons, groups and wings both domestically and overseas. (*Continued on page 8*)



Lt. Gen. Stayce D. Harris
(Photo Courtesy of U.S. Air Force)

When Lt. Gen. Harris entered pilot training, she knew she was in a male-dominated world. "Being in a male-dominated field really didn't frazzle me at all. You're used to being one of the few females in those classes," she said. She continued, "When you're in those types of environments you choose how you want to react" (*No Limits: Lt. Gen. Stayce Harris Broke Air Force's Barriers with Resolve*, Feb 2017, USA Today).

While at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia and commanding the 22nd Air Force, Lt. Gen. Harris approved and signed off on my final USAF medal, the Air Medal. It was my honor to work with her and her team on an Operational Readiness Exercise/Inspection (ORE/ORI). She was the kind of leader that inspired people to do their best and I am appreciative and thankful for the experience.

This article featured three amazing women military leaders who have served their country with honor. They are among a growing demographic in the military that are reshaping and redefining the opportunities available to women. VALOR wants to take this opportunity to thank and honor all women veterans and those currently serving. Our military has been, and will continue to be, strengthened by women's contributions. Learn more about women who serve and challenges specific to women military members with the resources below.



Learn More

- [Center for Women Veterans](#)
- [Women Veterans Network](#)
- [Facts and Statistics About Women Veterans](#)
- [Challenges Facing Women in the Military](#)
- [Continuing Challenges Facing Women Veterans](#)
- [Feeling Invisible and Disconnected](#)
- [Being a Woman Veteran](#)
- [Reproductive Issues](#)
- [Health and Healthcare](#)
- [Veterans Stories of Homelessness](#)
- [Military Sexual Trauma](#)
- [Traumatic Stress in Women Veterans](#)
- [Women in Combat](#)
- [Leaving the Military](#)
- [Depression and Suicide](#)
- [Why Women Veterans Consider Suicide](#)



WOMEN You are not alone in overcoming military sexual trauma

Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is sexual assault or sexual harassment that occurred during a Veteran's military service:

- Being threatened or pressured into sexual activities, such as with threats or promises of better assignments
- Sexual contact without your consent, such as when asleep or intoxicated
- Being physically forced to have sex
- Being touched in a way that made you uncomfortable
- Repeated comments about your body or sexual activities
- Threatening and unwanted sexual advances

There may have been times in life when you were treated badly because you are a woman. Experiencing MST may have felt like one more sign you didn't matter. Because of that, you also may worry that you won't be believed if you speak up. **WE BELIEVE YOU.**

CONCERNS COMMONLY REPORTED BY WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED MST

- STRONG EMOTIONS
- FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS
- EATING OR BODY IMAGE ISSUES
- DIFFICULTIES WITH TRUST OR COMMUNICATION
- PAIN AND PHYSICAL PROBLEMS
- SELF-ESTEEM PROBLEMS
- SEXUAL CONCERNS
- WORK OR SCHOOL PROBLEMS
- AVOIDANCE OR ISOLATION
- RECKLESS BEHAVIOR

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

One in four women Veterans says she experienced MST when asked by a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provider.

Women Veterans of **ALL BACKGROUNDS** have experienced MST, independent of factors such as era of service, age, race, rank, or sexual orientation.

MST IS NEVER YOUR FAULT

THERE ARE MANY PATHS TO HEALING FROM MST. VA CAN HELP.

- VA has free MST-related services for Veterans
- You may be able to receive MST-related services even if you are not eligible for other VA care
- No documentation of the MST experience is needed to get care
- Every VA has an MST Coordinator to help you access services and resources
- Contact your local VA health care facility and ask to speak to the MST Coordinator for more information

Both women and men can experience MST. Visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp to learn more about the MST-related recovery programs and services for women and men at VA.

VA | | |

For an expansive list of organizations and sites that serve women veterans—go to [Women Vets USA](#).

