

President

Laura Rose Bugaj

I am a third generation AMVETS Department of N.Y. officer. My grandfather and father, Robert and Martin Bugaj, respectively, are the only father/ son past Department of N.Y. Commanders. My grandmother, Margaret Bugaj, was a twice over past Department President and my mother, Denise Bugaj is a National Regional Director. I have been a member of AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary #14 for 12 years, and served two terms as local president. My younger brother, Stephen Bugaj, is also a member of AMVETS Post #14 and a Nuclear Engineer for the United States Navy and my boyfriend Edward Ashman is a Sargent in the United States National Guard having previously served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan while being in the United States Navy. He is the current commander of AMVETS Post # 722.

Previously in the department I have held the offices of Sgt. At Arms and Chaplain/ Scholarship Officer, 3rd, 2nd Vice and 1st Vice Presidencies. The last four years I have served on the Honors and Awards committee.

I graduated from SUNY Geneseo in 2008 with degrees in Political Science, History and am certified to teach grades 6th-12. I am currently a Healthier Life Service Coordinator for Fidelis Care of N.Y.

My theme this year is "Understanding through Transparency". An issue near and dear to my heart is the struggles many of our returning service men and women face with the stigma of mental illness and substance use disorders. By being open and honest with everything we do, the hope is we increase communication through barriers and reach a greater understanding of one another.