



Sail Something Special

White CAPS

The Newsletter for Military Women Across the Nation

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FEBRUARY 2016

PROFILE: ROBERTA “BOBI” PIKE-OATES, WOMEN VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Nov. 20, 2015 by Heidi Kyser, Submitted by Roberta Pike-Oates

Bobi Oates didn't want to be an airplane mechanic; she wanted to be a cop. And she was ... sort of. After getting an associate's degree in criminal justice, she landed a job as deputy sheriff for a small county in Vermont, where she was raised. This was the '70s, when, to get to the big leagues of policing, women had to meet the same requirements as men.

“At 5-feet, 3-inches, that just wasn't going to happen for me,” Oates says today.

So she took a friend's advice to get the same kind of challenge and see the world by joining the U.S. Air Force. She enlisted just as the Air Force was expanding its opportunities for women, Oates says, and based on her aptitude, they persuaded her to take one of the jobs available to the gentler sex: aircraft mechanic.



Lugging around heavy toolboxes and airplane parts and spending some 12-hour days on her feet took their toll on Oates. But where she was short on brawn, she had grit in spades. She recalls a flight chief telling her he didn't need female staff sergeants on his flight line, so she moved over to job control and continued to climb through the ranks.

“I didn't think I'd make it four years,” Oates says today. “I made it 23.”

In 1999, she retired as a senior master sergeant. At the pinnacle of her distinguished career, she was one of the four people chosen to establish the 11th Reconnaissance Squadron of unmanned aerial vehicles at Creech Air Force Base. Oates is Nevada's Veteran of the Month for December.

Today, her mission involves a different type of maintenance: fixing the relationship between the U.S. military and its former female members. Nearly 10 years ago, she began volunteering with Women Veterans of Nevada; now she's on the executive board and the ceremonial team

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The President's Message



Ladies:

Season's greetings to all! Happy New Year! I hope everyone is safe what with the horrendous weather conditions we have been experiencing. I am hoping 2016 will be better than the ending

of 2015!

I attended the chartering of our newest unit, New England Military Women Across the Nation, Unit #158, in November. It was an outdoor ceremony in Rhode Island and the weather was sunny but a bit chilly – at least compared to Virginia! I was honored to be able to attend and charter the new unit and spend some time with them and members of Ocean State, Unit #118. My husband and I attended Unit #118's meeting and had lunch with them. Ginny Hanson gave me a tour of the Veterans' Home prior to my

having to leave to return to Virginia. Thank you, ladies, for such a warm welcome to Rhode Island. It is an event to remember, for sure.

As you will see in Monica's article, it's that time of year to renew your membership if you are not a Life Member. I hope you have already done so. Unit treasurers and MALs are reminded to send dues to Monica O'Hara. If your renewal has not been received by April, the April issue of the White Caps will be your last issue. Don't let your membership lapse and thereby miss out on the opportunity to participate in our activities and the convention.

Regional Representatives: Have you started the election process for your region for this next term? Each Region is to hold elections for Regional Representative and Alternate for a two-year term beginning with the post-convention Board of Directors' meeting and continuing through

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Officers CALL

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Barb Sebring



I hope all of you had a wonderful Holiday Season. Once again my husband and I traveled to Southern California to be with family. As I drove along and looked at the wonderful scenery it reminded me of my very first glimpse of beautiful San Diego.

After my graduation from Corps School in Great Lakes in April of 1963, three other WAVES and I boarded a plane off to our new duty station at the Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego. What a beautiful site that was. I reflect back on how far all of us have come.

The ladies of WWI and WWII were trail blazers for sure. But those of us that came after them have also shown the military that we as women are more than capable of serving in every capacity as men. It has taken awhile for sure but just think about where we are now. Women can serve in combat, and we now have had women graduate from The Army Ranger School. The most recent appointment of the Commandant at West Point is a Woman and the Navy has several Admirals that are Women. This is sure a far cry from when I served and was discharged because I was pregnant with our first child. I also was denied equal compensation under the GI bill when I went to school after serving. Years later I joined a group of women that sued the Federal Government so that Woman Veterans would get those same rights and we won! So from that point on women got the same GI benefits as men.

As we move forward let's all remember the part each and every one of us has played in getting our military to accept us as equal. The journey has been long but we all stand proud of the part we have played.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Cheryl Adams



By the time you read this we'll be well into the new year but probably still

writing 2015 on checks and correspondence. A hearty welcome to another new unit chartered on November 21st: New England MWAN – Unit 158.

It is with regret that I will be stepping down as Second Vice President. My term is over as of National Convention in July. After retirement I became involved with several more Veteran organizations in addition to the ones I already belonged to. I've really enjoyed working with all of you but have decided to devote my volunteer time to local organizations working for Veterans suffering from PTSD. With that said, I wish only the best for MWAN as it moves into the future.

RECORDING SECRETARY

GinaMarie Doherty



I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our 2016 Convention! Our newest Unit 158 will

have a few officers in attendance. Thank you President Dassa for officiating our Charter Ceremony on 21 November 2015. Rhode Island was very proud to have you!

Our 2015 – 2016 MILITARY WOMEN ACROSS THE NATION NEWSLETTER CONTEST is also underway, deadline is 1 July 2016. Newsletters must be dated ONLY from July 2015 – June 2016. Judging Panel will consist of a History Teacher and her colleagues from Rogers High School Newport, Rhode Island. No more than (3) newsletters from any one Unit will be judged. The contest has five (5) categories:
 1. Large Unit, Electronic Newsletter;
 2. Small Unit, Electronic Newsletter;
 3. Large Unit, Paper Newsletter; 4. Small Unit, Paper Newsletter; and 5. Presidents Choice. And remember, MALs ARE considered a unit.

Please provide feedback on how the contest has been received within the units for the past 2 years. Let me know if the certificates and ribbons are being well received with your members or if anyone has a better idea. Improvement is always our goal. Happy New Year to you and your Families. **SISTERHOOD IS THE WAY!**

TREASURER

Monica O'Hara



Happy New Year everyone!!

Dues are slowly coming in. If you have not already done so, now is the time for all those who are not Life Members to renew their membership. Not sure if you are a Life Member? Check your address label on the latest White Caps. Just above your name will be "LM" or "15". If "LM" or "16" is not there, dues need to be paid. Members at Large (MALs), please send dues to me using the renewal form on the back page of your White Caps. Unit members, please submit dues to your Unit Treasurer.

Donations were received for the General Fund from the following MALs: Susan D'Ambrosio, Linda Nelson and Sarah Post. A donation in memory of Edith Thomas was received from Sue Matthison (friend of Edith). Kempsville Branch 99 of the Fleet Reserve Association (Virginia Beach, VA) also sent a very generous donation to MWAN.

Thank you all for your magnificent support to our organization!

May 2016 bring you joy, peace and happiness!

SUPPLY LOCKER

Linda Coffield



Hope Punxsutawney Phil didn't see his shadow and spring is on its way.

Thank you all for a great year in the Ship's Store/Supply Locker, we turned a profit due to your support and hope to do it again in 2016.

NEW ITEMS IN YOUR SUPPLY LOCKER: We now have WHITE POLO shirts, MWAN magnets and decals, MWAN flags and table coverings. The MWAN Flag is 3X5 and sell for \$80 and the Table Covering fits a 6' table and is washable sell for \$120.

Don't forget that MWAN sweatshirts and MWAN jackets are also available to purchase.

Note: The POLO Shirts are running larger than the sizes indicate, if you are on the fence about sizes, I suggest you order a size smaller than usual.

FINE PRINT SPECIAL: Get a free historical WN item, we are giving away a FREE WN small patch with each order of \$20.00 or more (excludes shipping). Limit one free WN small patch per customer. Orders MUST: 1) Total \$20 BEFORE shipping is added; 2) Specify "Ground

Hog" on the February 2016 order form for your free WN small patch; & 3) MUST be received by 1 April 2016.

PLEASE NOTE: Use the MOST RECENT White Caps order form. Your order may be delayed if the correct payment and/or shipping are not included.

VAVS NATIONAL REP



Diane Turcotte Culleton

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We start 2016 out with "New Year's Resolutions" and with positive thoughts that we will accomplish them. Perhaps this year one of those resolutions would be to volunteer at one of your local VA facilities. What a great opportunity to make a difference this coming year. Please feel free to contact me for more info at diane.turcotte30@gmail.com or call me at 352-410-6167 (winter telephone #) or 207-399-1696 (cell phone).

I am excited to announce that as the NAC VAVS National Representative, it is my honor to nominate **Carol J. Watson**, Deputy Representative at the VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System in Las Vegas, NV, for the VAVS (NAC) Volunteer of the Year. Carol enlisted in the U.S. Marine in 1952, was discharged in 1955, retired from the U.S. Postal System in 1992 and shortly after began her volunteer career where presently she is fulfilling her 12th year with over 4,000 hours completed.

Currently, Carol is volunteering in the Women's Health Clinic where she is involved in preparing & organizing materials as well assisting the Doctors and Nurses when needed. One of Carol's accomplishments was to help establish the "She Wore These" boots decorating campaign. Once the women veterans' combat boots were decorated, they were displayed in locked glass cases throughout the hospital. Carol is humbled and honored to be able to volunteer and her current and previous volunteer history reflects her commitment and dedication to all Veterans. The award will be presented during the 2016 VAVS National Advisory Committee meeting.

It is with sad news that I report that one of our volunteers, Crystal Sorge, from North East Ohio Women Veterans, Unit 21, has lost her battle with cancer. Crystal volunteered at the Cleveland VA and always found working with our Veterans to be very rewarding. We send our sympathy and

condolences to her family. You will be missed Crystal. **Rest in Peace.**

May the New Year bring you all joy and happiness!

VA MEDICAL/HEALTH



Ruth Storck

Shingles is caused by the varicella - zoster virus. This is the same virus that gives you chicken pox. If you have had the chicken pox, you're a high risk for shingles.

After you have the chicken pox; the virus moves from your skin to nerves along your spinal cord and stays dormant until your immune system is just weak enough to trigger the virus again. Once active, the virus spreads along your nerves to the skin. It forms a blistering rash that is painful, burning, itching and tingling. You may also get flu like symptoms of fever, chills feeling tired and headaches. These symptoms usually last 2-4 weeks. There is a vaccine available for those over 50 who have had the chicken pox. Ask your doctor if you would benefit from the vaccine.

A complication of having shingles is known as post herpetic neuralgia (PHN). This occurs when the shingles rash clears and the pain remains. This issue can remain a few days, months or years in some people. The pain can be very severe. Shingles can also cause complications with your eyes if it erupts on the face. Take the time to talk with your health care provider to see if you can take the vaccine to prevent this very painful virus.

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRMAN



Patricia Cerchio-Vieira

It is not too late to tell someone about the Military Women Across the Nation 2016 Scholarship. The deadline is not until 4 March, so there is still plenty of time to get the applications in.

Special thanks to those who have not only passed this information along to their family members, but to other organizations and even to groups using Social Media.

You can find the scholarship application online at our new website www.milwomen.org under the Documents Section. Or the 2016 Scholarship Application can be found directly at <http://tinyurl.com/MWANScholar>. Don't forget to pass along this information to other women veterans and even other women's groups.

You would be surprised how many "hidden" women veterans there are out there.

I have been sharing the scholarship information on venues such as Facebook and LinkedIn, especially with Military Women's Groups. With this added exposure we are anticipating a larger than average number of applications.

We need help evaluating the applications. You don't need to be an English scholar to be on the reviewing committee; I certainly am not. Please contact me if you would like to see what these talented young people are writing about "Military Women: Then and Now" My contact information can be found on page 18 of the White Caps.

PUBLIC RELATIONS



Jennifer Baun

It's a brand new year, and with it comes all the promise of starting fresh and making resolutions. So, this year I am giving each unit a resolution. Reach out to any military installation near-by and try to connect with the women stationed there. If you have no contacts, call the Public Affairs Officer there. Most installations have contact information available in local directories and the internet. Some ideas for connecting are to plan a luncheon with your unit and the women, or use Women's History month in March to do a program for your unit. Another organization to reach out to would be the National Association of Women Veteran Coordinators for the representative in your state. Their contact information is available at <http://www.naswvc.com/> or see their Facebook page. Don't forget when you do this to provide me with the information so I can work up press information on the event. This will generate interest in your unit.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



Barb Turner

A HUMBLE APOLOGY (times two). I received a note from a member which said: "Margarita (Margie) belonged to Unit 8 - Golden Gate WAVES, WN ID #xxxxx. Golden Gate WAVES has been disbanded for some time. Sincerely, xxxxx P.S. Hope she can get her name in your funeral notices Silver Taps." And, there was an obituary, a photo and a write

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up that came with the note. Margarita's name appeared in the August 2015, White Caps Silver Taps in error.

I didn't read the entire obituary or I would have noticed that the Margarita Vega Garciduenas who passed away was, in fact, the mother of Margarita M. Garciduenas. And, so it goes that (daughter) Margie is not deceased. I apologized to Margie with a personal note from me, from the bottom of my heart and she has graciously forgiven my grievous error.

When it rains, it pours, right? I received another note and write up with a picture of Ada LaVerne "Tommie" Simpson. "Ada "Tommie" Simpson has always been a lively woman. Belonged to Golden Gate WAVES., Sincerely, xxxxx". Tommie was listed in the August 2015 White Caps Silver Taps in error as well. You see, Tommie was celebrating her 90th birthday and did not pass away.

"I humbly apologize to you Tommie and I hope that you will forgive my lack of attention to detail. Congratulations on reaching 90 and I hope that you had a great celebration."

Moving? - When you move, would you please send in an address change? If you don't change your address each time you move, you will more than likely not receive the White Caps (WC) newsletter.

If you are a "snow bird" and move

from the frozen north to the sweltering south, on occasion, it is imperative that you let me know that you have moved, each time. Please send in a change of address, phone and e-mail address (if applicable) via written note, e-mail or phone call and I'll be happy to make the change in the database. To those members who have changed their address, **"thank you"**

WHITE CAPS EDITOR



Judy Faries

It is hard to believe that we are in 2016 already. This year has really gotten away from me. Hope that the holidays were wonderful for you all.

I am looking forward to another productive year. I can't wait for the convention in Mississippi this year. I am hoping to see many of you there and getting to put a face with a name.

It seems hard to believe that I have been filling the Editor position for about 5 years now. The time has really flown by. I enjoy the articles everyone has been submitting and hearing about all that is going on with the units. I hope this year to see more input from MALs and Regional

Reps. I am sure that many MALs are involved in parades and other veteran events in their areas and we would love to share those with everyone.

Just a couple of items I would like to bring up.

1) Ladies are still forgetting to copy the president (that would be Dassa Carvey until the election of officers).

2) It would really be helpful if ladies would remember that the articles need to be in Arial font and 10 pitch if possible.

3) There is only one space after each sentence. I know that this is hard to remember because it is not the normal way we write. Correcting this is the most time consuming task for the editor.

If we could remember these points it would really make my job easier. I realize a lot of ladies are sending articles from their tablets or phones and cannot change the font or pitch. That is not a big deal and I can change them easily.

I really enjoy working with each and every one of you and look forward to the next year.

Remember that the next cut-off for input for the April 2016 issue will be 1 March 2016.

BGEN VAUGHT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

On 4 January, BGEN Wilma Vaught announced her retirement as president of Women's In Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial. In her announcement, GEN Vaught stated, "I must say it has been an amazing and rewarding 29 years and one of the most gratifying times of my life. I knew, however, the time had come for the Foundation to transition to new leadership so that we capitalize on new technologies and strategies for business and communication and the enthusiasm and commitment of a younger generation of leaders. Like you, I want to assure our extraordinary Women In Military Service For America Memorial remains a viable center for learning about women's service to the nation and that there is a place where our individual stories are preserved and visible for generations to come."

Army Major General Dee Ann McWilliams, (Ret.), was introduced as her successor and is intimately familiar with the Foundation, having been a member of our board of directors since 2007 and serving as the board of directors vice chair since 2014. She took the helm as the Foundation president 1 January 2016.

GEN Vaught will be staying on at the Foundation with the title "president emeritus," assisting in the transition, working on a few projects and continuing to speak locally and around the country about the Memorial and the service of military women. MG McWilliams will be doing the heavy lifting and making decisions.

GEN Vaught is very proud of what has been accomplished in the 29 years since the Memorial was established. She stated, "Thanks to many of you, we changed the face of monumental Washington, adding military women to those the nation honors. Today, the Women's Memorial is one of only three major edifices in the entire nation to focus on women—and the only one to focus on military women! I believe we helped give military women a voice and a presence in discussions about our armed forces and finally in our history books. We established our own publishing arm, Military Women's Press, publishing a handful of books, our annual calendar and Women's History Month posters. Our world-class archive of artifacts and memorabilia related to women's service is the largest of its kind in the world, along with our growing oral history collection, which is supported by a corps of nationwide volunteers. These and our small research library have helped countless scholars, historians, journalists, television and movie producers and writers of all kinds tell the story of women's service."

Military Women Across the Nation wishes GEN Vaught all the best and much success.

FIRST MWAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

Set for 19-21 July 2016 in Tunica, Mississippi



Our first Convention as Military Women Across the Nation is set for 19-21 July 2016 at the Gold Strike Casino Resort in Tunica, Mississippi.

Great food & entertainment are there as well as a brand new Tanger Outlet Mall in nearby Southhaven. Other nearby attractions include Elvis Presley's Graceland, Sun-Studios, National Civil Rights Museum, Mud Island and the Pink Palace Museum just to name a few.

Rooms are currently available and have been blocked from Monday, July 18, 2016 through Thursday, July 21, 2016 at the rate of \$69.00 plus tax per night. Tunica County Room Tax is currently ten percent (10%) and could be subject to change. A \$10.00 per-night surcharge (subject to change) will apply to each third and fourth person occupying the same room. Guestrooms may have a maximum of four occupants. Also, regular guest rooms do NOT have a refrigerator. There are a few compact refrigerators available for a fee of \$25 per stay so plan and reserve accordingly.

To make reservations call the Gold Strike Casino Resort

Reservation Department directly at (888) 245-7829 and identify your affiliation with Military Women Across the Nation/ WAVES National (MWAN/WN). Rates cannot be changed at check-in or check-out for guests who do not identify their affiliation at the time the reservation is made. Gold Strike Casino Resort does require the first night's room and tax deposit accompany the reservation (a major credit card number may be used to guarantee a room in lieu of a deposit). The deposit is non-refundable if cancellation occurs within 48 hours of arrival.

Transportation from and to Memphis International Airport will be available for a nominal fee. Those details along with excursions to a few of the local attractions will be in the Call to Convention. There are nearby RV parks for those who live life on the road!

We look forward to seeing everyone at the Gold Strike for this historic convention. Points of contact for questions about the convention are Marie Porter, 469-855-0237 or Barbara Booth, 901-218-3991.

Reverse Raffle Results are In!

It's going to be a very happy New Year for one of our MWAN members. The Revers Raffle was successful, and while we didn't sell all the tickets we came really close and were able to hold the raffle anyway. It ended up raising funds for the organization in the amount of \$820.00. Thank you to everyone that participated and made it a success.

A reverse raffle is pulling every raffle ticket until only one remains. Along the way, other prizes were available, too. The winners are listed below. Congratulations to them all.

- 25th position, \$10.00 Gift Card = Military Women of Tampa Bay, Unit 55
- 15th position, \$10.00 Gift Card = Michelle Batti
- 10th position, \$10.00 Gift Card = Cheryl Adams
- 5th position, \$20.00 Gift Card = Dassa Carvey
- 2nd position, \$450.00 Second place = Evelyn Coy
- 1st position, \$1,000.00 Grand prize = Donna Sheldon



1st Place Winner – Donna Sheldon



IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

SHIRLEY HILL

Honored at Providence WaterFire



Ocean State Unit 118 Vice President Shirley Hill was one of two Vietnam veterans individually recognized at Providence WaterFire on November 7. This cultural event in the capital city occurs several times a year and each November, it specifically honors and celebrates Rhode Island's veterans.

The day consisted of musical performances, ceremonies, booths of information for veterans and culminated with a torch

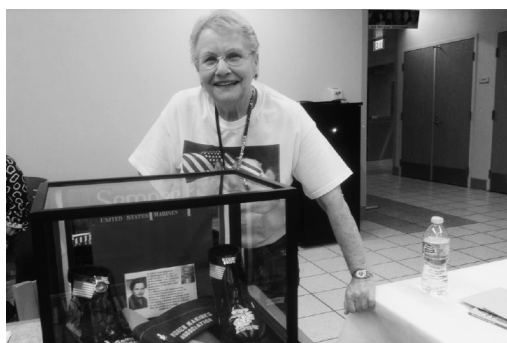
processional to light the cauldrons on the Seekonk River.

Shirley was introduced to the crowd of over 200 gathered at the RI Statehouse and was presented with a Department of Defense Vietnam Veterans Commemorative Pin by Capt. Dennis Boyer, Commanding Officer of Naval Station Newport. The evening continued with a ceremony on the statehouse steps, a procession down to the basin and a concert by Navy Band Northeast and the 88th Army Band.

Shirley served in the United States Navy from 1964-1995. After graduating from the Boston University School of Nursing, she received her commission in the Navy Nurse Corps. She completed a tour on the *USS Repose* off the coast of Vietnam, served at the Naval Hospital Subic Bay in the Philippines and had many stateside hospital assignments. She rose to the rank of Captain and retired as Director of Nursing Services at Naval Hospital Newport.

Shirley is an active member of the Navy Nurse Corps Association, Military Officers Association, 1st Rhode Island Regiment, Newport County Council of the Navy League of the United States, and Veterans of Foreign Wars among other community groups. Unit 118 is lucky to have Shirley as our Vice President and we are proud of her recognition at WaterFire!

CAROL WATSON nominated for VAVS Volunteer of Year



Carol Watson displays her decorated combat boots.

Carol Watson is a very active VAVS Deputy Representative at the Southern Nevada Healthcare System, and I am proud to have her nomination submitted for our VA Volunteer of the Year.

Before being a representative for MWAN, Carol was the Deputy Representative for the Women Marines. Carol works primarily in the Women's Program, but also supports the doctors and nurses wherever she can. She organizes and assembles educational materials for various VA Healthcare events, attending the events and distributing the materials while also engaging the veterans in conversation. Carol is a true ambassador for the VA medical facility.

Carol is most proud of the program she organized and implemented, "She Wore These," in recognition of Women's History Month. She gathered combat boots and materials; invited women veterans to join her in decorating the boots for display. Many women have attended the events, some bringing their own boots and memorabilia to decorate their boots. The decorated boots are displayed in cases at the

Women's Clinic.

In addition to her on-going support of the Las Vegas facility, she is active in several Veterans' organizations and community service activities supporting our veterans, earning numerous awards. She was recognized as Volunteer of the Month by the Women's Health Center, 2004-2005; received the Congressional Award from the State House of Representatives, 2006; recognized as the Volunteer of the Month, Nevada Office of Veterans Services, 2013.

Carol is diligent in trying to locate female veterans and encourage them to have their service recognized in the Women in Military Service for America Memorial.

Her tireless energy, devotion and commitment to our veterans are a testament to her dedication and exemplify MWAN goals, and is deserving of the award. Keep your fingers crossed for her selection. The winner will be announced at the Annual VA National Advisory Committee Conference in May.



Collage of women Veterans decorating their boots.

Organization Serves Female Veterans Of All Branches

Brandon News, by Barbara Routen, Special Correspondent • Published: December 30, 2015



Connie White, a retired Army veteran, honors the fallen with a salute after presenting a wreath provided by Wreaths Across America on the Army side of the Veterans Freedom Memorial at the Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park. — BARBARA ROUTEN

BRANDON — Military women have served the United States since the American Revolution and share a unique sisterhood.

They're not exactly like their civilian counterparts. They must go where the job dictates, can be deployed around the globe and move more often.

Overseas, they may face frightening situations in which the threat of injury or death is the norm.

Their service is not always recognized, even by their male colleagues.

"Sometimes people will thank a man accompanying a woman veteran for his service while not acknowledging her service," said Navy veteran Jouay Koppari of Valrico, president of the Military Women of Tampa Bay Unit 55. "Even members of veterans' organizations often

usher women veterans to the women's auxiliary rather than welcoming them in their organization."

Women of the various branches of the U.S. Armed Forces created individual associations to help with their unique veterans' issues.

For instance, in 1979, WAVES National was founded to support women who served in the U.S. Navy.

Recently, however, the number of members in several of these organizations have waned.

By early 2014, there were only eight women in the Tampa Bay WAVES Unit 55, which was chartered in 1988.

To meet the need for camaraderie and combat their dwindling numbers, in November 2014, WAVES National opened its units to women of all U.S. Armed Services

branches and changed its name to Military Women Across the Nation (MWAN).

The local group is now called Military Women of Tampa Bay Unit 55.

"The decision to adopt the name Military Women Across the Nation (MWAN) was [because] the acronym WAVES is associated with World War II Navy women veterans and is of little or no appeal to women veterans of today," said Brandon resident Jeannette Green. "We hope the organization will appeal to women veterans of all services and all conflicts, especially today's female veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom."

The purpose of the Military Women Across the Nation is "to encourage patriotism, loyalty to God, country and family; perpetuate the honorable history of women in the military services; strive

to support morale and assist all women veterans in need; seek opportunities for locating, communicating and associating with former military service women of Florida; and support other veterans organizations through community service and volunteerism," Green said.

"We are here to help and serve all military women — veterans and those currently serving — and advocate for them," said Riverview resident Catherine Gerolimatos, unit treasurer.

Military Women of Tampa Bay Unit 55 now has 30 members ranging in age from 30 to 96 who represent retired and active-duty women from the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Maritime Service and Navy.

They routinely participate in activities at and for the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, such as its Veterans Day Parade, fall fundraiser and December poinsettia distribution.

They visit area service clubs and help out with the Holiday Cards for Troops event at Center Place Fine Arts and Civic Association.

On Dec. 12, National Wreaths Across America Day, members of the Military Women of Tampa Bay Unit 55 placed wreaths provided by Wreaths Across America at the Veterans' Freedom Memorial at the Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park.

Military Women Across the Nation welcomes women who serve or have served honorably in regular or reserve components of the U.S. Armed Services, including the National Guard and Maritime Service.

Dues are \$25 per year. Life membership is \$30 for women at least 90 years old.

Military Women of Tampa Bay Unit 55 meets at 11 a.m. the second Saturday of each month from September through June at Hawthorne Village of Brandon Assisted Living Facility, 851 W. Lumsden Road.

For more information visit www.milwomen.org.

Freelance writer Barbara Routen can be reached at barbara.routen@gmail.com.

"158 is Great"

Submitted by Jennifer Baun, Public Relations



Dassa Carvey, MWAN National President pictured with the members of Unit 158.

It was a beautiful, crisp, sunny day on Saturday, November 21st when the New England Military Women Across the Nation held their charter ceremony and installation of officers. The event was held at the Rhode Island Women Veterans Memorial at the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Exeter, Rhode Island at 1100. Military Women Across the Nation President, Dassa Carvey was on-hand and participated in the ceremony by presenting the unit with their Charter and each member with a certificate.

There were several dignitaries in attendance to mark the occasion. Dr. Susan MacKenzie, Director of the Providence VA Medical Center was there. Dr. MacKenzie was appointed the Director of the VA Center in 2013 and has served as the Deputy Medical Center Director of the Boston Healthcare System, the Deputy Network Director of the VA New England Healthcare System, the Acting Director of VA Maine Healthcare System in 2012 and the Manchester VA Medical Center as her most recent achievements. Women Veteran Coordinator, Tonya Maselli McConnell, LICSW, BCD also attended.

The event also had a featured keynote speaker, Kim Ripoli who said, "It is the mission of organizations like MWAN to

be the voice of other female veterans and to help them realize the benefits of participating in a veteran service organization." Ms. Ripoli is the Associate Director of Veteran Affairs of Rhode Island. She manages the Division's operations, coordinates mission execution and oversees more than 220 employees in the three branches -Veterans Home, Veterans Memorial Cemetery, and Veterans Affairs. She entered Naval service in February 1988 and was deployed to Southwest Asia with the 1st Marines Expeditionary Force (1st MEF) in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. She was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for her actions during her deployment with Fleet Hospital 15. In September 1994, she joined the Navy Reserve, and affiliated with the Fleet Marine Force, 4th Force Service Support Group, 4th Medical Battalion, Surgical Company "A". In 2003, she was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom. She received two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals for her actions in Iraq. Additional overseas deployments include Operation New Horizon (2000), and Operation African Lion (2005). In July 2007, she was assigned to The Pentagon, in the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower, Policy and Reserve Affairs. Her military decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (three awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (eight awards), Army Achieve-

ment Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Kuwait Liberation Medal-Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Liberation Medal-Kuwait, Iraq Campaign Medal, and various service, unit and campaign awards. Senior Chief Ripoli earned her Bachelor's degree from Rhode Island College, and Master of Arts degree from Salve Regina University. Associate Director Ripoli is the first woman in the history of Rhode Island to administer the Division of Veterans Affairs. During her address, she proudly displayed her service while wearing a Navy Ballcap.

The mission of the New England Military Women Across the Nation is to seek women who may not identify themselves as veterans. They have several priorities already identified to carry out their mission. As many units, they hope to establish a relationship with the Rhode Island Veterans Home, which is a 110-acre complex on Mount Hope Bay that provides quality nursing and residential care to Rhode Island war veterans. They also plan to participate in the Bristol, RI Annual 4th of July Celebration. The Celebration, the oldest in the country officially starts on June 14th, Flag Day and concludes with the 2.5 mile Military, Civic and Firemen's Parade on July 4th. With these goals, the tagline they have will prove to be a true premonition, "158 is Great!"

With the expanding identification in Rhode Island, the need for a second unit was necessary. Congratulations to New England Military Women Across the Nation, Unit 158, and the following charter officers and members: Maria Helena Peixoto, Navy (President); Connie Rix, Navy, (Vice President); GinaMarie Doherty, Navy, (Secretary/Treasurer); Jessica Coulter, Air Force; Dorothy Dilullo, Air Force; Cheryl Foster, Army; Lynn Lavalley, Army National Guard; Alicia Rodriguez, Navy; Ronda Sherwood, Navy; Carol Slavens, Navy; Jeannine Vachon, Army National Guard; Sylvia Weber, Army.

President's Message

(continued from page 1)

the biennial convention. If the current Regional Representative wishes to continue as Regional Representative and she has served two terms already, she needs to request a waiver from the National Executive Committee in order to continue serving as Regional Representative.

Have you made your New Year's Resolution to recruit at least one new member this year? How can you make a difference and possibly recruit a member or two or three? How about Women's History Month? Does your church, American Legion, VFW, DAV Chapter or other organization recognize this event? Volunteer to be a speaker and take your memorabilia to "show and tell!" The theme this year is **"Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government"**. One of the honorees is Dorothy Stratton, WWII Director of the SPARS (Coast Guard Women's Reserve) and Executive Director of the Girl Scouts of the USA. What a tribute to women in the military! Each of us has something to offer from our experiences in the military. Be willing to share your story! It just may spark a desire in someone to join our organization and perpetuate our history!

Units that have not submitted name changes to me and updated their bylaws to Cathy Gerolimatos are reminded to do so. Please do not delay and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me or Cathy.

Until next time, please keep our troops in your prayers.

Always Navy~

Dassa

PROFILE: ROBERTA "BOBI" PIKE-OATES, WOMEN VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (continued from page 1)

that conducts weekly funerals at Boulder Cemetery for veterans who've died homeless or in the absence of loved ones.

"It's a way to make sure no vet passes without being honored and remembered," Oates says.

Based on that service, in the summer of 2014 Governor Brian Sandoval appointed her to the five-member Nevada Women Veterans Advisory Committee, a statewide group charged with identifying female veterans and advocating on their behalf. As the only member of the group in Southern Nevada, Oates represents the bulk of the state's population.

The new advisory committee faces enormous obstacles. Out of 21,000-plus female vets in the state, Veterans Services has located only 2,500. This matters, Oates says, because women are missing out on valuable benefits, such as education and health care.

For example, she says, "A lot of female vets are of child-bearing age, so they need access to obstetrics." One of the committee's recommendations that has already been implemented is the hiring of a full-time OB-Gyn at the Nevada Veterans Medical Center.

But a lot of work remains. The committee wants job and benefit applications changed to ask, "Have you ever served in the U.S. military?" rather than the current, "Are you a U.S. military veteran?" because women don't self-identify as vets. In June, the committee gave the governor a long list of recommendations for better communications, promotions and technology to spread the word about available benefits and services, and then keep track of those who respond.

"Women have served," Oates says. "And they've all been volunteers, because women have never been drafted. Sometimes, we weren't even wanted, but we've always been there."

Now, she adds, they need to know the state and country they served are there for them.

About the award program

In 2011 the Veterans of the Month award was established by the Governor for men and women across Nevada who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, specifically with respect to volunteer work in support of veterans and the military.

"Men and women across Nevada who have made a significant contribution will have achieved excellence by going above and beyond the call of duty," stated Governor Sandoval in his presentation. "It will be an opportunity for all of us to shine a bright light on the work veterans continue to do for our nation."

Candidates are chosen for their assistance to former veterans, as well as for support of active duty personnel and the community at large.

After leaving military service, volunteer work performed for their peers and for those who may be less fortunate speaks to their character, their dedication, determination and willingness to unselfishly help others.

The program is managed by the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS). Submissions are reviewed and chosen by the members of the Veterans Service Commission (VSC) at its quarterly meetings.

VFW Survey of Women Veterans

Background: The VFW is committed to ensuring veterans' health care and benefits are equitable among the brave men and women who have worn our nation's uniform. In an effort to identify barriers women veterans face when accessing their earned veterans' benefits and services, the VFW has commissioned a survey of women veterans that will guide the VFW's policy priority goals for them. The VFW will analyze survey results and direct feedback from women veterans to make recommendations to VA and Congress on how to meet their needs.

Action Needed: Take the VFW's Survey of Women Veterans to help the VFW hold VA accountable for delivering the high quality benefits and services women veterans have earned and deserve. To take the survey, go to: <https://www.research.net/r/VFWSurveyofWomenVeterans>.

SOUND OFF!

KEYSTONE WAVES

Unit #6 (PA) – Here in the Northeast, we have had very mild weather, with spring flowers, trees and shrubs blooming close to Christmas.

In November, we were honored with all women veterans at an annual afternoon tea held at Coatesville VAMC. We also participated in Veterans Day Parade and afterwards we ate at Texas Roadhouse. Ruthie Severino, Gladys Martin, Gladys Felice, Louise Manz, and Billie Taddie attended the second annual Freedom Medal Awards dinner as guests of the Delaware County Council.

Several of us placed wreaths at a memorial as part of the Wreaths Across America ceremony, which emphasized the impact women have made in the military.

At our December meeting, we chose the new name Keystone Women Veterans for our unit, and it is being submitted for review.

For meeting information please contact Ruthie Severino at 610-356-8956.

HEART OF AMERICA OF MWAN

Unit #9 (KS) – We held our annual Christmas luncheon in the home of Lois and Larry Hardeman. We had a lively group who enjoyed a catered lunch of ham with raisin sauce, cauliflower au-gratin, potatoes, salad and rolls. Several ladies brought their dessert delicacies to share. Many thanks to them for hosting our party.

It is always so good to fellowship with our sister veterans. We wish all of you a happy and healthy New Year.

Our next business meeting will be 23 April 2016. For more information please contact Michele Batliner at 816-315-9229 or email at mbatliner@att.net

NORTHEAST OHIO WOMEN VETERANS

Unit #21 (OH) – The unit closed out the year as busy as it came in. Members visited the women that stay at the Ohio Veterans Home (OVH) in Sandusky and had a little Christmas party. Each woman received a gift and personal care bag.

Then the unit had its annual Christmas party complete with entertainment. We shared our most memorable Christmas memories. Joining us this year were Veterans from the Danbury, where we hold our meetings.



Unit 21 elves at OVH: L-R Elva Pounders, Barb (Delores' Mom), Karen Kish, Ellen Leidy, Delores Speed, and Claudia Westover.



Claudia, Elva and Delores with women from OVH.

After a short hibernation, we will begin anew in 2016 with the planning of our 30th anniversary.

For meeting information please contact Jennifer Baun at 314-803-8643 or email at Jennifer.baun@att.net.

SAN DIEGO STARS & STRIPES

Unit #36 (CA) – November was a very busy month with the Annual Women Veterans Luncheon at MCAS Miramar, San Diego Veterans Day Parade, and joining with area Girl Scouts to teach them how to make our neck pillows. Total number of pillows to date: 3,580 (145 from the Girl Scout event).

One surprise to all was seeing Mabel Stenstrom in the Grand Marshall car. It was a bit last minute truth be told but it

was great publicity all around and she had a wonderful time.



The lady in the car is Mabel Stenstrom - a member of Unit 36 and Grand Marshall for the Veteran's Day Parade.

Working with the Girl Scouts was an adventure from having lunch with them, telling about our service times, and then teaching them to cut out, sew, stuff and stitch pillows in group rotations.



Escondido Service Unit (gathering of many troops) from Escondido, CA area and members of Unit 36 in attendance for the pillow stuffing project: front-Barbara Ellis, Evelyn Coy; second row-Monica O'Hara, Shirley Ferrill, and Jeannie Dicks; back row-Roxanne Jones, Lynne Pine. Missing-Elisabeth Usborne had to leave early.

Shirley Ferrill was the guest speaker for the rededication of National City's War Memorial on 7 December. A few months ago some enterprising souls decided to steal the brass plaques from the park memorial but thanks to quick action by local citizens, news media, and the police, the items were recovered very quickly.

Our annual holiday gathering hosted a woman veteran and her son from the Welcome Home Program of Veterans Village. After lunch and the veteran's sharing of her life, the hat is passed and the ladies, as always, were very generous. A small gift exchange followed enjoyed by all.

The next scheduled meeting is 6 February at Mangia Italiana. April (no date yet) will be a visit to the Chula Vista Veterans' Home.

For unit information contact, Roxanne Jones, at roxanne.jones@score.com or 619-545-6546.

SOUND OFF!

MILITARY WOMEN OF TAMPA BAY

Unit #55 (FL) – Brandon Homemakers invited Military Women of Tampa Bay Unit 55 to their 12 November meeting which honored military veterans. Also in attendance were representatives of Vietnam Veterans of America and Marine Corps League. Upon arrival, we were invited to help ourselves to potluck breakfast provided by the members of Brandon Homemakers. Then each veteran was asked to introduce her/himself including a little bit about their military experience, training and duty assignments. The Marine Corps League conducted a Flag Folding Ceremony followed by TAPS. To our surprise, the Brandon Homemakers provided a potluck lunch as well.

We traveled to Plant City, FL, to join with approximately 30 women veterans for GFWC Plant City Women's Club 2nd Annual Honoring Women Veterans' program held at Veterans' Memorial Monument Park at Courier Field, Plant City. Plant City Commissioner Bill Dodson made a presentation and MSgt Angela Franklin, USAF, was the guest speaker. Our own Shirley Dawley spoke of her experiences during her tour of duty in the Navy and how that experience impacted her throughout her life.



Lee Martin, Shirley Dawley, Patti Duvall, Connie White, Sandra Moren, Bernadette Dunn, Jouay Koppari attended the Plant City Women's Club 2nd Annual Honoring Women Veterans' program

Wreaths Across America tributes have become a tradition the second week of December which remembers and honors the fallen of the United States Armed Forces through the laying of wreaths on their graves, particularly in veteran cemeteries. On 12 December, we had the honor of hosting and conducting the Wreaths Across America Tribute at Hillsborough County Veterans' Memorial Park. Wreaths were

placed at all war memorials at the park and the tribute ceremony was held at the Freedom Memorial which sits prominently in front of the Leroy Collins, Jr. Veterans' Museum.



Connie White, Rhonda Crawford, Sandy Moren, Mary Atzert, Lee Martin, Cathy Gerolimatos, Kathleen Cooper, Jouay Koppari standing beside the Medal of Honor Memorial at Hillsborough County Veterans' Memorial Park.

Members completed their annual distribution of poinsettia plants throughout the James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa, FL. Recipients included the Women's Clinic, Spinal Cord Injury units, Women's Imaging, Reception Desks, Emergency Room, Geriatric Clinic, Community Living Center and USO Day Room.



Jouay Koppari, Mary Atzert, Pamela Smith-Beatty (Women's Health Care), Rhonda Crawford, Sandy Moren, Cathy Gerolimatos delivering Poinsettias.

REDWOOD EMPIRE MILITARY WOMEN

Unit #77 (CA) – Greetings from Redwood Empire Military Women Unit 77. We enjoyed a delicious holiday lunch at the 101 Casino. We celebrated our new members and toasted to good health. Much discussion centered on plans for the New Year. A donation was made to Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) in the amount of \$100.00.

For meeting information please contact Suzanne Seville, 707-829-3104, or sksaville@gmail.com.



Pictured from L to R are; Anne Brenneis, Morella Staggs, Barbara McArthur, Flora Haluzak, Bettie Crandall, Maura Mooney, Margaret Patrizi-Enea, MaryLou Loustalot, Tecla Pierotti, Breeze Baker, Helen Nugent, and Emily Souza. Not pictured is Suzanne Seville (photographer).

OCEAN STATE

Unit #118 (RI) – We were honored to have MWAN National President Dassa Carvey join us at our November meeting. She filled us in on National news and we told her about what we do in our unit. President Carol Rotkin, State Director Luisa White and Past State Director Ginny Hanson presented her with a "Welcome to Rhode Island" proclamation from Governor Gina Raimondo and citations from Rhode Island Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed, House Representative Jan Malik and Speaker of the House Nicholas Mattiello. The unit also presented several Rhode Island souvenirs for Dassa to remember her visit.



Pictured above: Rhode Island State Director Luisa White, Past State Director Ginny Hanson, MWAN National President Dassa Carvey, and Unit 118 President Carol Rotkin

December brought our annual tradition of Christmas visits to shut-in members. We also started a new tradition with a visit to the Rhode Island Veterans Home. Our members sat and chatted with residents over coffee, tea and pastries. Each attendee was given a gift bag containing a sweatshirt with the emblem of their branch of service and other goodies. One lady kissed her bag even before opening it. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and we look forward to doing this again next year.

For meeting information please contact Margaret Pedlow Smith at 504-756-4570 or email at mpedlowsmith@gmail.com.

SOUND OFF!

MILITARY WOMEN OF TIDEWATER

Unit #152 (VA) – Military Women of Tidewater Unit 152 had a busy Holiday Season! On 12 December, Unit #152 were present in full force at the Wreath Laying ceremony at the A.G. Horton, Jr., Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk, VA where unit members helped to lay 7,000 wreaths. We donate to help purchase the wreaths. The 14th of December, unit members stuffed Ditty Bags for the Hampton VAMC patients' Christmas party. We had our annual Unit Party on 16 January at Stacy Ketsdevers' home. We held an auction, using donated items, as a fund raiser for the unit.



Picture above from the Ditty Bag stuffing features Renee Brown, Helen Jakubik, Dassa Carvey, and Jo Anne Teel.

We meet, monthly, at VFW 4809, Norfolk, VA. For meeting information, contact Dassa Carvey, at Dassa_2@verizon.net, or 757-363-3059.

TRISTATE WOMEN VETERANS

Unit #157 (TN) – Four members of our unit were recognized at Chattanooga's



Unit #157 members pictured include (at left) Deborah Kendrick, Army veteran & Director of Chattanooga National Cemetery along with four Vietnam-era veterans: Patty Parks, Navy; Penny Manna, Marine; Renee Chisholm, Army, and Gloria Gray, Air Force.

Veterans' Day Service as Vietnam Era Veterans. The recognition is part of a nationwide program commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. The program's goal is to present every veteran who served in the military during the Vietnam War – regardless of duty station – a commemorative pin.

Military Women Across the Nation members reminded observers that 'Women are Veterans' when they piled into a couple of vehicles and rode in the Dalton, Georgia, Veterans' Day Parade.



Noisemakers pictured are (left to right) Shelly Gallo-way, Army Guard; Barbara Ware, Army; Gloria Gray, Air Force; Penny Manna, Marine; Beth Wingfield, Army, & Patty Parks, Navy.

Not only did MWAN Life Member & World War II veteran Jeanette Legg make it to the Unit's Christmas Party, but she had the opportunity to visit with another WWII veteran and MWAN Life Member, Gerry Watson. Gerry has been a member of Unit 56, Gulf Coast Dolphins, since November 1984. She recently moved away from Northport, FL, to South Carolina. However, she was in the Chattanooga



World War II veterans Gerry Watson and Jeanette Legg.

area during Christmas visiting her son, Dan, who saw an article about TriState Women Veterans in the newspaper and made contact to see if his mom could attend the December meeting. We were delighted to host this lovely lady!

For meeting information please contact Patty Parks, 423-326-0839, or pattyjoparks@yahoo.com.

NEW ENGLAND MILITARY WOMEN ACROSS THE NATION

Unit #158 (RI) – Our Vice President Connie Rix and unit member Dorothy DiLullo shared military and civilian career milestone stories via phone, strengthening unit cohesiveness and building new friendships.



Unit 158 President Maria Helena Peixoto (left) presents unit member, Navy Veteran Carol Slavens with some welcomed Christmas cheer and a beautiful poinsettia.

Unit President Maria Helena Peixoto and unit member GinaMarie Doherty visited Rhode Island State Director Luisa White and Unit 158 members Sylvia Weber, and Carol Slavens for the holidays. We thank you Sisters for your generous hospitality and delicious tea.





SILVER TAPS



Please send all WN member Silver Taps information to Executive Secretary, Barb Turner (address on page 18)

<u>FIRST</u>	<u>LAST</u>	<u>MAIDEN</u>	<u>SERV</u>	<u>UNIT</u>
Crystal	Lynn	(Sorge)	USN	021/OH
Phyllis	Gallant	(Curran)	USN	055/FL
Nancy A.	Brenza	(Robinson)	USN	077/CA
Margaret (Evelyn)	Smalley	(Cavanagh)	USN	114/AZ
Anne N.	Campbell	(Nechak)	USN	MAL/CA
Jane F.	Seelman	(Olesko)	USN	MAL/NY
Ruth A.	Walling	(Harris)	USN	MAL/TX
Margaret A.	Thorngate	(Anderson)	USN	MAL/OR

FORMER WN MEMBERS

<u>FIRST</u>	<u>LAST</u>	<u>MAIDEN</u>	<u>SERV</u>	<u>UNIT</u>
Frances E.	Brookshier	(Wyatt)	USN	103/TX
Clara	Castellana		USN	114/AZ
Bonnie L.	DeMaria		USN	MAL/FL

Gone...but not forgotten!

Linda Thanks Jackie!

Submitted by Linda Joan Balink-White, Captain U.S. Navy (Retired)

Some of the wonderful benefits of belonging to a veterans' group are the surprises that come to the fore when the usual questions are asked: were you ever stationed at....; did you ever run across....; where were you when, etc.

Well, way back in 1964, as a very junior US Navy officer (O-2), I received unexpected, early transfer orders to a NATO command in London, England. Within weeks of my arrival, I met an extremely handsome and incredibly fascinating and urbane Royal Navy officer who was stationed at his Ministry of Defense. He, being the British Navy's expert on Mine Countermeasures and Mine Laying, frequently called me and visited my office, as I was NATO's coordinator for the associated NATO-wide Standardization Agreements (STANAGs). Over the next two years, he and I were required to attend meetings in other NATO nations, such as Greece and The Netherlands, where about 100 male military officers and I met to discuss details of these STANAGs. And so it began. The romance of the century. He was transferred to the south of England and four years later retired after an extremely successful 32 years in the Royal Navy. I was transferred to New Orleans shortly before his Navy retirement, but it was truly amazing how often his business trips to the United States just happened to coincide with when I was able to take leave. A few years later, he and I married and had an absolutely exciting and wonderful marriage of just over 40 years until his passing two years ago. As my husband, he had fully supported me during the last 19 years of my USN career, all the while taking on a variety of fun jobs no matter where we were stationed around the world. It was a perfect trans-Atlantic union!

So, in 1992, shortly after we retired to Pensacola, Florida, I became a member of the local Sea Service women's group. And I soon met Jackie Davis, a retired Navy Yeoman First Class (E-6). We started asking each other those questions and soon we were stunned to find that she, together with the woman officer detailee who was responsible for orders for us women officers (Commander Ruth Streeter), had actually written, 28 years earlier, my orders to London, England!!!! How fantastic!

For whatever reason they chose me for that assignment, I shall be forever grateful to Jackie, for, after my parents (who were Dutch), she had the most significant impact on my life until I met Philip! It was in no small part due to her that I met the absolute love of my life. And now, every time we see each other, I give her a huge hug of appreciation! This excitement was a benefit I did not expect when I joined the unit! Thank you, Jackie, thank you!

P.S. For those who might be interested, please "google" my husband and read of his fascinating life. He was a WWII survivor of the sinking of his battleship (*HMS Royal Oak*) and later became a bomb and mine disposal diver. He also had bit parts in Hawaii 5-0, Magnum PI and a few movies. (Legacy.com recommended) His name: Commander Philip A. Balink-White, MBE, Royal Navy.

MILITARY WOMEN ACROSS THE NATION COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

One \$1,000 scholarship will be available to a relative, male or female, of a military woman. The essay topic is: ***"Military Women: Then and Now"***. It is suggested that applicants pick a particular segment or service such as Army Medical or Naval Aviation and a previous time period such as WWII or Desert Storm and compare it to present day.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE RULES

In the past, several entrants have been disqualified because they did not follow the rules.

1. Eligibility is open to any female or male relative of a MILITARY WOMAN who has served or is serving in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard or their Guard or Reserve components. The relative may be by birth, legal adoption or marriage. Documented proof of eligibility of the military woman's honorable discharge OR her present status in the military must be included with the application. Documented Proof of Eligibility is a legible copy of her Form DD-214 discharge certificate or a statement of service for actively serving members. Applications will not be considered if this PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY is not submitted. Scholarship not intended for military women or veterans, only relatives.

2. Applicants: **Mark out** all references to **social security or service numbers** on the DD-214 and high school or college transcripts.

3. Competition is open to high school seniors or college students. The scholarship may only be used for undergraduate work.

4. Applicants must have a 3.2 or better Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale to be eligible.

5. The essay must be written on the 2016 topic and shall include documented evidence of both research and an interview with at least one military woman. The military woman need not be the relative who makes them eligible for the scholarship. Applicants are encouraged to contact Military Recruiters, Military active or reserve components, etc. to enhance their research. Each essay must be the applicants own work and shall consist of 1,000 to 1,500 words.

6. Entries must be submitted by **March 4, 2016**, with no exceptions.

7. **Applicants will be notified in June of the results. Scholarship will be paid jointly to the scholarship recipient AND their college.**

e-mail your questions, application and accompanying documents to:

Scholarship Contest Chairperson
MWANScholarship@gmail.com

(DEADLINE IS MARCH 6, 2015)
You may download an application at
www.milwomen.org

Attached documents via email will be accepted.

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP + 4: _____

COUNTY: _____ COUNTRY: _____

PHONE: (including area code) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS : _____

YOUR AGE: _____

ARE YOU A UNITED STATES CITIZEN

YES _____ NO _____

GENDER:

FEMALE _____ MALE _____

ARE YOU A RESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES?

YES _____ NO _____

SCHOOL CURRENTLY ATTENDING

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

MILITARY WOMEN ACROSS THE NATION COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

COLLEGE TYPE YOU INTEND ON ATTENDING OR ARE CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN:

_____ 4-YEAR/GRADUATE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

_____ 2-YEAR/GRADUATE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

_____ TRADE/TECHNICAL SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL TEST SCORES: SAT Verbal _____ SAT Math _____ ACT Comp _____

CURRENT GPA (4 point scale): _____ CLASS RANK _____

CLUB CIVICS: List your club memberships and offices (if applicable). Include school, civic, community service, honorary and religious organizations for each active membership: _____

VOLUNTEER/EMPLOYMENT: List your volunteer or employment experience: _____

HOBBIES/TALENTS: What are your hobbies, talents or interests? _____

ASPIRATIONS: what are your career aspirations? _____

COURSE OF STUDY: What major or courses do you plan to study in college?

WOMAN VETERAN OR ACTIVELY SERVING MILITARY WOMAN

FULL NAME (including maiden) _____

RELATIONSHIP _____ (i.e. "Mother," "Aunt," "Cousin," etc.)

WOMAN VETERAN OR ACTIVELY SERVING WOMAN military service status: **Veteran** of Active Duty, Guard or Reserve

_____ U.S. Army _____ U.S. Navy _____ U.S. Marine Corps _____ U.S. Air Force _____ U. S. Coast Guard

OR Active Duty, Guard or Reserve currently serving in

_____ U.S. Army _____ U.S. Navy _____ U.S. Marine Corps _____ U.S. Air Force _____ U.S. Coast Guard

PROOF OF MILITARY WOMAN'S HONORABLE SERVICE: Please provide a legible copy of the DD-214 discharge certificate or a statement of service for Actively serving members. This is **REQUIRED** in order to prove eligibility for this scholarship application. Your application will not be considered if this information is not submitted.

COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION AND SEND WITH YOUR ESSAY. The essay must be in your own words.

eMail the completed Scholarship Application, proof of eligibility, transcript(s), essay and all other required documentation and information to the **Scholarship Contest Chairperson, at:**

MWANScholarship@gmail.com

DEADLINE IS MARCH 4, 2016

Questions: Preferred method to contact Scholarship Chairperson, is via email MWANScholarship@gmail.com may also call Pat Cerchio-Vieira at 401-338-3798

New law allows retirees to transfer SBP when ex-spouse dies

By Karen Jowers, Staff writer Military Times, 10:59 a.m. EST December 11, 2015



Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Harold Brown and his wife, Marsha Bordner (Photo: Courtesy of the Brown family)

A new law will prevent military retirees from losing Survivor Benefit Plan benefits when their ex-spouse dies before they do, by allowing the benefit to be transferred to a current or future spouse.

The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act provision will help an unknown number of people like retired Air Force Lt. Col. Harold Brown, who paid tens of thousands of dollars into his Survivor Benefit Plan for his ex-wife.

Retirees agree to pay a portion of their retirement pay into their SBP so that, when they die, the program will pay an annuity to their surviving beneficiary based on a portion of the retiree's pay.

Brown, one of World War II's famed Tuskegee Airmen, who survived being shot down near Austria and taken as a prisoner of war, has been in a battle with the Defense Finance and Accounting Service since 2013, when his ex-wife died of cancer.

At the time, he asked to transfer his SBP benefit to his current wife. Unbeknownst to him and a number of other retirees, DFAS had changed its interpretation of the law in May 2013 — and refused to allow him to transfer the benefit.

That new interpretation affected situations in which SBP was awarded to

an ex-spouse as part of a divorce settlement. DFAS said that, because the benefit would henceforth be considered part of the ex-spouse's property, the benefit "expired" if the ex-spouse died.

The new provision, which took effect on Nov. 25, fixes that problem for future retirees. It also applies retroactively to retirees who were previously unable to transfer their benefits after their ex-spouse died.

"I've been waiting and waiting and waiting," said Brown, 90. "When I got the news, I was quite delighted. This was just a terrible wrong."

Brown, who hired an attorney to help him pursue the issue, said that he's also happy for other affected retirees.

"There are others who are in much worse [financial] shape. ... It will make a tremendous difference to them," he said.

The new law allows:

- A military retiree who was married at the time of an ex-spouse's death, or who later remarries, to elect to provide SBP coverage to his or her current spouse. The request must be received by DFAS within one year after the date of the ex-spouse's death. For retirees who remarry after an ex-spouse's death, the request must be received within one year after the date of the marriage.
- A military retiree whose ex-spouse died before the effective date of the new law to elect coverage for his or her current spouse, regardless of whether the remarriage happened before or after the ex-spouse's death. The request must be received within one year of the law's Nov. 25, 2015, enactment.

Information was not immediately available on whether or when DFAS will have revised procedures in place to implement the new law, or whether retirees will simply be able to submit a standard DD Form 2656-6, as they did before May 2013.

Phil Odom, deputy director of government relations for the Military Officers Association of America, said that DFAS had allowed SBP transfers after the death

of a former spouse from the time SBP was created in 1972 until the agency changed its interpretation of the law more than 2½ years ago.

Odom said the fact that DFAS made no public notice of the policy change rankled retirees, advocacy groups and some lawmakers.

"The remedy was essentially painless and did not threaten former spouses," he noted.

Brown did not hesitate to name his first wife as his beneficiary when they divorced in 1991.

"It seemed to me the only honorable thing to do," he said in an interview in March. "I would have done it even if it hadn't been for the court order. She was the mother of my two children. How was I to know cancer would catch up with her and she would die before me?"

If Brown had died before his ex-wife, the SBP would have paid a monthly annuity to her equal to 55 percent of his monthly retirement pay.

But after his ex-wife died, he said he simply wanted to name his new spouse, whom he married in 2010, as his SBP beneficiary.

With the passage of the new law, he said, "a terrible wrong has now been corrected. I would like to thank any and all people who played a role in the passage of this law."

The request for the change originally came from defense officials, said Dustin Walker, spokesman for the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"We thought it was common sense to ensure service members are able to pass their benefits on to their loved ones," Walker said.

In April, a DFAS official told Military Times that the agency had drafted potential legislation and provided a copy to defense personnel officials. Odom said that MOAA had brought the matter to the attention of defense officials and staff members of House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

The Military Coalition also adopted the issue as a goal to be remedied in fiscal 2016, Odom said.

VA Plans to Propose Expanded Disability Benefits Eligibility for Veterans Exposed to Contaminated Water at Camp Lejeune

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 17, 2015

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for Veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

“The water at Camp Lejeune was a hidden hazard, and it is only years later that we know how dangerous it was,” said Secretary McDonald. “We thank ATSDR for the thorough review that provided much of the evidence we needed to fully compensate Veterans who develop one of the conditions known to be related to exposure to the compounds in the drinking water.”

ATSDR determined that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks from 1953 to 1987. ATSDR also determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of certain health conditions.

Based upon VA’s review of current medical science and ATSDR’s findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for the following

conditions:

- Kidney Cancer
- Liver Cancer
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Leukemia
- Multiple Myeloma
- Scleroderma
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Aplastic Anemia / Myelodysplastic Syndromes

The Secretary’s proposal would also expand benefits eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time from August 1, 1953, through December 31, 1987. These personnel would be presumed to have been exposed to the contaminated water during their Reserve or National Guard service and, in appropriate circumstances, to have been disabled by such exposure during service, thus allowing them to qualify for VA benefits under the statutory definition of “Veteran.” This would make them eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any of the presumptive conditions, and their surviving dependents would be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

VA is working on regulations that would establish these presumptions, making it easier for affected Veterans to receive VA disability compensation for these conditions. While VA cannot grant any benefit claims based on the proposed presumption of service connection for these conditions until it issues its final regulations, it encourages Veterans who have a record of service at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, and develop a condition that they believe is related to exposure to the drinking water at the base, to file a disability compensation claim with VA.

VA will continue to grant claims for disabilities claimed to be associated with exposure to the contaminants that can be granted under current regulations and review of the evidence in each case. If a claim for service connection for one of the proposed presumptive conditions would be denied under current regulations, the denial will be stayed until VA issues its final regulations. VA will announce when the regulations are final and presumptive benefits can begin to be awarded. For more information on applying for these benefits, visit: http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-camp-lejeune_water.asp.

Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, are already eligible to receive VA healthcare for up to 15 health conditions. More information, including a full list of covered conditions, can be found online at: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/PUBLICHEALTH/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp>.

Veterans can establish eligibility for healthcare benefits by submitting VA Form 10-10EZ online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, downloading it at www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/1010EZ-fillable.pdf and returning it to any VA Medical Center or Clinic, or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM (Eastern Time).

VA is reimbursing certain veterans’ family members for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered conditions. More information can be found at: <https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov>

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- Conventions are biennial.**
- WHITE CAPS is published six times a year: Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct., and Dec. **Items for publication must be received by the 1st of the month before publication.**
- National Dues: \$25.00 for the calendar year - 1 January to 31 December, submitted to the National Treasurer. Unit members submit to Unit Treasurer; Members-at-Large, submit directly to the National Treasurer.**
- When dues have been paid by new members, **membership cards will be issued to each new member directly, with a copy to unit treasurers for those unit members. Regular members** will not be issued another membership card **but** Life members will be issued a permanent Life Membership card.
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- You may submit your White Caps articles via e-mail to Judy Faries at, Mizjudy97@gmail.com with a copy to Dassa Carvey at Dassa_2@Verizon.net.

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1 May 2016	Jun 2016	Jun
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1 Sep 2016	Oct 2016	Oct
1 Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Dec
1 Jan 2017	Jan 2017	Jan

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MWAN Polo Shirt w/logo \$30 White w/emb logo Gray w/emb logo SM-MED-LG-XL-2X-3X-4X	MWAN Earrings \$12 Pierced, 1/2" Round Enamel MWAN Logo (Clip-on Available on Request)	MWAN Logo Charm \$7 Round, Enamel MWAN Logo (3/4")	MWAN T-Shirt w/Logo \$15 Gray color w/screened logo on upper left front & center back SM-MED-LG-XL-2X-3X-4X
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Anchor Lapel Pin \$4 Original Hat Pin Style, 1/2" with single pin clutch back	Necktie \$12 Women's USN - Black w/Velcro closure-One Size	MWAN Playing Cards \$10 MWAN logo on front	Vet WAVES Patch \$4 Round, 3 1/2 inch patch Blue/Gray/White
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"Original" Hat Pin \$10 WAVES w/Anchor & Prop	USN Hat Pin \$4 Spread eagle w/USN	WN Logo Charm \$7 Round, Enamel WN Logo (1/2")	Anchor Charm \$7 Original Hat Pin Style (3/4")
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MWAN Lapel Pin \$4 Round, clutch back, 3/4"	MWAN Name Puck \$3 Round disk for name tags, 3/4"	Lady WAVE Pin \$4 Oval pin with 'Lady WAVE w/flag	WN Logo Bottle Cap \$7 Earrings – stars or hearts
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Patriotic Key Chain \$6 Stars or Stripes in Red, White and Blue Canvas material	WN Blue T- Shirt \$10 Navy w/White screened Logo SM-MED-4X only	Sewing Kit \$2 Blue Case w/WN Logo & WEB address printed in white; 2"x3 1/4"x1 1/4" Needles/threader/scissors/pins, etc.	WN Bumper Sticker \$1 Two-tone blue WN emblem and dark blue letters on white; glossy paper; Approx 3" x 10
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