



# Missouri Women Veterans Newsletter



Volume 2013, Issue 33

[www.mvc.dps.mo.gov/service/women](http://www.mvc.dps.mo.gov/service/women)

October - December 2013



**Editors Note:** I am really excited about the remainder of 2013. This Fall women Veterans are being recognized through-out Missouri. If your schedule allows, please try and attend an event that these organizations are planning. It is very admirable that they are recognizing that "Women are Veterans Too." It is important that we stand together, women Veterans are one of the fastest growing Veteran populations. (Please see pg 4 under Upcoming Events for more details). As always if I can be of any assistance regarding your VA benefits or you have a question, please don't hesitate to contact me. Happy Holidays!

## Jen Eaton is named the 2013 Missouri Woman Veteran of the Year



Jen is a Veteran of the USAF and she served from 2002-2005 where she earned the AF Civilian Exemplary Service Medal, USAF Commendation Medal, USAF Achievement Medal and Wing Staff Agencies Company Grade Officer of the Year in 2003. She serves on a Veterans Assistance League, where her hard work and dedication garnered a brand new \$3,000 Gold level sponsorship and she convinced them of an additional \$750 to sponsor 30 Veterans from the Missouri Veterans Home in Warrensburg, to send them to the Missouri State Fair. She has conducted outreach to important groups within the community; ranging from an auditorium of 500 student leaders from across the state of Missouri, to active duty military and civilians at Whiteman AFB to build support for our Veterans. Two of her patriotic photos of Veterans Home events were recently selected as finalists in the Missouri Secretary of State "Harry Truman" photo contest. Also, this year she began her PhD program. Her dissertation will focus on the Department of Defense Embedded Media Program and its impact on the officers and enlisted members who hosted journalists in combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.



k8104693 www.fotosearch.com

### What's Inside

MVC's Female VSO's	Page 2
Women in Uniform	Page 3
Mail Call	Page 4
Fascinating Facts	Page 4
Upcoming Events	Page 4
New Military Uniforms	Page 5
Changes in Travel Pay	Page 5
Registration Form	Page 6

### Missouri Women Veterans Luncheon and Expo

The luncheon and expo that was held on September 28<sup>th</sup> was an educational and an enjoyable time for everyone. We were delighted to have Cindy Stivers, Women Veterans Program Manager from the Columbia VA Hospital and Lowry Finley-Jackson, Adjutant for the American Legion speak on Women Veteran topics. Several vendors were also there informing the women Veterans on their benefits.



# Missouri Veterans Commissions New and Current Female Veterans Service Officers (VSO)



**Pictured above are all the Women VSO's for Missouri Veterans Commission**

Back Row: Lawanda Swearngen, Jennifer Hadley, Sonja Christlieb, Paula Nordin, Malinda Graves-Sampson and Cathy VonHolt, Middle Row: Jennifer Falls, Celia Thompson, Lisa Helms, Amy Bennett, Rebecca Bradley, Bottom Row: Alfredia Williams, Lisa Mullin and Mary Kientzy

---

## Jennifer Hadley, New VSO

I went to Marine Corps bootcamp at Parris Island, SC on Sept. 11, 2000. For the first 4 1/2 years I was a Tactical Data Systems Repairman, which is a long fancy term for computer programmer/repairman for air wing communications. My last 3 1/2 years were spent as a Combat Instructor at Marine Combat Training Battalion at Camp Lejeune, NC. where I taught basic Infantryman skills to non-infantry Marines. This was my favorite assignment as a Marine. Being a VSO is a dream come true for me. I am able to give back to my brothers and sisters in arms and that is a privilege I hold dear to my heart. Vets helping vets is a saying within the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, but for me it is a way of life. I feel very honored to be given the opportunity to put my passion of helping veterans to use in my professional life.

---

## Cathy VonHolt, New VSO

I am a veteran of the Air Force. I first began my career in the Air Force as administration support. When I had the chance to cross-train, I became a Base Career Advisor, where I had the opportunity to advise enlisted on their careers in the Air Force. I chose to leave the Air Force after almost 16 years of active duty. While working at the Missouri Career Center, I found that I liked working with veterans and noticed there were positions for Veterans Services Officers (VSO) on the state's website so I decided to apply. The position fit my professional background and my degree program. I began working as a VSO on July 1<sup>st</sup>. I belong to the Air Force Sergeants Association and help out with various charitable organizations in Springfield.

### Missouri Veterans Commission 3 Key Messages:

**If you have ever served in the military have you:**

**Visited with a Veterans Service Officer?**

**Signed up for VA Health Care?**

**Joined a Veterans Service Organization?**



# Saluting Our Women in Uniform

## Anita L Ray



On Jan. 31, 1977, I went to Basic Training at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX. My recruiter convinced me to enlist "open-general", because he didn't think I was big enough to serve as Security Police, which was my dream. I was only 5'3 1/2" tall, and weighed 98 pounds, soaking wet! When the day finally came for me to declare my desired career field to my TI, she laughed. I was sent to the physical fitness evaluation center where I was asked by the burly Sgt in command, "How badly do you want this, Airman Basic?" to which I replied, "It's all I ever wanted, Sir!" In order to pass the required physical I had to lift a weight above my shoulders and hold it there for ten seconds. I don't remember how heavy it was, but suffice it to say it was too heavy for this 98-pound-weakling to lift off the floor, much less above my head. The Sgt had compassion on me, not wanting to flatten my dreams, he lifted the weight for me, handed it to me and declared as it came crashing down to the floor, "Passed!" My first duty station was Little Rock AFB, AK. It was there that I had to prove myself to my fellow SP's, earning the Expert Marksman Ribbon with the M16, M60 machine gun, M70 grenade launcher, and, yes, even the shotgun! I earned their respect...and a little self-confidence as well.



## Mary Pierson



I was 19 when I enlisted in the USAF/WAF, Sept 1965. Since I was somewhat of a military brat, I found it only fitting to join. I'm glad I did! Looking back I just wished I served my country longer. While in basic training in San Antonio, TX I was a squad leader. During my basic training I found it hard to believe not everyone didn't know how to clean or iron clothes. I helped some of those girls. After basic training, I was stationed at Westover AFB in Springfield, MA. I served in the 99th Bomb Wing and worked with Top Secret material. I was enthralled with the B52 Bombers. What a big bird! I was the only woman that worked in the building. I can remember having to place a handmade sign on the woman's bathroom "ladies". I was transferred to SAC Headquarters in 1967 in Omaha, NE. and continued to work with Top Secret material and there I served my remaining tour. After serving in the military I moved to St. Louis, MO. I did serve my country and was proud that I did. Now I am retired and very active spending time with the grandchildren, flowering gardening, antiques, traveling, time for Zumba and cooing over my 22 (lb) cat, Winslow.



## Marge A. Scott



I joined the Army in April 1966 as part of the WAC's. My first stop was at Fort McClellan, AL for basic training, then to Fort Sam Houston, TX for Medical Corpsman and stayed on to complete AIT, Operating Room Course. Then off to Fort Jackson, S.C. for OJT. My final destination was at Fort Benjamin Harrison, IN. I really enjoyed working in the O.R. I lived in the WAC Barracks and ate most of my meals in the hospital mess hall. This one particular meal, breakfast, a handsome NCOIC of the mess hall followed me through the line and helped serve up my breakfast, he offered to carry my tray to the table and asked if he could join me for breakfast. I was and still am a very independent person, but could not resist. Then we went bowling and I really whipped him, hands down. As a bowling enthusiast I bowled my best game ever while in the Army, 256. So, of course I beat him. We attended the Hospital Christmas party of 1968 and on Jan. 22, 1969 he departed for Vietnam. Before he left he bought my wedding ring set and we were engaged. He returned in 1969 and we were married at the Main Post Chapel in Colorado Springs. We have now been married for 44 years.



## Bertha Hardison



I enlisted on June 29, 1953 in Chicago, Illinois. I served in the United States Navy as a CorpWave. I went to basic training in Bain Bridge Maryland. I was trained as a physician's assistant. I was stationed in California and worked at the Oakland California Naval Hospital and a few Marine bases as well. I spent most of my time on base. One of my fondest memories is attending the Opera dressed in my white uniform, I felt so "great and special" on that day. After serving my four years I decided not to re-enlist. I received my honorable discharge on June 28, 1957 in San Diego, California at the final rank of Hospital Corpman second class. I was awarded the National Service Defense Medal and Good Conduct Medal. Because of the Navy I could afford to go to college. After my military service, I attended nursing school at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois. After graduation I became a school nurse at a preschool for three and four year old children. I held that position for 34 years. Today, I enjoy watching the Animal Channel, Food Network and listening to audio books. I am also using my Veterans benefits and I am proud to have served our Country.





## Mail Call

What is the definition of a Veteran and the criteria for a Veteran to enroll in VA Health Care?

A Veteran is a person who served in the active military, navy or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. If you didn't serve Active Duty here is two other ways to enroll in VA Health Care.

- ✓ Former Reservists may be eligible for VA health care benefits if they served full-time and for operational or support (excludes training) purposes.
- ✓ Former National Guard members may be eligible for care or enrollment if mobilized by a Federal order, under Title 10 orders.

If you have met any of these scenarios bring your DD214 to your local Veteran Service Officer or VA Hospital to enroll in VA Health Care.



## Fascinating Facts

- As of May 31, 2013 Women Veterans made up 8.6% of all U.S. Veterans
- October 1, 2012-May 31, 2013, 7.5% of Women Veterans had Service Connected claims that were rated
- October 1, 2012-May 31, 2013 (11,881) 26% Service Connected Claims were denied and (34,310) 74% were approved
- October 1, 2012-April 30, 2013 (5,442) 57% were denied Non-Service Connected Pension and (4,091) 43% were approved

### Top 5 Claimed Conditions for Women Veterans:

1. Knee Condition
2. Back Condition
3. PTSD
4. Headaches/Migraines
5. Depression

## Upcoming Events

**October 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Veterans Octoberfest**, Valley Speedway, 348 E. Old 40 Hwy in Grain Valley from 11:00-3:00. FREE Speedway tickets for Veterans and kids 12 & under for Saturday night.

**October 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> & November 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> Prepare for the future: Make Your Transition to Civilian Life Easier.** For Veterans and military spouses at the University of Central Missouri, Ward Edwards Building Room 2030, Warrensburg 8:00-4:00, registration required please e-mail Elaine at [que@hem@returnwithpurpose.org](mailto:que@hem@returnwithpurpose.org)

**October 19<sup>th</sup> - Veterans Salute**, Mid-Continent Public Library, Smithville Branch, 120 Richardson St. in Smithville. Opening ceremonies begin at 9:30. For more information call 816-532-0116.

**November 5<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>- Veterans week in Branson, The Branson Task Force Salutes Armed Forces Women of Valor, Past, Present and Future.**

- November 8<sup>th</sup>-Women Veterans mini reunion hosted at the Golden Corral at 3 pm, meal will be served at 4:30 pm with a show at 6 pm. For more information call 417-230-2278 or email [bransonveteransevents@yahoo.com](mailto:bransonveteransevents@yahoo.com). FREE to Women Veterans
- November 9<sup>th</sup>-Women Veterans Rose Petal Ceremony, Grand Plaza Hotel, 245 N Wildwood Dr. in Branson from 11:00-1:00. FREE to all Women Veterans. RSVP to Barbara Riggle, Task Force Women's Veterans Committee at 417-339-6823.
- November 11<sup>th</sup>- 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Veteran's Day Parade. Women Veterans will once again "Ride the Ducks" in the parade. For more information please call 417-334-2360.
- For more information about Veterans week in Branson and specials for Women Veterans, please visit [explorebranson.com/veterans](http://explorebranson.com/veterans) and for a list of other specials for Women Veterans please e-mail [WOMANOFVALOR2013@GMAIL.COM](mailto:WOMANOFVALOR2013@GMAIL.COM)

**November 11<sup>th</sup>- Honoring our Women Veterans Ceremony**, University of Central Missouri, UCM Multipurpose Building, Warrensburg. Women Veterans are asked to be there at 9:30 am, event will start at 11:00 am. Lunch to follow at American Legion Post 131 in Warrensburg. Send your RSVP to [wingsvsblues@charter.net](mailto:wingsvsblues@charter.net) with your name, branch of service, number of years served and if special assistance is needed, please put Veterans Day 2013 in the subject line.

**November 16 - Tribute to Women Veterans**, Christy Banquet Center, 5856 Christy Blvd, St. Louis, social hour 11am, lunch 12pm, \$20. Reservations required. Contact Shirley Janes, 314-853-4746.

## New Military Uniforms Made for Women

For women in the military, it's been a long time in the making, but just recently, along with the announcement that it would open all units and jobs to women by 2016, the U.S. Army debuted new women-friendlier unisex uniforms.

"The old uniform was meant to be one size fits five sizes; there are more tailored," said Central Initial Issue Point project manager Trevor Whitworth. "When you're low crawling or doing a lot of physical training, it's nice to have a pair of trousers that have a little give-and-take to them. I think having made uniforms for a female body type will make a big difference for female soldiers."

Some of the changes to the current silhouette include adjusting the cut to fit a woman's chest, hips and waist better; narrower shoulder width and narrower back; shortening the button-fly rise and back rise to better fit women. The new uniforms are available in 16 sizes and were tested by 600 female active-duty, National Guard and Reserve soldiers in 2011. An overwhelming majority, 94 percent of all respondents, said that the cut of the new ACU-A allowed them to present a better military appearance.

### Army Combat Uniform – Alternate

This 2010 graphic shows a breakdown of proposed changes to combat uniform design to better fit female soldiers. In March, the uniform was approved for use by both sexes. Soldiers will decide whether to wear the ACU or the ACU-A.

#### Items not shown

- Removed drawstring/added elastic waistband
- Shortened button fly
- Repositioned pockets on lower leg and cargo
- Material on each side of the shoulder blades taken in to conform to the narrower female back, allowing greater freedom of movement.



- A** Shoulder width narrowed
- B** Rank insignia moved above the breast
- C** Adjusted sleeve length and width
- D** Repositioned elbow patches
- E** Repositioned pencil and sleeve pockets
- F** Adjusted the cut of the material to conform to a woman's chest, hip, and waist size
- G** Longer length front and back
- H** Adjusted hip to waist ratio
- I** Adjusted the front and back rise to fit the female body
- J** Repositioned knee patches

---

## Changes in Travel Pay at the VA

In compliance with the Department of Treasury requirements the VA is now processing payments by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). This EFT is for payments for beneficiary travel and compensated work therapy. According to the VA this change will improve services by saving Veterans time by eliminating waiting in line for your travel pay, delays with check processing, and ensure a safe and efficient way to receive payments. The form for reimbursement can be picked up at the Travel Office. Once the Veteran fills out the form, turns the form in and it has been received and direct deposit goes into effect then the Veteran will simply fill out a voucher at the Travel window. Payment will be electronically deposited into your bank account within five business days.

Veterans Service Program Director, Doug Meyer  
Senior Editor and Women Veterans Benefits Outreach Coordinator, Amy Bennett  
Editorial Assistant, Design, and Layout, Pamela S. Luyk

[www.mvc.dps.mo.gov](http://www.mvc.dps.mo.gov)



Please join our Registration of the Missouri Women Veterans to continue to receive this Free Newsletter and Women Veteran Sticker



## State of Missouri Women Veterans

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name you served under (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Month Year

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State

Service (Circle one) USA USMC USN USAF USCG GUARD/RESERVE

Service dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you receive this registration form? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like contact information and a schedule for a Veteran's Service Officer in your local area to explain your potential benefits? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to share this information with WIMSA (Women in Military Service for America Memorial) in Arlington VA? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be featured in the next Women Veterans Newsletter? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

To receive your free gift and Woman Veteran State Sticker Return to:

Missouri Veterans Commission  
Amy Bennett, Women Veterans Coordinator  
525 Jules, Room 320  
St. Joseph, MO 64501  
(816) 387-2841  
[Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov](mailto:Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov)



Check us out on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/MissouriWomenVeterans?ref=hl>