



Missouri Women Veterans News



Volume 2011, Issue 22, January-March 2011

What's Inside

Women in Uniform	pg. 2
Ask Cindy	pg. 3
Did you Know	pg. 3
Upcoming Events	pg. 4
Dedications	pg. 4
VSO Success Story	pg. 5
Business Women Missouri	pg. 5
Registration	pg. 6



First Women Veterans Stand-Down and Mini Retreat



I had the privilege to attend the First Women Veterans Stand-down and Mini-Retreat in Missouri which was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau in Kansas City, MO, Green Vet and a collaboration of federal, state and local community organizations. It was held at Metropolitan Community College Penn Valley campus in Kansas City, Missouri on October 23, 2010. The Women Veterans Stand-Down and Mini-Retreat had a successful turn out of over 200 Women Veterans. The Women Veterans Stand-Down and Mini-Retreat was an event to honor our Women Veterans and addressing their needs. The event helped female Veterans with assistance for programs, such as, job search, Veteran Benefits, VA Health Care, and FREE legal services. Also provided was information on housing assistance and a variety of social services. They even

offered free chair massages and clothing boutique. It was a wonderful day of learning, networking and rejuvenation! The number of women serving in the military is rising, and so are the struggles for female Veterans - including homelessness. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are more than 1.8 million Women Veterans in the country and about 6,000 homeless female Vets in the country. Government statistics show that 15 percent of the military is made up of women and the number of homeless female Veterans has grown from about 3 percent a decade ago to 5 percent today. We currently have over 37,000 Women Veterans in the State of Missouri. This event is bringing a special awareness to the increasing plight of female homeless Veterans and understanding of the different needs of female Veterans and our female soldiers. When our obligation to the Military Service is completed our needs as women vary and now is the time to recognize and address them. One size does not fit all. The Women Veteran Stand-down event for homeless Women Veterans was not about handouts, but rather women's empowerment, engaging the community, and leveraging resources to work for and honor women who served. The US. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, Green Vet, and organizers plan to make this an annual event.

VETERANS SERVICE PROGRAM -- *Apply for your VA Benefits*

The Missouri Veterans Commission has 44 Veterans Service Officers and 1 Veteran Service Assistant to explain your potential VA and State Benefits to you. They are located throughout the State. All of our Veteran Service Officers are Veterans, so you are dealing with someone who has shared military service. The Veterans Service Officers with Missouri Veterans Commission go through annual training with the VA to maintain accreditation. We are updated with the current information to help with your filing of claims and on current changes with the laws and regulations with the VA. Women Veterans sometimes have sensitive issues that need to be addressed such as doing claims for PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) with or without MST (Military Sexual Trauma). We have 10 women that are serving as Veteran Service officers and 1 as a Veteran Service Assistant. To contact your VSO or VSA in your area, visit our website at www.mvc.dps.mo.gov or call 866-VET-INFO, or call our Jefferson City office at 573-751-3779. Soo... Women Veterans if you haven't done so please contact your local VSO to go over all your VA Benefits.



Left - Right: Rebecca Bradley - VSO, Minority Veteran Coordinator- Kansas City, Amy Bennett, VSO - St. Joseph; Janeen Pierce, VSA - Carthage; Suzi MacDonald, VSO - Springfield; Lawanda Swearingen, VSO - Kennett; Celia Thompson, VSO - Hannibal; Alfredia Williams, VSO - Ft. Leonard Wood; Sonja Christlieb (not pictured), Ft. Leonard Wood; Lisa Mullin, VSO - Sikeston; Paula Nordin, VSO, Incarcerated Veteran Re-Entry Coordinator-Lebanon; Mary Kientzy, VSO - St. Charles; Cindy Stivers, VSO, Women Veteran Coordinator- Macon;



Women in Uniform PAST

Jennifer Cunningham



As a recent college graduate with a degree in nursing—I was looking for a workplace that I could hone my technical skills. The United States Air Force offered a 6-month “Nurse Internship Program” focusing on clinical skills and leadership. My plan was simple; I would go into the Air Force for three years then go back home to San Francisco, CA and go back to “normal” life...26-years, 3 deployments, 1 husband, 2 children, numerous assignments and leadership positions later, I retired from the Air Force in May 2008. My husband and I were a dual-military couple, each of us completing our military commitments with retirement. My assignments have taken me across much of the United States, Europe and the Middle East. I have deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm, Operation Southern Watch and Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom. I was a clinical nurse, Chief Nurse, squadron commander, deployed commander and finally Director of Staff & Inspector General for the 375th Airlift Wing at Scott AFB, IL. My military experience has prepared me well for my current position as the Women Veterans Program Manager for the St. Louis VA Medical Center. I am instrumental in leading the St. Louis VA Medical Center as it enhances its healthcare services to the fastest growing segment of the veteran population, women veterans. I am available to assist any women veteran maneuver through the VA healthcare system.



Melanie Fisher



I was recalled to Active Duty Sept 2007 until April 2009 to Wounded Warrior Battalion West based out of Camp Pendleton, CA. This was the most challenging and the most rewarding tour I could ever imagine. Wounded Warrior Battalion West's mission is to: Develop and maintain a comprehensive program that tracks and supports all wounded, ill, and injured Marines and Sailors attached to Marine Units throughout their phases of recovery. This program is/was not one-size-fits all. Each resident was carefully counseled and the correct part of the program was selected. My position at the Battalion was to manage all medical and psychosocial appointments for all residents to also include the coordination of Case Mgt, MEB (medical evaluation board), PEB (physical evaluation board) throughout the entire process. Not all of our residents were combat injured, that's not a requirement to be assigned to Wounded Warrior Battalion. The injury can not be due to negligence on behalf of the Service Member, so many are injured during training for their combat mission. There has not been a more challenging or rewarding duty assignment than Wounded Warrior Battalion, but there is nothing I would change about this tour. I was honored to be part of such an amazing team....who could ask for more, to assist a Wounded Service Members back to full-duty or a return to a productive civilian life. I will have over 23 years of combined Active Duty and Reserve Service in February 2011.



Alice “Hazel” Hanson



I come from a family of 6 children. Two of my brothers were enlisted in the Army, and my mother's brother served in the military during World War I. I was a proud supporter of the Military. In 1943, my sister and I decided to join the Navy together. We marched down to the recruiter's office. I passed all the entry requirements but my sister was not accepted. Although her heart was totally set for enlistment in the Navy, she instead became a Nurse and worked at Audrain Medical Center, in Mexico Missouri. I, however, enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was trained in operating and installing tabulators for payroll for military personnel as well as civilian personnel with the US NAVY. One night at the Bowling alley on the Mare Island California base, I was out with some friends it was there I met my future husband. We got married while I was still serving in the Military. The military was a good life. It was somewhere I could advance in my career, and I advanced to a SP2c (Specialist 2 Class). During that time a woman could ask for a discharge due to getting married. After my discharge from the Military, I started a family. I have 2 daughters, 7 grandchildren and 1 great grandson. I enjoy crafts and participating in craft shows. I have made over 600 of those famous, beloved cabbage patch dolls. Several years ago there was a reunion of Navy Veterans held in California and all four of us roommates from the Service attended. It was great to see my old roommates from the Navy again. I now reside at the Missouri Veterans Home in Mexico, MO.



Margaret Rieken (Rosie the Riveter)



When World War II came about, I knew I had a patriotic duty. My sister (Alice) and 2 of my good friends one of which was, Pauly Dodge, and I entered into the workforce in a Factory in Kansas City, MO working with the B24's and B25's Bomber Aircrafts. We worked long hours in the Quality Assurance Division for the aircrafts. The four of us ladies shared one apartment of which the living space consisted of one bedroom with one full size bed, one bathroom and a kitchen. We would divide up into 2 shifts; at least a 12- hour shift, two worked during the day and 2 worked at night. Thank goodness we all learned to live together in such small quarters. In 1944, I decided to enlist in the U.S. Navy and was trained as a Nurse (Pharmacist's Mate Third Class). Most of my training was in Bethesda, Maryland. I was assigned to take care of the wounded soldiers that came back from the War. As I worked there for many months I got to know the soldiers. There were Soldiers of who were Prisoners of War returned back from the “Bataan Death March”. Some were blinded, but they could use their senses to identify people. They always noticed me by my perfume that I wore. Throughout the time I took care of them, I did not change my perfume. There was one special Marine and we later married and were blessed with 9 children to include one set of twins. Throughout the years I continued taking care of Veterans by working at the St. James Veterans home in Missouri, as a Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) and as a Medical Technician. I now reside at the MO Veterans Home in Mexico.





Ask Cindy



Q. I am a WWII Veteran and I have lost my military ID (dog tags) from the service. How do I get them replaced?

A. There is something special about the military identification tags (dog tags). The military ID tag is issued to every soldier and is worn at all times when she/he is on duty. The Military ID tag contains the military member's name, social security number, blood type, branch and religion. Identification tags have been known to our soldiers dating all the way back to the Civil War of which some soldiers pinned paper notes with their name and home address to the inside back of their coats. The US Army first authorized identification tags in Dec 1906 and they were the size of a silver half dollar. Over the years the ID tags have gone through designs and changes. ID tags issued to United States Army during World War II had a notch situated in one end of the tag. There are many myths about the notch – but the truth is that it was designed to hold the tag in place when being imprinted on the carbon-paper medical form by the Model 70 Addressograph. This small piece of metal still connects us to when we served and our continued service to our country. You may obtain a replacement at the unit supply shop, military exchange on post or at an off-post surplus or military supply store. There will be a small fee to replace the tags. There are many websites you can purchase the ID tags, for example:

www.usmedals.com
www.usarmilitarymedals.com



If you would like to submit a question please send it to:

Cindy Stivers, VSO
MO Women Veterans Coordinator
Missouri Veterans Commission
1716 N. Prospect, Suite A
Macon, MO 63552
660/385-6192

Cindy.Stivers@mvc.dps.mo.gov

Did You Know?

■ **New telephone hotline 1-877-4AID VET** provides emergency support and resources to homeless Veterans. Veterans, Family members, workers at community agencies and non-VA providers may call the hotline to find out about the many programs and services available to assist homeless Veterans.

■ **Wartime Veteran's Survivors Grant** – The children or spouse of soldiers who were injured or died while serving in the military since Sept. 11, 2001 may be eligible for grants from the state of Missouri. The grants, which will be available for up to 25 eligible students enrolling in classes this fall, will be administered by the Missouri Department of Higher Education. The Wartime Veteran's Survivor Grants were created by the Missouri Legislature in 2008 and funded for the first time in 2010. To be eligible, a student must be: less than 25 years old, the natural, adopted, or stepchild of a qualifying military member, and a dependent of the qualifying military member at the time of death or injury; or the spouse of a qualifying military member at the time of death or injury. Award amounts are based on the tuition of the institution the student will attend, up to the tuition charges at University of Missouri-Columbia. In addition, students may receive up to \$2,000 for room and board and up to \$500 for books. For more information or to apply for the grant, call 1-800-473-6757 or go to www.dhe.mo.gov/wartimevetsurvivor.htm.

■ **On October 7, 2010**, the U.S. Small Business Administration published a final rule effective early 2011, aimed at expanding federal contracting opportunities for women-owned small businesses (WOSBs). The rule is part of the Obama Administration's overall commitment to expanding opportunities for small businesses to compete for federal contracts, in particular those owned by women, socially and economically disadvantaged persons and Veterans. To learn more, visit "[SBA Releases Final Women-Owned Small Business Rule to Expand Access to Federal Contracting Opportunities](#)".

■ **Park Ride Fly USA** offers Discount Airport Parking for Veterans, active members of the United States Armed Forces and their families. Book 3 days; get up to 1 day free – all year long! Absolutely no cancellation fee, even when you cancel within 24 hours of your first day of parking! **How to make your reservation** It's easy! Just call toll-free Reservation Help Desk: **1-866-922-PARK (7275)** and one of the reservation agents will be happy to help you with your airport parking reservation. Valid Military or Veterans ID will be required, so please have it handy.



Upcoming Events

“MAVO Legislative Days”

(Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations)

January 31 & February 1, 2011

January 31st

10 am -12 pm Missouri Veterans Commission First Quarterly Meeting,
Jefferson State Office Building, 205 Jefferson Street, 1st Floor State Board
Education Room, Jefferson City, MO

1:30 pm MAVO Meeting, Truman State Office Building, Room 400,
Jefferson City, MO

6:00 pm Legislative Reception, VFW Post 1003, 217 E. Capitol Avenue,
Jefferson City, MO

February 1st

8:00 am Rolls/Coffee State Capitol Building, 3rd Floor Senate Rotunda,
Jefferson City, MO

6:00 pm Joint Committee Meeting on Veterans Affairs, State Capitol Building,
3rd Floor Senate Lounge, Jefferson City, MO

Visit with your Senator or Representative between the scheduled events

Dedications in Missouri

On September 13, 2010 Fort Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery held its dedication ceremony. The property was donated by the U.S Army Maneuver Support Center. The Fort Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery has 229 acres, making it the largest State Veterans Cemetery in Missouri. With the first building phase complete, phase one provides 7,257 burial plots to Veterans and their spouses. Once all six phases of the cemetery is complete it is estimated 32,510 veterans will use Fort Leonard Wood Veterans Cemetery for their final resting place, before it's closing in the year 2178. For more information, or to pre-register contact Leah Piland, Fort Leonard Wood Cemetery Director at 573-774-3496 or Leah.Piland@mvc.dps.mo.gov. For information on all of our State Veteran Cemeteries visit our website at www.mvc.dps.mo.gov.

September 22, 2010 a new VA outpatient clinic began serving Veterans in Sedalia, MO. The facility is located at 3320 W. 10th St. (the old Social Security Bldg). The clinic will offer primary medical and mental health services to approximately 2,500 Veterans in Pettis, Benton, Saline, and the western portion of Morgan counties. The outpatient clinic is one of seven such out-patient facilities operated through the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital in Columbia.

October 4, 2010 the new VET CENTER opened in Columbia, MO. The Vet Center offers a wide range of mental health services. Designated staff will include 3 Readjustment Counselors (one specializing in marriage and family counseling), a supervisory social worker, and an office manager. The VET Center is available for the Combat Veteran or a family member of the Combat Veteran. Also available is the Military Sexual Trauma Counseling which is available to any Veteran who was sexually traumatized while serving in the Military. The Facility address is 4040 N. Rangeline St., Columbia, MO. Phone: 573-814-6206 Fax: 573-814-2608.



VSO Success Story *What's in your Wallet?*



In April 2007 I was working a case for a Veteran that served during the Korean War in the Army during 1952 and 1953. We submitted a claim for bilateral hearing loss and tinnitus (ringing of the ears) due to acoustic trauma of being a Tank Operator. Although his discharge papers stated his MOS (Military Occupation specialty) was a clerk, he was in the Infantry unit. As we all know during a period of War time we could be assigned or directed to be a MOS but we actually perform duties of other Military Occupation. We battled his claim with pictures of him with the M-46 Tanks. But unfortunately pictures didn't collaborate his statement of happenings. After two years of sending the claim to DRO (Decision Review Officer) and the Appeals process, the claim was still being denied. I sat down with the Veteran and asked him again if he has anything else that could corroborate that he was with an Infantry unit and around acoustic trauma. He finally stated to me that he still has his operators permit DD form 313 issued to operate the Tank M46. On the permit it not only has the Veterans name but the issuing official of the Battalion Motor Officer. Within 3 months of sending in his operator's license for the M-46 tanks, the award letter came back to award his service connection for bilateral hearing loss and tinnitus awarding back to original date of claim. The operators' evidence was sufficient enough to concede exposure to hazardous levels of noise while in the service. In this case the Veteran was awarded service connection 100% due to the severity of the hearing loss and tinnitus and also awarded special monthly compensation on account of deafness of both ears, having absence of air and bone conduction. Two lessons to take from this, Veterans when you are working your claim – think of anything and everything that could verify medical conditions that happened during your Military Service, and work with a Veteran Service Officer on your claim.

Submitted by Cindy Stivers, VSO, MVC



Business Women of Missouri

The mission of the Business Women of Missouri is to achieve equity for women in the workplace through advocacy, education, and information. This is a wonderful organization that meets on a monthly basis to assist women in networking, educating yourself on how to run a business meeting, an opportunity to be involved in a professional organization (always looks good on a resume) and educate yourself more about your community.

The program is focused on the following program goals:

- Work to end systemic gender inequities in the workplace by training and grooming women for leadership roles in the workforce.
- Nurture leadership potential by assessing individual potential and offering opportunities to acquire skills essential for successful leadership.
- Education on the fine points of public speaking, career preparation, and planning and working with the media.

One of the 2010-2011 President's Goals for the Business Women of Missouri is to continue to support women in the military.

If you are a woman in the military or a veteran this program is a great advocate assisting you in reaching out to other avenues in the civilian sector. If you are interested in joining BWM or attending a meeting, please visit our website www.businesswomenmo.org to find a local organization in your area.

Missouri Women Veterans News is written and published by Missouri Veterans Commission Staff.
Veterans Service Program Director, Doug Meyer
Editor and Women Veterans Benefits Outreach Coordinator, Cindy Stivers
Design, Layout and Copy Assistant, Pamela S. Robbins

mvc.dps.mo.gov



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

Please fill out, fold, stamp and return



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 OTHER _____

Service dates: From _____ To _____
From _____ To _____

Receiving VA or Medical Benefits: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what benefit: _____ (i.e. pension, comp., medical, etc.)

Have received benefits in the past: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what benefit: _____

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 _____

To receive your free Woman Veteran State Sticker

Return this to: Missouri Veterans Commission/Cindy Stivers

Women Veterans Coordinator/VSO

1716 N. Prospect

Suite A

Macon, MO 64501

660/385-6192

or send a request via email to: Cindy.Stivers@mvc.dps.mo.gov

Cindy Stivers, VSO
MO Women Veteran Coordinator
Missouri Veterans Commission
1716 N. Prospect, Suite A
Macon, MO 63552

Place
Postage
Here