



Missouri Women Veterans Newsletter



Volume 2011, Issue 24

www.mvc.dps.mo.gov/service/women/

July - September 2011

A Message from the Women Veterans Coordinator



On April 18, 2011 I was appointed the NEW Women Veterans Coordinator for the Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC). As many of you may know the former Women Veterans Coordinator, Cindy Stivers accepted a position as the Women Veterans Program Manager at the Columbia VAMC. I have been employed with MVC since January 1, 2010 as a Veterans Service Officer (VSO). I will still maintain my duties as a VSO as well as the duties of the Women Veterans Coordinator.

I served in the USAF from 1993-1997. I was stationed at Travis AFB, CA and I enjoyed my time while serving in the Air Force. cont. pg. 2

Inside this Issue

GI Bill	pg 2
NASWVC Conf.	pg 2
Women in Uniform	pg 3
Mail Call	pg 4
Fascinating Facts	pg 4
Upcoming Events	pg 5
New VSO's	pg 5
Word Search	pg 5
Conf. Registration	pg 6
Registration	pg 7



5th Annual Missouri Women Veterans Conference

The 5th Annual Women Veterans Conference will be held this year at the Waynesville Career Center in Waynesville, MO on September 17th. This year's theme is "Proud to be a Woman Veteran." The Conference will be filled with educational presentations, a variety of vendors, a time for networking, a tour of the Pulaski County Museum (old courthouse), free lunch, and door prizes. If you would like to attend this event, please fill out and send in your registration form which is located on the last page of this newsletter. Below is additional information that you may find resourceful. I look forward to meeting all of you at the Conference.

Several hotels in the area are reducing their rates for this conference. If you would like to come in on Friday or stay Saturday night please contact one of the following hotels:

Hampton Inn \$89 plus tax (normally \$109 and up)

Includes a Deluxe breakfast. (**rate available through 8/26/11**)

103 St. Robert Plaza, St. Robert, MO 65584 (573-336-3355)

Comfort Inn \$79.99 plus tax (normally \$99.99 and up)

Includes a Deluxe breakfast. (**rate available through 8/26/11**)

103 Comfort Inn Blvd, St. Robert, MO 65584 (573-336-3553)

Baymont Inn& Suites \$74.00 plus tax

Includes a complimentary breakfast.

139 Carmel Valley Way, St. Robert, MO 65584 (573-336-5050)

Holiday Inn Express and Suites \$89.99 (1 King) \$94.99 (2 Queens)

Includes a complimentary breakfast

South Side of Interstate 44, Exit 161 (573-336-2299)

****Ask for group code "Woman Veterans Conference" For Discounted Rates****

Help Available for Veterans in Joplin, MO



The Dept. of Veterans Affairs announced that special disaster assistance may be available to Veterans with VA-Guaranteed home loans that have been affected by the recent tornados in Missouri. "We will do everything we can to help Veterans and their families get through this difficult time," said Secretary of VA Eric K. Shinseki. "We urge Veterans to use VA resources available to help them recover from this disaster." VA strongly encourages mortgage companies not to initiate any foreclosures in disaster areas for a period of 90 days. Veterans should contact their insurance company and mortgage companies as soon as possible.

Veterans should also start the FEMA disaster application process by calling 1-800-621-3362. For more information please visit www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans and visit the "Are you a disaster survivor?" section on the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/index.shtm>

Message from WVC cont.

My last day of inactive-status was Sept. 13, 2001 two days after 9/11. I was willing to go back and serve if our country needed me; however, I received my discharge two weeks later and my eight year service obligation was complete. Since then I have used several of my VA Benefits such as my GI Bill which helped me financially to earn my BS in Business Administration.

I am honored to have this position and if I can be of assistance regarding your benefits, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have any ideas, questions for the Newsletter or would like to be featured in an upcoming Newsletter, please let me know. I hope to meet many of you at the 5th Annual Missouri Women Veterans Conference in September. Thank you for your service to our Country.

Amy Bennett
Missouri Women Veteran Coordinator
816-387-2841
Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov



Changes to the GI Bill

Just like your DD214 you earned for serving our Country and can never be taken away from you, neither can a diploma you earned for completing your education. On Jan. 4, 2011 President Obama signed the Post-9/11 Veteran Educational Assistance Act of 2010. This Act created several changes to the education benefits. Here are a few examples "Monthly housing allowance benefits are prorated based upon rate of pursuit, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10 (effective Aug. 1, 2011)". "Break or interval pay is no longer payable under any VA education benefit program unless under an Executive Order of the President or due to an emergency situation such as a natural disaster or strike (effective Aug. 1, 2011)". "Students can be reimbursed for more than one Licensing and certification test, and can also be reimbursed for fees paid to take national exams (effective Aug. 1, 2011)". There are many other changes affecting this Act. For a complete listing of these changes and when they go into effect, please visit www.gibill.va.gov

NASWVC Conference May 2011

On May 16th-19th I attended the National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators (NASWVC) representing the State of Missouri in Madison, WI. This was the 12th Annual Conference which was founded by Linda Waldroop. Women Veteran Coordinators (WVC) from all over the United States attended the conference, even as far away as Hawaii. All together 22 WVC attended, which I thought was a good turn-out considering the economy. We had numerous guest speakers talking about various issues that affect Women Veterans such as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and MST (Military Sexual Trauma).

We were honored to have three retired Generals in attendance. Major General (MG), Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris, Director of Dept. of Veteran Affairs Center for Women Veterans; Brigadier General (BG) Wilma Vaught, Foundation President of Women in Military Service for America Memorial; and Major General (MG) LaRita Aragon. MG Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris gave a presentation on Women Veterans issues, BG Wilma Vaught gave us an update on the Womens Memorial which is in need of financial assistance, and MG LaRita Aragon gave a motivational presentation on Wonder Woman. She reminded us, we are all "Wonder Women." We were also privileged to have U.S. Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin attend our conference. She gave a presentation on how much she supported the Military and Veterans and thanked us all for our service to our Country.

In conclusion, it was an educational conference that gave me the opportunity to network with other WVC, and visit with former Missouri WVC, Karen Etzler. Karen is now enjoying her retirement and stays active in Women Veterans issues by serving as Co-Chair on the NASWVC Board.



MG LaRita Aragon



Congresswoman, Baldwin and Dr. Trowell-Harris



Linda Waldroop and MG LaRita Aragon



Congresswoman, Baldwin



Amy Bennett



BG Wilma Vaught



Marilla Cushman and Larri Gerson



Karen Etzler, and Amy Bennett



Saluting our Women in Uniform

Dorothy Showman



I joined the Coast Guard in April, 1943 and was sent to Palm Beach, FL for training. I remember when my commander, Dorothy Stratton, got the approval to use the contracted version of our motto, S.P.A.R. (Semper Paratus, Always Ready) to describe the women's group. That's how we became SPARS. After training, I volunteered to go to Seattle, but when I received my orders, they were sending me to The Ninth Naval District, which was headquartered in St. Louis. They were sending me home! During my three years at the Ninth Naval District, my responsibilities varied. One of my main responsibilities was to encourage service personnel to buy war bonds. While in the Coast Guard I kept busy with activities outside of work. I taught Sunday school, knitted outfits for English children at the Red Cross, frequented the USO, and participated in a Coast Guard drum and bugle corps. After leaving the Coast Guard I raised a family, worked for both the V A and Army Aviation Command, and eventually retired. I still do volunteer work including Meals on Wheels and the Tribute to Women Veterans.



Helen Marie Horvath



I served in WWII as an Army WAC from January 1943 until January, 1946. I was born and raised in St. Louis and I had two brothers in the military at the time. I was intrigued by the military, the Army. It took a rebellious streak for me to enter the service. My father had strong objections to my joining because he worried about the negative labels, but when I turned 21 I signed up. I did my basic training at Fort Des Moines, IA. My assignments after basic training included both clerical and nursing jobs. While working at Newport News, VA I worked with our soldiers going overseas, and with Italian prisoners of war being sent into the United States. One Christmas a friend and I made stockings for patients and served them wine with lunch. A couple of the guys who were hospitalized had asked me to buy a gift for someone at the PX. To my surprise, the gift was for me. I still have that gift, a compact, sixty years later. Some of my memories have faded over time, but I remember being treated well and no differently from the men who were serving. I have no regrets about joining all those years ago.



Dorothy Wood



I joined the Navy on my 21st birthday in February, 1943. I left California and was sent to Cedar Falls, IA for my Navy boot camp, and did my technical training in Memphis, TN. I was going to become an aircraft mechanic. In the Assembly and Repair shop, I learned how to sandblast pistons, take an engine apart and put it back together, and how to sew, paint, and glue canvas wings. I graduated from Memphis as an Aircraft Machinist Mate 3rd Class. My first assignment after technical school was in New Orleans. I tested, applied, and was selected as the only WAVE from my base to go to Officer's Training School at Smith College in Northampton, MA and while there I became a platoon leader. My first assignment as an officer was in Special Devices where I worked with Link Trainers. My workplace was at One Park Ave in New York City. These trainers were boxes built on stands and contained instrument panels for student pilot practice. I am very proud of my WWII service. I enjoyed the fellowship and made lasting friendships during my time in the Navy and I have no regrets. The Navy presented incredible opportunities for me.



Mary Thibault



I joined the Coast Guard in May, 1944 while visiting my brother in Boston, who was also in the Coast Guard serving on the USCG Campbell. I did my SPARS boot camp at Palm Beach, FL. After boot camp I went to Yeoman's school and received my first job assignment. I was sent to Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington DC to work in intelligence where I was stuck in a boring job for six months. I was transferred to the Aviation Air and Sea Rescue Office. I was logging planes and tracking mechanical issues and occasionally I would get to fly with "hot shot" pilots. I took advantage of military transport flights and flew to places like Texas and California. Life became adventurous and I was enjoying my time in the D.C. area going to galleries, concerts, being active with friends. I worked hard but I also played hard. I was one of the SPARS invited to the White House for tea with Mrs. Truman. The First Lady took time to greet each of us. She was very pleasant and down to earth, a plain lady. I have great memories, pictures, clippings and even my uniform that I can still wear proudly. I would do it all over again if given the opportunity.





Mail Call

As many of you may recall one of the highlights of boot camp was "Mail Call!" I remember I was so excited to have a letter written from a loved one informing me of what was happening at home. It gave me a piece of comfort and happiness. I wanted to give that feeling of comfort back to those fellow Veterans with the new "Mail Call" section. If you have a question regarding your benefits, chances are someone else has the same question. Please submit your questions to me so I can share them with other Veterans.

Q. I recently was discharged from the Army where all my medical was provided for me. I would like to still have my yearly women exams. Are these services available to me as a Veteran?

A. Yes, I would highly encourage you to apply for your VA Health Care through the VA. This can be accomplished through several resources. You can fill out a VA Form 10-10EZ located on www.va.gov, call 1-877-222-8381, or call any VA Health Care Facility or Veteran Benefits Office. I would encourage you to visit with the Women Veterans Program Manager, there is one located at every VA Hospital or visit a Veteran Service Officer and bring your DD214.

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

Amy Bennett, VSO
MO Women Veteran Coordinator
525 Jules, Room 320
St. Joseph, MO 64501
(816)387-2841
Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov



If you move or change your email address, please let me know so I can continue to share the newsletter and other important updates with you.

Fascinating Facts

During the WWII era 70% of women held "female traditional" jobs such as Nurses, Typists, Clerks and Mail Sorters. These women have paved the way for today's women who are serving in the Armed Forces. Today women serving in our Military are performing jobs such as Truck Drivers, Gunners, Military Police and Pilots. Below are some interesting statistics on how far our military has come for women who are currently serving.

- Women make up 15-20% of the military.
- 95% of military jobs (MOS & AFSC) are now open to women.
- As of October 2010 Missouri had 37,777 women Veterans.
- More than 1.8 million women are Veterans
- 245,000 women Veterans are registered with the Women In Military Service for America Memorial (WIMSA)
- 57,149 of these women Veterans are WWII Veterans, and they are the largest supporter of WIMSA.



(WIMSA Memorial, Washington, DC)

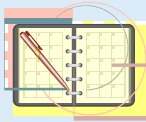
Missouri Veterans Commission 3 Key Messages:

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?



Upcoming Events

State Fair August 11-21, 2011 in Sedalia, MO.

Military Day is Sunday, August 14. FREE admission for Active, Veterans and Delayed Entry Recruits with appropriate I.D.

Meet the Women Veterans Coordinator Friday, August 19th from 3:00 - 8:00 PM

Branson Veterans Task Force Events, Branson, MO:

National Day of Atomic Remembrance - July 16th,

Then End of WWII - Sep 2nd, 11:00 at Veteran Memorial Museum

9/11 Branson Remembers - Sep 11th, 6:00 at The Branson Landing

POW-MIA Day Silent March - Sep 17th, 10:00 next to the Post Office

For more information call (417)337-8387

Welcome our Newest Female Veteran Service Officers

Vita Baker recently retired from the Army after serving 25 years. She started with Missouri Veterans Commission(MVC) as a Veterans Service Officer (VSO) on May 2, 2011. In the Army, her job was in Administration where she assisted Soldiers. Becoming a VSO was an easy transition for her, because now she is assisting our Veterans. Vita's office is located within St. Louis County. She is enjoying civilian life and her new job with the MVC.

Sonja Christlieb served in the Navy on the USS Puget Sound as a Quarter Master. She started with Missouri Veterans Commission as a VSO on Dec. 1, 2010 and will be working in Texas and Pulaski Counties. In her spare time she volunteers with the Nebo-Falcon Rural Fire Dept. in Falcon, MO as a volunteer firefighter and safety officer. Sonja is enjoying being a VSO and giving back to her fellow Veterans.

S	E	P	T	E	M	B	E	R	Z	Q	A	E
M	E	M	O	R	I	A	L	C	P	P	R	C
I	M	A	R	I	N	E	S	V	X	R	J	R
L	B	Y	Y	S	R	L	E	E	A	O	U	O
I	M	M	L	I	B	E	R	T	Y	U	S	F
T	R	O	O	P	S	V	A	E	D	D	T	R
A	I	Q	C	D	M	E	V	R	E	S	I	I
R	L	P	Y	V	A	N	T	A	F	C	C	A
Y	I	M	A	R	C	H	I	N	G	N	E	D
U	N	I	T	E	D	S	T	A	T	E	S	A
J	J	U	L	Y	X	F	O	U	R	A	P	S
C	O	A	S	T	G	U	A	R	D	S	L	M

AIRFORCE
ARMY
COASTGUARD
ELEVEN
FOUR
JULY
JUSTICE
LIBERTY

MARCHING
MARINES
MAY
MEMORIAL
MILITARY
NAVY
PROUD
SEPTEMBER

SERVE
TROOPS
UNITED STATES
VETERAN

Missouri Women Veterans News is written and published by Missouri Veterans Commission Staff.
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mvc.dps.mo.gov



Women Veterans Conference

September 17th, 2011
Waynesville Career Center
400 GW Lane
Waynesville, MO 65583

Door Prizes

This will be an information packed FREE event!
Numerous Guest Speakers!
Information Booths!
Meet your local area State Representatives!

Display Tables

Tour of the Pulaski County Museum
Transportation provided at no cost by
Pulaski County Tourism Bureau

9:00 - 9:30 Registration and viewing table displays

9:30 - 10:00 Opening ceremonies

10:00 - 3:00 Guest Speakers, included but not limited to, VA hospitals, Veteran Homes & Cemeteries, Veteran Service Officer, Missouri State Ombudsman, and an OEF/OIF Woman Veteran

11:00 - 1:00 Tour of Pulaski County Museum/Lunch (provided) ~~AAA~~

Register on line at <http://www.mvc.dps.mo.gov/service/women/registrationconference.asp>

Display_____ Guest_____ (Limited Seating, Guest Registration preferred but not required)
(Display request must register and be approved)

Name: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail _____



Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov
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Women Veterans Coordinator
525 Jules, Room 320
St. Joseph, MO 64501
816/387-2841



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 _____

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 _____

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

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