



# Missouri Women Veterans Newsletter



Volume 2012, Issue 27

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

April - June 2012

## Message from the Missouri Women Veterans Coordinator:



Spring is in the air, or has it been there all winter long? We have been so lucky to

have a more mild winter then the past two years. I can't believe that on April 15th I will have been in this position for one year already! Time has flown by for me and I have really enjoyed meeting my fellow Women Veterans. I have started planning the 6th annual Missouri Woman Veterans Conference which will be held in Warrensburg on September 14, 2012. I would like to hear from you, what would you like to see improved for Women Veterans? What would you like to see at the Conference in September? I look forward to hearing from all of you.

## Honoring from the Heart



Every year we observe Memorial Day, and we remember those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. The state of Missouri currently has five Veteran cemeteries. Each of the cemeteries will be holding a tribute to honor those Veterans on Memorial Day. With the all familiar 24-notes that will be heard on that day as we hear taps being played, a range of emotions will run through us all. No matter what you do on Memorial Day I hope each of you take a moment out of your day to remember our fallen brothers and sisters.

## What's Inside

<b>Army Mom</b>	<b>pg. 2</b>
<b>Furry Residents</b>	<b>pg. 2</b>
<b>Women in Uniform</b>	<b>pg. 3</b>
<b>Mail Call</b>	<b>pg. 4</b>
<b>Proclamation</b>	<b>pg. 4</b>
<b>Word Search</b>	<b>pg. 5</b>
<b>Upcoming Events</b>	<b>pg. 5</b>
<b>New VSO</b>	<b>pg. 5</b>
<b>Women of the Year</b>	<b>pg. 6-7</b>
<b>Registration Form</b>	<b>pg. 8</b>

## Missouri Women Veteran of the Year

I am very excited to announce that the Missouri Veterans Commission will recognize a Missouri Woman Veteran, with an award, starting in 2012. This award will be given to a Woman Veteran who has compiled a record of exemplary service as a Military Service Member, Veteran and as a Citizen in her community. The award will be presented at the annual Women Veterans Conference which will be held on September 14, 2012 in Warrensburg. Nominations may be submitted by a nominee or the Veteran herself. Nominations must be received or postmarked by August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The registration form is attached to this newsletter and will be in the upcoming newsletters, or online at [www.mvc.dps.mo.gov/docs/women/womenvet-nomination.pdf](http://www.mvc.dps.mo.gov/docs/women/womenvet-nomination.pdf). I know there are many Women Veterans in the State of Missouri that are very deserving of being recognized for this award. If you have any questions, you may contact me directly. Thank you and Good Luck!

Amy Bennett  
Women Veterans Coordinator

# 51-year-old mom holds her own during Basic Combat Training

(article provided by public affairs office fort leonard wood, missouri 65473)



Sgt. Sandra Coast graduated from Basic Combat Training at Ft. Leonard Wood on Feb. 16, 2012, officially beginning her Army career — at 51 years old. According to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, the average age for an Army Reserve recruit is about 23, making Coast one of the oldest people to go through Basic Combat Training. “Everybody in the world thinks I am a total nutcase,” Coast said. “I just want to support our troops. I love all of them.” From 1982 to 1993, Coast devoted her life to the U.S. Navy. She gave up her lifestyle as a Sailor to raise her son, Jeff, who ironically led her back to the military she left behind years ago. “When Jeff graduated high school, he joined the Marine Corps. When I was at the recruiter’s office with my son, I walked into the Army recruiting office and said ‘I want to join,’” Coast said.

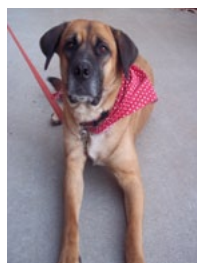
She was stunned to learn that as a paralegal specialist she would have to go back to basic training — this time, Army-style. “I wasn’t quite expecting to be running around with a M16 and all of this gear,” Coast said. “This is nothing even remotely similar to being a Sailor. I was blown away by the total difference of it. We carried M16s during Navy Boot Camp, but we never shot them. Here we are shooting several times a week. Shooting this weapon with all of the gear on takes a toll on me.”

Coast started preparing for Basic Combat Training months prior to stepping foot on Ft. Leonard Wood. “Before the recruiters would even talk to me I had to lose 30 pounds. I went from sitting at home every night eating ice cream to exercising and watching what I ate. I also started getting up at 4 o’clock in the morning to exercise and tried to go to bed early at night. I knew I needed every advantage I could have to get through this,” Coast said. Her 10-week journey from civilian to Soldier was spent in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Chemical Brigade. Coast even amazed herself when she came in second place during the PT test. “Everything about basic training is pretty tough, but living with more than 30 teenage females is one of the hardest things,” Coast said. Sgt. Coast has set another exceptional standard for Women in the military. HOOAH!

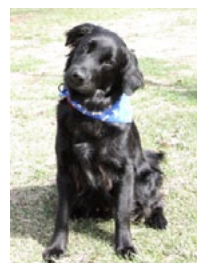
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## Missouri Veterans Homes New Furry Residents

Missouri currently has seven Veterans Homes. All of the Veterans Homes have recently adopted a new furry resident. These residents are unique because they bring smiles and love to our Veterans and the staff every day. The dogs have been adopted from organizations such as puppies on parole where inmates have trained the dogs so they may live in an environment where they will receive the love and attention they deserve. Pictured are the dogs and which Veterans Home they reside in.



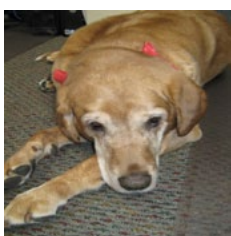
Jesse  
St. Louis



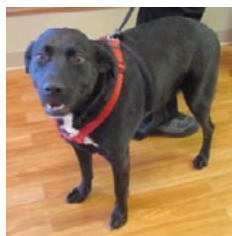
Jackson  
St. James



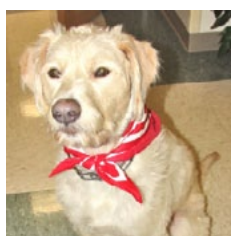
Soldier  
Mexico



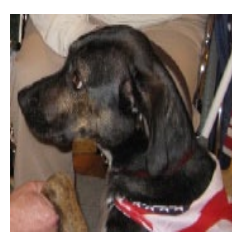
Alex  
Cameron



Bruno  
Mt. Vernon



Winston  
Cape Girardeau



Roxie  
Warrensburg



Ginger  
Cameron



# Saluting our Women in Uniform

## Cynthia Ortega



I am Sgt. Cynthia Ortega. I joined the Army in 2007 when I was 37 years old. I went to enlist in the reserves and walked out as a regular soldier. Two weeks later I was in Fort Jackson, SC. I did my AIT training in Fort Sam Houston, and left a combat medic. I went to Fort Carson, and five months later I was in Iraq. I had amazing training and loved my job. In my Army career I was a medic, worked trauma, taught classes to fellow soldiers and was in leadership positions. My family was very supportive and my children were, I think, the proudest of me. Yes, I missed a lot but gained so much. I am a mother and grandmother and hope to show women that anything is possible. I am now transitioning into the civilian world after 4.3 years in the Army. I have an Honorable Discharge and I am a Disabled Veteran, however, with all that I have learned in the Army, I can conquer anything. The picture of me was taken when I was in Iraq. I think it was about 4:00 a.m. and we were getting ready to go on a mission.



## Hazel Dickerson



I served in the Marines from 1944-1946. I was 21 years old when I joined; I had to be otherwise my mother wouldn't let me join. I had boot camp at Camp LeJeune, NC. I remember to this day how hard the six months of boot camp was. After boot camp I was sent to San Diego, CA for duty. I had motor transport training and worked out of motor transport. I drove several different kinds of military vehicles and had to learn how to do pre-trip inspections on them. The vehicle I normally drove was a dump truck. By bringing women into the Marine Corps during WWII, allowed the men that were doing these kinds of jobs to be sent overseas to join the fighting. On the base dances were popular and we would always dance with the men, but the women would leave and return to base as a group. We were protected and respected. I was honorably discharged as a Corporal after the war and earned a good conduct medal. I made \$66 per month and the USMC paid me travel pay from San Diego to Missouri at 5 cents a mile. I am humbled when it comes to my service and I am a member of the American Legion and VFW Auxiliaries.



## Edna Hughes



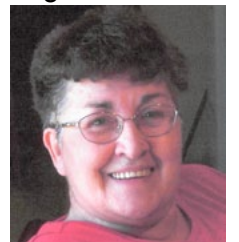
I am the oldest of four children and when I was five years old my family moved to St. Louis, MO. After high school I attended college and studied to be a nurse's aide. On Feb. 12, 1942 I enlisted in the Women's Army Corps (WAC). One of the reasons I signed up was because I had visions of being sent to Europe and I wanted to go there. Ironically, I was stationed in my hometown of St. Louis, MO. While in the service I supervised around 90 women who worked in the hospital. It wasn't a hard job, women behaved themselves back then. While in the service I received several medals such as the Women's Army Corps Service Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal and the Honorable Service Lapel Pin. I was discharged on Oct. 6, 1945 as a Tsgt in the Medical Corps. I met my husband; Robert through my father, they were both in the same unit in the National Guard. I enjoy reading, music, sewing, knitting and crocheting.



## Lorna Crawford



I enlisted in Baraboo, WI in 1957. I had always dreamed of being a Marine. I was sent to Parris Island for my boot camp and was sent to Camp Lejeune, NC for duty. At the time that I was in the Corps, we couldn't go overseas, in fact, the only thing that I could do was work in GS. It was different being on my own for the first time and so far from home without any relatives near, but I was a Marine and did it. I met my husband at Camp Lejeune. We were married two weeks later and have been married for 54 years. I have 7 children, 5 have been or are in the military. Two served in the first Gulf War. I now serve in the American Legion Auxiliary, VFW, DAV and Marine Corps League. At the time that I was in, we could not fly or use weapons of any kind. My daughter was one of the first to go through training with the men. I enjoyed my time in the Marines and feel that I have been in ever since, as my husband was career military. I think that every woman should serve in the military in some way. Semper Fi







## Mail Call

Q. I am currently looking for a job and I have noticed some employers give preference to Veterans. If I have a 5 point preference, am I considered a disabled Veteran?

A. No, the 5 point preference is given to those Veterans who served Active Duty and you must have an Honorable or General Under Honorable Discharge.

Q. What do I need to provide to an organization when I'm applying for a job to prove that I am a disabled Veteran?

A. When applying for positions that give preference to Disabled Veterans such as the State jobs or the Federal jobs you will need to fill out an SF-15. You will also need to provide your award letter to the organization you are applying to, stating you are a disabled Veteran. If you don't have a recent award letter you can call Veterans Affairs at 1-800-827-1000 and they will mail you your award letter directly to you. You can also contact your local Veterans Service Officer for assistance.

If you have a question, please contact me at:

[Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov](mailto:Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov) or

Missouri Veterans Commission

525 Jules, Room 320

St. Joseph, MO 64501

(816) 387-2841



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.



Please help us stay green. If you are receiving your Women Veterans Newsletter via the mail and you have an e-mail address, please send your e-mail to [Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov](mailto:Amy.Bennett@mvc.dps.mo.gov)



### Governor Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon proclaimed March 22, 2012 to be Women Veterans Recognition Day

Over 40 Women Veterans, Soldiers and advocates of Women in the military attended the Proclamation in Jefferson City on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. This was in conjunction of March being Women's History Month. Today, there are approximately 350,000 women serving in the military which means women make up 15% of the military. After the Proclamation a reception was held for all those that attended. A tour of the Capital was also given for those who wanted to learn more about the history of Missouri.



## Happy Birthday Army!

### June 14th

#### 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?

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



Airborne  
 Army  
 Battalion  
 Bunker  
 Chow Hall  
 Company  
 Drill  
 GI Party  
 Hooah

Instructor  
 Latrine  
 Line of Duty  
 Platoon  
 Ranger  
 Regulation  
 Spoon  
 Tank

## We Welcome Our Newest Female Veterans Service Officer

Chris Fierros, our newest female Veterans Service Officer joined the Army in 1986 and spent five years on active duty as a Personnel Specialist. Upon discharge, she joined the Missouri Army National Guard where she spent the next ten years as both a Personnel Specialist and a Heavy Wheeled Vehicle Driver. Chris started as a Veteran Service Officer with Missouri Veterans Commission on March 16, 2012 and will be working in the St. Joseph office.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

April 24th-Semi-Annual Job Fair, Ft. Leonard Wood, 11:00am-2:00pm

May 6th-"Honoring our Female Veterans Unit 624 American Legion Auxiliary, Post 624, Zack Wheat, 852 American Legion Drive, Sunrise Beach, MO. 65079. The Legion's Phone number is 573 374-6091. Please respond if you and your guest will be able to attend by April 15, 2012. For questions call Retta Morton at 573-374-3013 or [jimrettamorton@gmail.com](mailto:jimrettamorton@gmail.com)

May 12th-Stand Up! For Women Veterans, Busch Student Center at St. Louis University, 20 North Grand Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63108

May 28th-Memorial Day Services at 1:00 at the following Missouri Veteran Cemeteries, Higginsville, Bloomfield, Ft. Leonard Wood, and Springfield. Jacksonville be holding their service at 9:00am.

June 8th and 9th Summer Stand Down - 2012 will be at the Scottish Rite Temple, 1330 Linwood in Kansas



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





## MISSOURI WOMEN VETERAN OF THE YEAR NOMINATION

Personal information you provide may be used for secondary purposes [Privacy Law, s.15.04(1)(m)]

Missouri Veterans Commission will recognize a Missouri woman Veteran who has compiled a record of exemplary service as a military service member, a Veteran, and a citizen.

The award will be presented annually at the Women Veteran Conference beginning in 2012. Nominations may be submitted by a nominee or the Veteran herself, at any time throughout the year. They must be received by the month prior to the Women Veterans Conference.

**Submit this signed nomination form to:** Women Veteran Coordinator  
Missouri Veterans Commission  
525 Jules, Room 320  
St. Joseph, MO 64501  
(816) 387-2841

**NOMINATOR'S NAME & ADDRESS:** Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**VETERAN'S NAME & ADDRESS:** Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_

**VETERAN'S INFORMATION:** BRANCH(S) OF SERVICE (check all that apply): ☐ US Army ☐ US Marine Corps

☐ US Navy ☐ US Air Force ☐ US Coast Guard ☐ US Merchant Marines ☐ US Army Air Corps

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

MILITARY SERVICE: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_ Character of Discharge: \_\_\_\_\_

LIST ALL MILITARY AWARDS AND DECORATIONS (attach additional sheet if necessary):

LIST COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND OFFICE(S) HELD (attach additional sheet if necessary):

LIST VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND OFFICE(S) HELD (attach additional sheet if necessary):

PLEASE SPECIFY WHY THE NOMINEE SHOULD BE SELECTED AS THE MISSOURI WOMAN VETERAN OF THE YEAR. In the justification, please cite specific examples of accomplishments toward enhancement of female Veterans in the past 12 months. You may also include past accomplishments, for example: any awards, publications, association/committee participation, community service, or participation in campus/civic activities.

NOMINATOR'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_



**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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