SHE SERVED MAGAZINE

Celebrating Women Veterans



HEROES HAVEN

Inside Issue 8:

SPOTLIGHTING HEROES HAVEN



VA Resources for Women

DON'T WAIT ANOTHER DAY TO CALL AND ASK FOR HELP.

Women Veterans Call Center:
855-VA-WOMEN

Veteran Crisis Hotline:
988 (press 1)

Caregiver Support Line:
855-260-3274

VA Benefits Hotline:
1-800-827-1000

CONTENTS

5
Letter from the Editor

6
FEATURE ARTICLE
Healing through connection ... written by Tammy Flake

8
Veteran Tammy Flake

10
Veteran Sheryl Binetti

12
Veteran January Goklish-Stevens

14
Veteran Jelena Cantrell

16
Veteran Kelly Holmes

18
Veteran Michele Hill

20
Veteran Adrene Wike

22
Veteran Heidi Heydt

24
The unexpected journey of healing ... written by Heidi Heydt

26
Veteran Amanda Garman

28
Veteran Anai Ferrachi

30
Veteran Dee Dee Terry

32
Veteran Diana Symbol Lorio

34
Veteran Jessica Patten Arafi

36
Veteran Joann Haines

38
Veteran Lacy Hardman

40
Veteran Rachel Walker

42
RECOMMENDED READING

43
VETERAN BUSINESS DIRECTORY

44
BEHIND THE SCENES WITH HEROES HAVEN & SHE SERVED

48
HOW TO SUPPORT THE SHE SERVED INITIATIVE

HEROES HAVEN

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEROES HAVEN:
WWW.THEHEROESHAVEN.COM



Did you know we have a new website! You can see the She Served image galleries, buy print copies of the magazine (past and current) and purchase merchandise from the online store including tank tops, travel mugs and water bottles. **Check it out https://sheservedinitiative.org/**

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HOST A VETERAN PHOTO SHOOT

To host a **She Served** event visit: www.sheservedinitiative.org.



General criteria: The space needs to be indoors, and approximately 20x20' in size, with at least an 8' ceiling height (preferably 10') with electrical outlets.

Photoshoot Details: Photoshoots are reserved for female veterans only. Each Veteran will get a 30-minute professional photoshoot. They can bring props or mementos to be used during the session.

As the host you should be aware that each Veteran that wants to participate will need to fill out an intake form of basic information, provide a short biography of their military career and post military life, and provide a clear photo of themselves in uniform (their official service photo is best, but other photos of them in uniform are acceptable if it is clear and in focus so that their face is recognizable). I can comfortably accommodate approximately 10 women a day if the timeslots are scheduled in advance.

Expenses: I do not charge the Veteran or the host a photoshoot fee. However, as you can imagine I do have expenses. I ask the host to provide suitable lodging, air fare and/or reimbursement for gas, and my meals during the photoshoot. Visit **https://sheservedinitiative.org/host-she-served** for all the details then contact us to be a host!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



We closed out 2024 with a meaningful five day trip to Park City, Utah, where we participated in the Heroes Haven all-female cohort program and hosted a ***She Served*** photoshoot for Heroes Haven participants and members of the Salt Lake City VA Peer Support program. The event provided a powerful opportunity for connection and community building among female Veterans, hosted by the National Ability Center, a venue renowned for its support of Veterans.

During the visit, participants from Heroes Haven met with members of the VA Peer Support program for an evening of bonding and mutual encouragement. The ***She Served Initiative*** had the privilege of capturing the essence of these incredible women through individual portraits, celebrating their strength and resilience.

Heroes Haven offers a transformative experience for veterans, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to understand and manage the trauma they carry. The program creates a safe and supportive environment where veterans can share experiences and learn practical strategies to cope with triggers, stress, and challenging situations. It underscores the importance of peer support, where Veterans help one another heal—a critical aspect of addressing mental health challenges, including the alarming rates of Veteran suicide.

The VA Peer Support Program is another vital resource for Veterans, providing support through trained peer specialists who are also veterans. These specialists, drawing on their personal recovery experiences, are certified mental health care professionals and integral members of interdisciplinary treatment teams. They help Veterans navigate challenges such as addiction, mental health conditions, and other issues that can affect daily life and well-being.

Both Heroes Haven and the VA Peer Support Program are essential in their missions to empower and uplift female Veterans. Together, they embody the strength of community, resilience, and the profound impact of Veterans supporting one another. Find out more about these powerful programs on page xx and xx respectively.

As always, we invite you to discover the remarkable stories of the women Veterans featured in this edition of ***She Served*** Magazine.

Martina Schmidt



HELP US LOCATE AND PAY HOMMAGE TO MORE WOMEN VETERANS

We invite you to join us in honoring and paying tribute to the invaluable service of women veterans from World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam. Your support is crucial in recognizing their dedication and contributions to our nation's history. Together, let's express our gratitude for their sacrifices and celebrate their remarkable service.

If you, or someone you know, would like to be featured email martina@sheservedinitiative.org

Scan to receive the ***She Served*** newsletter in your inbox to stay up on all the new and exciting projects we're working on with women Veterans just like you!

SCAN THE CODE

HEALING THROUGH

My journey with Heroes Haven

BY TAMMY FLAKE

As women Veterans, we share unique experiences that come with serving in the military. Often, these experiences leave us with invisible wounds—emotional scars that can be hard to navigate alone. That's where Heroes Haven, a Veteran-led program in Park City, Utah, steps in to offer healing, camaraderie, and tools to overcome the challenges that arise from trauma.

Heroes Haven was created with one mission: to provide Veterans with the knowledge and resources to understand and manage the trauma they carry. The program offers a safe space for Veterans to learn practical strategies for coping with triggers, stress, and difficult situations. It's a place where veterans support veterans—a deeply important concept for healing. The bond formed through shared experience is often the most effective way to combat the mental health struggles many of us face, including the crisis of veteran suicide.

What Makes Heroes Haven Unique

Run by veterans for veterans, Heroes Haven offers weeklong cohort experiences at the National Ability Center in Park City, Utah. These cohorts are intentionally small—ranging from three to 10 participants—creating a close-knit environment where healing can take root. Each week is tailored specifically for male or female veterans, ensuring the space feels inclusive for everyone involved.

During our time at Heroes Haven, we engage in workshops about trauma and mental health while immersing ourselves in the healing power of nature. Activities such as bike riding, archery, and rock climbing challenge us physically and emotionally, fostering resilience and self-discovery. These activities serve as metaphors for the larger recovery journey, reminding us that even when the climb feels steep, we can reach new heights.

I participated in my first Heroes Haven cohort in May 2021. At the time, I didn't realize how much healing I needed. That cohort changed the course of my life, helping me tap into a path of recovery I had never considered before. With the guidance of fellow veterans and invaluable tools, I confronted the hidden wounds I had carried for too long. For weeks, I wrestled with feelings of unworthiness, thinking, "I don't deserve this program. Someone else needs it more." But I came to understand that I did deserve it—and that there is time and space for everyone ready to join.

The Importance of Veteran-to-Veteran Support

One of the greatest gifts Heroes Haven provides is the opportunity to connect with other women veterans. Women who have served in the military face unique challenges and often feel isolated in a world that doesn't always understand our experiences. Heroes Haven offers a safe space to open up, bond, and learn from one another.

I've also returned as a mentor to help lead women's cohorts. Each time I step into that role, I am reminded of the strength, resilience, and determination of the women who walk through those doors. They come seeking healing, but they leave with so much more—a sense of belonging, newfound strength, and a community that always has their backs.

A Powerful Collaboration: She Served Initiative

This particular cohort was especially meaningful because we partnered with the She Served Initiative, an organization dedicated to elevating the voices and stories of women veterans. They joined us, capturing our stories through photography and listening to our journeys. Being part of this initiative was a beautiful reminder of the importance of sharing our experiences to show the strength and resilience of women veterans.

... CONNECTION



The Road to Healing: A Message for Women Veterans

Through Heroes Haven, I found a path to healing I didn't realize I needed. The support, tools, and deep connections I formed have been integral to my recovery. Healing is not something we have to do alone; there is power in community, especially within the veteran community.

If you're a woman Veteran reading this, you're not alone. Help is available, and you deserve to take that first step. Heroes Haven is one of many programs that can support you. More importantly, there is a sisterhood of women Veterans ready to welcome you, share their experiences, and walk beside you on your recovery journey. I encourage you to reach out, explore opportunities, and take that first step. You have nothing to lose—and so much to gain. Together, we can rewrite our stories and continue serving not just our country, but each other.



Veteran Tammy Flake, Heroes Haven shepherd and advocate for women Veterans.

HEROES HAVEN

Tammy

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Tammy Flake served in the United States Army from February 2004 to December 2008 as a unit supply specialist and an arms room specialist. Her duties involved receiving, inspecting, and inventorying supplies and equipment. She also maintained the weapons and ammunition, securing and controlling firearms and ammunition, and maintained automated supply systems. She was stationed at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, in the 3-101 Aviation Unit working with the Apache Helicopters. While there, she became air assault qualified. Her military career included a deployment to Iraq from 2005 to 2006, where she supported critical operations at LSA Anaconda.

Family is at the heart of Tammy's life. She is married to her best friend, James, and together they have five children: Ridge, Coal, Steel, Valley, and Brook. Despite her professional and community commitments, she always finds time for her family. Together, they run a successful government contracting business, and Tammy also contributes to the community by working with Americans for Prosperity in Utah.

Tammy is a dedicated community leader. She serves as the post commander for her local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and is the Utah VFW's state surgeon. She is passionate about supporting Veterans as evidenced through her work with Heroes Haven, which strives to combat suicide among Veterans. Tammy is also a member of the American Legion and is actively involved in her church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. She is passionate about serving others and inspiring people to participate in their communities. She loves board games, cards, and spending time in the water.

Tammy wants the public to know that while women may not be required to serve, many feel called to do so, and their service is invaluable.

For her women Veterans who may be struggling, Tammy encourages you to step out of your comfort zones, build relationships with other Veterans, and embrace the lifelong bonds that come from shared experiences.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“Well behaved women rarely make history."
~ Eleanor Roosevelt



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Love you more,
always."
~ My Mom,
Linda Boyd Huskey



Sheryl

BY BILL BEAN

Sheryl Binetti proudly served in the United States Navy from November 1985 to June 1996, where she worked as a Torpedoman's Mate. In this role, Sheryl was responsible for maintaining the ship's armory and weapons spaces, ensuring that the guns, gun mounts, and sprinkler systems were always in top condition. She also supported ship operations during general quarters, and manned the salute battery while entering foreign ports. She recalls that she was a lower rank, so she didn't get to fire the artillery, but was a "catcher" assigned to catching the massive shells ejected from the guns. A highlight of her service was supporting the Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Admiral Staff, a position she considered a "sweet assignment."

Though Sheryl served before 9/11, she traveled extensively, visiting ports across the Mediterranean and beyond, including Gaeta, Italy; Nice and Toulon, France; Haifa, Israel; and Alexandria, Egypt. Her service also included training in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and a NATO exercise in the North Atlantic Ocean that earned her entry into the Order of the Blue Nose. One of her most memorable experiences came while working on an ammunition storage compartment sprinkler system. She opened an outside portal and was stunned by an up-close and awe-inspiring view of the Rock of Gibraltar.

After her service, she transitioned into civilian life, where she and her husband, Rob, have raised three boys and maintained close relationships with extended family. She currently supports her family's travel agency, "Cruise Sea-Kers," while managing their home and actively volunteering with organizations like the American Legion Post 68, where she participates in community events and supports Veterans' causes.

Sheryl is passionate about writing, photography, gardening, animals, and traveling. She also advocates for women Veterans, reminding others that they are often invisible but integral to the fabric of our military history. Through her involvement in organizations like Heroes Haven and She Served, Sheryl continues to mentor and support fellow women Veterans.

Sheryl would like the public to know that women Veterans are all around you, even though you don't know it, and "we are trying hard to change that."

Sheryl's military service taught her invaluable lessons about pride, resilience, and the importance of seeking the benefits available to all Veterans, and her message to fellow women Veterans is clear: "Be proud that you served your country, and don't hesitate to seek the benefits that you earned. You deserve help because you served. There is no judgment about how or where you served—just that you served."





January

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

January Goklish-Stevens served in the United States Air Force from Sept. 1, 1998, to June 20, 2022. Initially dreaming of becoming a firefighter, January worked hard to meet the prerequisites. However, due to misinformation, her career path did not align with her aspirations. After some disappointment, she chose to make the best of her situation.

Assigned to the services field under an open classification, January worked in roles such as kitchen operations, fitness center management, and lodging. Although her dream was initially shattered, she embraced this unexpected path as a challenge, excelling in all responsibilities. Her dedication earned her recognition as Airman of the Quarter three times and Airman of the Year for two consecutive years. She also received USAF in Europe Airman of the Year and Senior Airman Below the Zone honors. January went above and beyond by creating fitness programs, establishing a new baking line, and volunteering in youth programs. Later in her career, she was nominated to serve as an instructor for the Air Force but suffered a traumatic injury before transferring to Lackland Air Force Base, which led to a medical discharge.

During her service, January deployed briefly to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Southern Watch and assisted Kosovo War refugees while stationed at Aviano Air Base in Italy. While there, she engaged in anti-terrorism efforts and was impacted by the Al-Qaeda insurgency in Yemen. She earned several awards, including the Air Force Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, NATO Medal, and Air Force Commendation Medal.

January's biggest takeaway was realizing the power of a positive attitude in changing the trajectory of her life. Though she didn't become a firefighter, she learned to embody a fighter's spirit.

January now lives in Utah with her two children, Ethan and LeeElle, along with her dog, Scout; two cats, Beans and Boots; and two garden bunnies. She enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking, rafting, and mountain biking.

After her discharge, January used her G.I. Bill to become a teacher, a role she finds deeply fulfilling. She loves inspiring her students and seeing their excitement for learning. In her free time, she works with a local youth group, organizing outdoor activities. Since moving to Utah seven years ago, she has cherished the state's natural beauty.

January believes the public should recognize the strength of women who served in the military. To her fellow Veterans, she advises: trust yourself and everything you've learned. You may inspire others, especially during times of change. She encourages Veterans to connect with a Veterans' group for support, reminding them they are not alone.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do." ~ Pelé!





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"A woman is like a tea bag — you never know how strong it is until you put it in hot water."
~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Jelena

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Jelena Cantrell served in the United States Marine Corps from June 1983 to November 1985, specializing in classified material control. Her expertise in managing sensitive information was vital to her command's operations. Jelena also served temporary duty with the Inspector General, where her exceptional performance earned her formal recognition. Additionally, she collaborated with the Navy as a dental technician, where her dedication and professionalism were acknowledged with a letter of appreciation for her outstanding contributions.

Jelena credits the Marine Corps with teaching her how to adapt in high-pressure situations—a skill that has proven invaluable in her civilian life. "The ability to adapt, especially in emergencies or stressful situations, is something I carry with me every day," she said. Her love for the Marines remains strong; she still keeps her original combat boots, spit-shined and ready, 40 years later.

Today, Jelena is focused on her family and faith. She has been married for 25 years and is the proud mother of two children. Her son lives in South Carolina, while her daughter, who lives nearby, has five children that Jelena helps care for.

Despite living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and being unable to work since 2016, Jelena remains active in her community. She is passionate about teaching American Sign Language (ASL) to raise awareness about Deaf culture, a cause close to her heart as her husband is deaf. Jelena also serves at FamilySearch, helping both deaf and hearing patrons explore their family histories. Through daily inspirational memes created from animal photos, she spreads joy and encouragement to her Facebook followers. Jelena is proud to have been involved with the Malinois Foundation and Heroes Haven.

In her spare time, Jelena loves to volunteer, read, paint, and craft. She is always available to support her fellow Veterans and was even featured in Valor Magazine. Most of all, she treasures time spent with her grandchildren, husband, and two dogs.

Jelena reminds the public never to underestimate the strength of a woman Veteran. As Rudyard Kipling put it: "The female of the species is more deadly than the male."

For women Veterans facing challenges, Jelena offers simple but powerful advice: "Take it one day at a time, and don't be afraid to ask for help."





Kelly

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Kelly Holmes served in the United States Army from 1985 to 2006 as an Admin/Records NCO, where she was responsible for tracking and documenting soldiers' military careers. She supported Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, contributing to critical missions during both conflicts. One of her proudest accomplishments was her role in managing the records of soldiers and ensuring their service was accurately documented.

A significant takeaway from her military service is the belief that she can achieve anything she sets her mind to, a mindset that has continued to guide her throughout her life.

Kelly is the mother of two grown children—her son, DaMarques, served in the Special Forces, and her daughter, who is married with three children, continues to make her proud.

Currently retired, she enjoys her time exploring hobbies such as pottery and archery. Her favorite quote, "Adapt and Overcome," serves as a reminder of the resilience and adaptability of women in the military.

She encourages others to learn more about women Veterans and not hesitate to ask about her service. She is honored to share her experiences and offers this advice to women adjusting to civilian life: "Take it slow and enjoy the ride."





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Adapt and overcome."



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Don't let fear keep you from accomplishing your dreams. Just do it!"



Michele

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Michele Hill served in the United States Army from 1975 to 1983, enlisting as a supply clerk (76Y). Her role involved managing essential administrative tasks, from signing equipment in and out to ordering uniforms for soldiers. Later, as an administrative technician, she oversaw the motor pool and orderly room, ensuring weapons and gas masks were properly cleaned and stored.

During her basic training, the Women's Army Corps disbanded, making Michele one of the first women integrated into the regular Army. As the only woman in her unit, she faced the challenges of being a pioneer, paving the way for women in today's military. Her service spanned the Vietnam War to the Cold War, and she takes pride in being part of a transformative era for women in the armed forces.

Reflecting on her military experience, Michele says her service taught her the true meaning of strength and resilience. "I learned how to push through and hang on, even when others couldn't," she shares.

Michele's ties to the military span her entire life. She was born in Germany while her father served in the Air Force. Her late husband also served in the Army, and today she and her current husband, a retired Navy Veteran, enjoy retirement by traveling, gardening, and attending matinees. Recently, Michele began crocheting hats for cancer patients and has rallied her friends to join her efforts.

An award-winning author, Michele has written several books and short stories, including Your Mother Wears Combat Boots, which details the experiences of military women. She is currently completing her bachelor's degree at Brigham Young University. Michele is passionate about staying active and is the oldest member of her nationwide boxing gym.

Michele believes women Veterans have earned respect and equality through their hard work. "Give them their dignity and your admiration—they deserve it!"

Her advice to fellow women transitioning to civilian life is to take pride in their service, seek support when needed, and remember: "You are awesome."





Adrene

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Adrene Wike served as a United States Air Force Security Forces member from 2007 to 2012. Security forces encompasses diverse roles, including law enforcement, security, and combat. One of Adrene's most rewarding challenges was Airman Leadership School (ALS), where she earned the Commandant Award, presented to the student who makes the most impactful contribution to the class's success.

Her final assignment pushed her beyond her comfort zone as a cadre member for security forces pre-deployment training. There, she overcame her fear of public speaking and discovered a passion for it. Adrene also deployed twice in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

One of Adrene's key takeaways from her time in the Air Force was meeting her husband of 11 years. While she was transitioning out, he planned to stay in until retirement. Together, they built a team supporting fellow service members and their blended family of three daughters, ages 21, 16, and 15.

Adrene now embraces public speaking and finds fulfillment in training and development. She oversees a team of health coaches supporting individuals with Type 2 Diabetes, prioritizing the human touch often missing in health care. Helping people is where Adrene feels she belongs. When she needs a reset, she heads to the hiking trails or dives into a good book.

Adrene believes that if the public understood a few key points, women veterans would find it easier to transition to civilian life and careers. Women Veterans often bring a directness that can be misunderstood as a traditionally masculine trait. Balancing this perception while educating others can be challenging, leaving many women veterans feeling as though they must constantly prove themselves.

Adrene envisions the path forward as one of mutual learning and listening for both veterans and civilians. She encourages taking the time to understand what adjustments are needed to bridge the gap.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Comfort lives in complacency; growth begins when you lean into fear!"





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"One day you will tell your story of how you overcame what you went through, and it will become someone else's survival guide." ~ Brené Brown

Heidi

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Heidi (Dawn) Heydt served in the United States Air Force from December 1995 to April 2017. She completed the Air Force Fire Academy in San Angelo, Texas. As a firefighter, she rose through the ranks to become a crew chief of an engine company, responsible for aircraft, structural, hazardous materials, fire rescue, and disaster response operations. In 2001, her career shifted to public health, where she managed programs focused on disease prevention, food safety inspections, sanitation, health education, and medical entomology.

Although Heidi was not in direct combat, she supported several conflicts. Most notably, she deployed to Kosovo as a senior noncommissioned officer in preventive medicine. Her mission involved supporting 29 NATO nations and 5,800 troops across six Pan-Balkan countries.

Heidi's most significant takeaways from her Air Force service were resiliency, flexibility, versatility, and leadership skills. She also values the strong bonds formed with fellow service members, along with the discipline, commitment, and perseverance she developed, which have shaped her personal and professional growth.

Heidi has been married for 23 years and has two stepdaughters and two beloved dogs. She has traveled extensively, visiting 45 countries. Her passion for travel stems from a desire for cultural awareness, personal growth, broader perspectives, and insight into the commonalities of humanity.

Currently, Heidi works as a certified peer support specialist at the local Veterans Affairs (VA) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Clinic. She supports Veterans recovering from mental health and substance use disorders, facilitates PTSD groups, and leads the Women Veterans Network (WoVeN) program, which fosters connection among women Veterans. Heidi also volunteers at Equellness, a Park City ranch that promotes mental fitness and personal growth through equine-assisted activities and wellness programs.

Heidi highlights the need for greater recognition of women Veterans, who often face unique challenges such as gender-based discrimination, balancing family responsibilities, and higher rates of PTSD and anxiety. She advocates for raising awareness of resources, improving community support, and enhancing the quality of life for Veterans.

For women transitioning from military to civilian roles, Heidi's advice is to embrace and celebrate their service. She encourages women Veterans to recognize their unique skills, seek mental health support, and connect with other women Veterans.





THE UNEXPECTED JOURNEY OF HEALING: A Veteran's path to to service

As a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS), I offer a unique approach to veteran care. My recovery journey from mental health challenges and substance use shapes my perspective. Like many veterans, my transition from military to civilian life was challenging, often marked by struggles with mental health, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, many veterans are finding solace and support through peer support programs.

My journey provides a valuable understanding of the struggles faced by fellow service members who have walked a similar path. Guided by our mission to instill hope and empower recovery, I offer support rooted in shared experiences. This bond creates an atmosphere of trust, understanding, and empathy that transcends the conventional clinical setting. Peer support services depend on a palpable connection of shared experiences. This connection, forged through camaraderie, mutual respect, and a unique familiarity born from difficult military experiences, fosters a level of trust essential to confronting deeply personal struggles.

As a peer, I provide support and resource guidance, earning gratitude from many veterans. My assistance is based on personal connections that go beyond traditional clinical expertise, offering compassionate help during the transitional period after active-duty service. Peers understand the difficulties veterans face when returning to civilian life because they have faced and navigated those same challenges. This intimate understanding forms a bridge of empathy and trust, encouraging recovery and growth. Such a deeply felt bond fosters a profound shift toward positive momentum in recovery, often unattainable in traditional therapeutic settings.

This perspective—shaped by experiences on the front lines, facing upheavals, anxieties, and fears—enables me to empathize deeply with my fellow veterans. That hard-earned understanding is invaluable in helping others find their way forward.

The Unexpected Journey of Healing: A Veteran's Path to Service

My active-duty service in the Air Force, from 1995 to 2017, culminated in a bittersweet transition. As I prepared for retirement and eagerly anticipated travels, our youngest daughter celebrated her 21st birthday. Tragically, three weeks later, she was struck and killed by a drunk driver while crossing a street in Germany. Amid unfathomable grief, she gave the profound gift of life: her organs saved seven young women and a boy. This devastating loss shattered my world. Overwhelmed by grief, I turned to alcohol and sank into a deep depression with suicidal tendencies.

My first appointment at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) felt like navigating a minefield of emotions. Anger, despair, and the



Heidi (center) pictured with her daughters, Dana (left) and Nina (right)

uttered the hardest words I'd ever spoken: "I need help." I was grappling not only with the unbearable loss of my daughter but also with military sexual trauma (MST)—a crippling burden I had carried silently for 20 years.

The road to healing wasn't linear. It involved seeking assistance through every available VA resource, including Whole Health initiatives, recreational therapy, and evidence-based therapies. One program, Warrior Renew, particularly helped me understand my trauma and challenge negative thoughts. I also participated in equine therapy, working with horses as sentinel beings. I embraced mindfulness and breathing techniques and engaged in individual and group therapy. Each interaction and session gradually fostered trust in the VA system and its dedicated professionals, whom I affectionately call my "A-Team" because their first names all began with the letter "A." Their compassion and expert guidance were essential to my recovery.

Today, I find purpose in giving back. I work within the VA, providing peer support services and guiding fellow veterans as they navigate their own paths to recovery. My self-introduction during calls or meetings is always the same: I share my name, acknowledge my struggles with PTSD and MST, and convey one clear, unwavering message: "You are not alone." My experiences have cemented my trust in the VA system, its skilled providers, and the effectiveness of evidence-based therapy. My journey has burdened me with unimaginable pain but also blessed me with the strength found in healing and in sharing my story to offer solace to others facing similar battles.

BY HEIDI (DAWN) HEYDT, MPH, CPS | RETIRED USAF



HEIDI HEYDT: Motivational messages for fellow Veterans

"YOU HAVE SURVIVED YOUR HARDEST DAYS 100% TO DATE."

"YOU MUST PUT IN THE WORK TO GET THE RESULTS."

"YOU ARE NOT ALONE. I BELIEVE YOU, AND I BELIEVE IN YOUR ABILITY TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL LIFE."

"A PEER IS THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. YOU MAY FEEL IT'S A TRAIN, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE ME SAYING, 'LET'S GO THIS WAY.' YOU MUST DECIDE."

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Ever tried. Ever failed.
No matter. Try again.
Fail again. Fail better."
~ Samuel Beckett



Amanda

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Amanda Garman served from 2008 to 2016 as an United States Army animal care specialist. In this role, she provided care for government-owned animals, including dogs, horses, marine mammals, and various laboratory research animals. Her responsibilities included diagnosing conditions based on the animals' medical histories and veterinary practices, calculating and administering medications, assisting in surgeries, and maintaining comprehensive records of animal care and treatment. One of her notable assignments involved caring for laboratory animals and preventing zoonotic diseases. She also assisted with animal studies in collaboration with local embassies in Egypt.

Amanda's military service allowed her to explore ancient ruins in Egypt and neighboring countries. Her time there enabled her to immerse herself in diverse cultures and languages, which varied across regions and local communities.

Inspired by her father, who was drafted during the Vietnam War and served until his retirement, Amanda continued the legacy of military service. Now retired from the Army, she is working toward becoming a certified peer support specialist at the Salt Lake City Veterans Administration.

Amanda is passionate about riding and driving horses, adaptive rock climbing, archery, and dog training. She actively participates in various dog shows across Utah and neighboring states.

Amanda wants to address a common public misunderstanding of her role, emphasizing that she is not "just the spouse" but served honorably in the Army. She proudly states, "We rock."

Amanda encourages fellow Veterans to start with an interest and choose a program they might enjoy. She highlights the importance of trust, which develops over time, and reminds them they are capable of facing challenges such as therapy. Amanda recommends recreational therapy, acknowledging that while it can be tough at first, the healing benefits are worth it.





Anai

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Anai Ferrachi proudly served in the United States Army from 2005 to 2006—a short but impactful period that shaped her life and career. As a transportation specialist, she was responsible for moving essential supplies, personnel, and equipment—virtually anything needed to keep operations running smoothly. Her military experience took her to the heart of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where she drove convoys almost nightly.

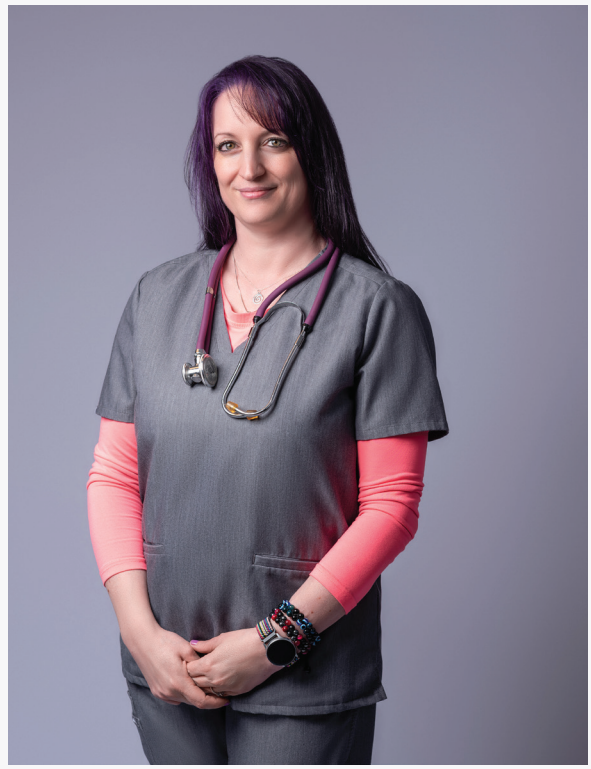
One of her proudest accomplishments was being promoted three times within just 11 months—a testament to her hard work and dedication. "I was promoted in basic training, again during advanced individual training (AIT), and finally during my deployment," she recalls. Reflecting on her service, Anai proudly states, "I can do anything a man can do, and I have proven it."

Today, Anai is a dedicated nursing student and works at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as an advanced medical support assistant. In this role, she serves as the first point of contact for Veterans, helping them access the care and support they need. Her passion for helping fellow Veterans is clear, as she strives to provide the best possible care for those who served.

Outside of her professional life, Anai is married to a fellow Veteran and is a proud mother to a 4-year-old daughter. In her free time, she indulges her love for gaming, from Dungeons & Dragons to console and computer games.

Anai speaks candidly about the frustration many women Veterans feel when their service is overlooked or underappreciated. "We served and performed all the same duties and deployments asV the men," she explains. Yet, the fight for recognition and equal access to resources remains ongoing. Despite these challenges, Anai remains a fierce advocate for women Veterans and their contributions.

For women transitioning from military to civilian life, Anai offers valuable advice: "Get involved in the VA as soon as possible after your military service, and connect with Veteran groups that can help ease the transition." She emphasizes the importance of taking time to adjust, reminding fellow Veterans to be patient with themselves during this period of change.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."
~ Alice Walker



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"You are worth it."
~ Kyle Carpenter



Dee Dee

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Dee Dee Terry served in the United States Army from 1967 to 1968, initially as a medic at Fort Sam Houston. There, she learned what is now considered basic nursing skills, such as treating shock and administering IVs. After some time, she realized she was in the wrong field and decided to switch roles. She opted to train as a culinary specialist, taking on responsibilities such as ordering food supplies, inspecting subsistence items, maintaining a safe and sanitary kitchen, and working alongside chefs to prepare meals. Dee Dee found great satisfaction in providing food for the troops.

As a Vietnam-era Veteran, Dee Dee was honorably discharged with the rank of private first class, though her discharge was not something she wanted. At the time, women were not afforded as many rights as they are today. Reconciling her service experience has taken years, but with the help of programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and support from her son, Dee Dee has cultivated the hard-won pride associated with her service.

One of the most significant and empowering moments of Dee Dee's service was stopping to salute the large American flag during basic training. The incredible people she met remain among her most valued experiences.

Blessed with a large family, Dee Dee cherishes her six children, nine grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Now enjoying retirement, she previously worked in the reservations department for Marriott and spent nine years as an eligibility clerk for the Salt Lake City VA.

Dee Dee remains active in her community. She runs bingo once a month in her building and participates in opportunities to promote women Veterans whenever possible. A skilled crafter, she enjoys knitting and crocheting in her free time.

Dee Dee believes public recognition of women Veterans is simple yet powerful: "Don't ever forget your time in service. Remember, you are worth it."





Diana

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Diana Symbol served in the United States Air Force from March 1986 to October 2011 as a security forces specialist, pararescue (PJ) augmentee, and data analyst. A defining moment in her military career came when she was augmented into the Pararescue Unit—a groundbreaking achievement accomplished long before women were officially permitted to serve in that career field. While training fellow security forces personnel, her talents as a rappel master and jump guide caught the attention of her chief. Recognizing her expertise, he recruited her as an augmentee with the PJs. This role not only highlighted her leadership abilities but also marked a significant milestone in her career. Later, she transitioned to database analysis, believing it would provide a desk job that allowed her to stay closer to her children. However, deployments continued throughout her career, and she often found herself as the only woman in male-dominated roles.



Diana supported several conflicts, including the Panamanian War in Nicaragua, Operation Desert Shield in Afghanistan, Operation Desert Storm in Kuwait, and missions across Africa and Iran. As a Pararescue augmentee, she also participated in rescue missions, including saving Navy SEALs trapped in a mountain range in Alaska. Her service earned numerous accolades, including a Valor Award, multiple Commendation Medals, Meritorious Unit Awards, and the Soldier's Medal for saving a life.

One of Diana's greatest takeaways from her service was embracing her identity as a warrior, earning respect from male counterparts for her success in both combat and non-combat roles.



Married for 24 years, Diana and her husband run D&L Property Services LLC, a general contracting company specializing in remodeling. They have 11 children (four biological and seven adopted) and three grandchildren, including one grandbaby living in Alaska. Currently, Diana operates her own business and is training to become a Veterans Administration Volunteer Services Representative in Salt Lake City. She actively supports Veterans at the VA, focusing on recreational therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

Through the Salt Lake City VA's Adaptive Sports Program, she participates in activities such as recumbent cycling, air and rifle shooting, pickleball, adaptive kayaking, and cornhole.

Diana believes women Veterans contribute not only their lives but also their specialized skills to the military. She recognizes that serving as a woman in the military is challenging yet immensely rewarding. She hopes the civilian community acknowledges the strength and resilience of women Veterans. Her advice to women Veterans is to carry their military skills with pride and remember their value as they transition to civilian life.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"No sense in worrying about yesterday; yesterday was yesterday. But you can ruin today by worrying about tomorrow, so enjoy your present at all times."
~ Unknown (from her father)





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Be the queen who fixes another queen's crown without telling them it was crooked."

Jessica

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Jessica Patten's military journey began on March 15, 1995, and spanned 20 years, culminating in her retirement on April 1, 2015. Jessica's role in the United States Air Force was centered on transportation and logistics, specifically as a 2T171 vehicle operator, often referred to as a "combat trucker." Her duties extended to convoy linehaul missions and security operations, ensuring that critical supplies and personnel reached their destinations both at home and in war zones. She played a vital role in several key military operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. Jessica's ability to adapt and thrive in high-pressure environments earned her the respect of her peers and superiors alike.

When asked about her most significant takeaway from her military career, Jessica's response was empowering: "The military showed me that I'm a lot stronger than I thought I ever could be."

This realization became a cornerstone of her identity, shaping the way she approaches life's challenges both in and out of uniform.
Today, Jessica is a beacon of hope and support for others. She serves as a sexual assault victim advocate at Hill Air Force Base, working within the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office. Her role involves providing crucial support to survivors, fostering a culture of consent, and advocating for systemic change.

She is also pursuing a Master of Social Work degree at Weber State University, where she is sharpening her skills as a future licensed therapist. As an intern therapist with KT&T Ventures, Jessica works directly with youth and families, many of whom are navigating the challenges of foster care and complex home dynamics.

Jessica's dedication to service extends to her family. She and her husband, Charles Patten Jr., have been married for more than 24 years—a partnership that began during their time in the Air Force. Together, they've raised three children: Charles III, 22, born in Okinawa, Japan; Orion, 18, born in Landstuhl, Germany; and Audrey, 15. Rounding out the family is their beloved rescue dog, a spirited Shar-Pei/Boxer mix named Princess Ali Pup.

Patten is a firm advocate for women Veterans, challenging outdated perceptions. Her message to the public is clear: "We did go outside the wire—there are female combat vets!"

As a female Veteran, you are a powerful force for good in the world. Remember that your strength comes not just from your physical abilities, but from the depth of your character, the resilience of your spirit, and the positive impact you have on those around you. By cultivating inner strength, leading by example, and giving back to your community, you can inspire others, create meaningful change, and thrive in all aspects of your life.





Joann

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Joann Haines served in the United States Marine Corps from July 1965 to July 1969. She held various roles, including launch and recovery technician, military police, motor transport driver, personnelist, and naval intelligence. One of her most memorable moments was safely landing an F-4 aircraft during the Vietnam War—a task that typically required three people.

During her service, Joann earned several medals, including the Sharpshooter with Rifle, National Defense Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and recognition as a Cold War Veteran. The Marine Corps instilled in her a deep respect for discipline, independence, teamwork, and equality. Hermost significant takeaway was the understanding that the military community transcends service branch, race, or rank, fostering lasting familial-like bonds.

After leaving the service, Joann continued to serve as a Veterans Administration (VA) ambassador focused on mental health and helping Veterans navigate available services. She also uses her musical talents, playing her flute to calm anxiousVeterans at the VA when needed.

In addition to her ambassador work, Joann supports Veterans by offering coffee and donuts at the VA for a small donation to her charity, Hope Squad, which promotes mental health and suicide awareness. She is a licensed HAM radio operator, artist, and motorcycle enthusiast who recently purchased a Harley-Davidson trike.

Joann recognizes the public often overlooks the essential roles women played during the Vietnam War and continue to play today. She advocates for programs that highlight the contributions of womenVeterans to help shift this narrative.

To her fellow womenVeterans, Joann shares this encouragement: "Take pride in your service. You are a member of an elite group—just 1 percent of the population took the oath to serve. If you're facing challenges transitioning to civilian life, connect with the VA early. I waited 40 years before seeking benefits; don't make the same mistake. You earned these benefits through your honorable service—never think otherwise."



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Women can do anything a man can do, but better. These boots are made for walking, and that's what we're gonna do. In the military, we all wore the same boots." ~ Nancy Sinatra




WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"The secret of
success is constancy
to purpose."
~ Benjamin Disraeli

Lacy

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Lacy Hardman, a proud airborne Veteran of the United States Army, served as a logistics officer from July 10, 2000, to September 14, 2014. During her time in the military, Lacy's role was pivotal, focusing on planning and resourcing to ensure missions were well-equipped for success. Her leadership was tested and proven during Operation New Dawn in Iraq, where she led the 8th Ordnance from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where she was responsible for supplying ammunition to soldiers across Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Our mission was challenging—we faced constant danger, including being shot at—but we persevered and successfully supplied the warfighters in two countries," Lacy recalled. Under her leadership, a company once regarded as the weakest in the battalion rose to become one of the best. Her battalion commander acknowledged the transformation, a testament to her leadership and dedication to service members.

For her service, Lacy was awarded multiple awards including the prestigious Bronze Star and Combat Action Badge. She noted that the most significant lesson she learned during her 14-year career was self-awareness. "The Army's first leadership principle is 'Know Thyself,' and that's something I carry with me every day. It's helped me in my personal life, with my family, and as a business leader."

After her military service, Lacy transitioned into entrepreneurship, now owning three businesses: Swell Retreat, a space designed to help others align with their purpose; Salty Peak Real Estate; and Builder Agent Academy. She has also launched a signature retreat program called Hearts and Horses and created the Polar Purpose Plunge, an initiative to raise awareness for suicide prevention. Furthermore, Hardman founded a Foster Care Retreat at Swell Retreat, offering foster children educational, recreational, and connection opportunities.

Outside of her businesses, Lacy remains dedicated to community service, sitting on several boards including the Main Street Committee, Bolder Way Forward, and Direction One. These programs focus on supporting local businesses, advocate for women's success, and promote youth achievement, respectively.

Today, Lacy is a devoted wife to Ben and mother to two children, plus three daughters from Ben's previous marriage. When she's not working or volunteering, she enjoys spending time with her family, hiking, traveling, and reading books on self-development, leadership, and business. Her deep faith also continues to be a guiding force in her life. Her advice to fellow women Veterans transitioning to civilian life? "Stay connected. Find other Veterans, use the lessons you've learned, and help others along the way."

Women Veterans, she says, are resilient and dedicated, standing for freedom and service beyond self—a legacy she's proud to uphold.





Rachel

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Rachel Walker proudly served in the United States Army from Jan. 25, 1996, to April 10, 2002, specializing in communications. As a skilled technician in digital switching, radio, and satellite communications, she deployed mobile subscriber equipment (MSE) to establish cell sites, digital switching, and satellite communications, providing crucial voice and data support for both short- and long-range operations.

Serving as a paratrooper with the 82nd Signal Battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Rachel was part of the D-Main Task Force, delivering division-level communications for airborne operations. Her contributions included implementing video teleconferencing directly from the battlefield, pioneering the integration of civilian technology within military operations. Later, at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, she continued her communications work with echelon-level satellite support, including a deployment to Kuwait in 2001.

From the moment Rachel entered the military, she knew she was where she belonged. Her experience in the Army shaped her into the person she is today. The technical knowledge, leadership development, and camaraderie she found among her fellow soldiers provided her with a lifetime of invaluable experiences. She is especially proud of her time as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division—a highlight of her life.

Throughout her military career, Rachel earned two Army Commendation Medals, seven Army Achievement Medals, and additional honors, including the Humanitarian Service Medal for her assistance during Hurricane Fran. Her service was marked by continuous leadership, cross-training in various technical specialties, and a swift advancement to staff sergeant within five years.

After her time in the Army, Rachel transitioned to a career in education. She initially taught kindergarten before moving to sixth grade. Today, she manages K-12 state testing and school data for her district, supporting students as they strive to reach their full potential. Her three children inspire her as they establish careers in emergency services and technical fields and prepare to graduate high school. "All three are my world, and I will do anything to help them succeed in life—including letting them work hard and struggle as they experience life," Rachel said.

Passionate about giving back, Rachel believes in guiding students at her school with encouragement, honesty, and support, knowing how impactful it is for someone to believe in their success. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, hiking, working on home projects, and visiting national parks.

Rachel says women Veterans bring unique strength and perspective, often transforming struggles into resilience. She advises women Veterans to lean into VA resources and their veteran community, recognizing that the military bonds they've built can provide invaluable support during the transition to civilian life.





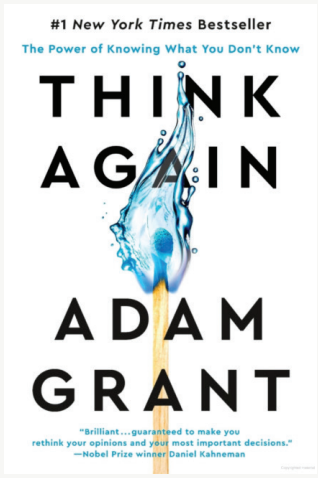
WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving; we get stronger and more resilient."
~ Steve Maraboli



Recommended reading

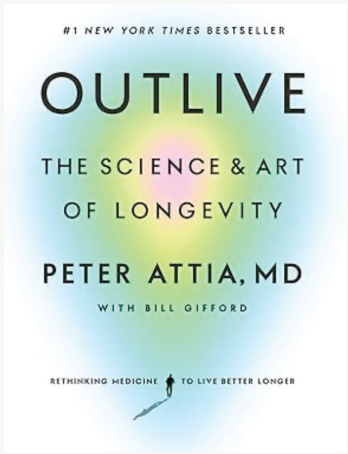
1

Think Again
by Adam Grant



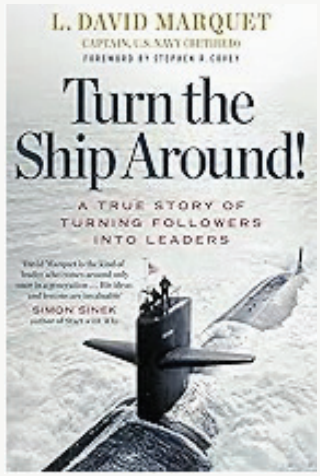
2

Outlive
by Dr. Peter Attia



3

Turn the Ship Around
by L. David Marquet





This issue's recommended reading list, selected by featured veteran Adrene Wike, highlights three inspiring books that delve into personal growth, leadership and well-being.

"THINK AGAIN" BY ADAM GRANT

This insightful book by organizational psychologist Adam Grant encourages readers to embrace the power of rethinking. Through a blend of research and storytelling, Grant challenges us to question our beliefs, stay curious, and adapt to the ever-changing world around us. Perfect for leaders, educators, and anyone seeking personal or professional growth, Think Again inspires readers to become more open-minded and intellectually flexible.

"OUTLIVE" BY PETER ATTIA

In this groundbreaking manifesto, longevity expert Dr. Peter Attia redefines how we approach health and aging. Outlive provides practical advice for preventing chronic diseases and optimizing long-term health, offering readers a new lens on living better and longer. This book is an essential guide for anyone looking to take charge of their well-being and adopt a proactive, science-based approach to aging gracefully.

"TURN THE SHIP AROUND!" BY L. DAVID MARQUET

Former nuclear submarine captain L. David Marquet shares his transformational leadership journey in this compelling account. By shifting from a traditional "leader-follower" approach to a "leader-leader" model, Marquet turned the worst-performing crew in the U.S. Navy into one of the best. Turn the Ship Around! offers valuable lessons on empowering teams, fostering accountability, and cultivating a culture of excellence, making it a must-read for leaders across all fields.

www.thevetspace.org

https://linktr.ee/jennifermcneill

www.hivepromo.com

https://rallypointgrille.com

www.Hope4veterans.org

www.newufitnessjax.com

https://hope4veterans.org/board-of-directors/GIGreen.org

http://heavenonearthevents.com/

https://christopherburksscholarshipfoundationinc.org

www.consciouslyaware.com

https://anchoredchirojax.com/

www.autumnfaithcompany.com

https://linktr.ee/wildflower_massage

www.straightforwardhomesales.com

https://designconciergeathome.com

www.kmullins.shop

humblewarrior.org/

www.facebook.com/GardenBeliever/

www.villagersforveterans.org

https://hopecenterforveterans.org/

www.facebook.com/georgiamilitarywomen/

www.barnwellevents.com/

www.footsolutions.com/greenville

https://thepeachpitgeorgia.org







BEHIND THE SCENES

Here are some behind-the-scenes photos from Heroes Haven Cohort HH012!

We're incredibly proud of everything we've accomplished — whether it was conquering physical challenges or embracing emotional growth. Together, we faced our fears and began a transformative journey toward healing and resilience.













She Served photo shoot from the fall of 2024: Members of the Veterans Administration Peer Support Group and Heroes Haven came together for a social gathering and participated in the *She Served* photoshoot at the National Ability Center in Park City, Utah. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect, share stories and build camaraderie with fellow women veterans from the local community.












Godox UB-105S


HEROES HAVEN


SHE SERVED
Celebrating Women Veterans




HEROES HAVEN

*Did you know **women** are the **fastest-growing** segment of the military and Veteran populations? That's just one of the reasons we bring you ...* ***She Served***.

*Every individual featured in this magazine is **unique**, yet they share **similar** experiences from active duty service to what happened in the days, months and years after She Served.*

*We hope the Veterans we featured in this issue of this magazine **inspired you** with examples of their leadership, resourcefulness, knowledge and sacrifice.*

Your generosity enables us to continue the She Served Initiative. Donations help us continue to tell the **amazing stories of our women Veterans.** Additionally, it furthers our mission to raise awareness that women served in the United States Military **and** are Veterans too.

You can make a donation on the website, **https://sheservedinitiative.org/donate** or scan the QR code.

She Served is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization registered in the State of Georgia.