SHE SERVED
MAGAZINE
Celebrating Women Veterans



19 MILITARY WOMEN VETERANS SHARE THEIR STORIES

Inside Issue 7:
WOMEN OF VALOR: THREE GENERATIONS OF MILITARY EXCELLENCE

HUMBLE WARRIOR & GEORGIA MILITARY WOMEN EDITION



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

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SCAN TO VISIT THE NEW WEBSITE

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 the website: 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



In this edition of *She Served* magazine, we're focusing on wellness and self-care! The She Served Initiative had the honor of collaborating with two incredible Georgia-based women Veteran organizations, Humble Warrior Wellness and Yoga, and the Georgia Military Women Facebook group, for the first-ever Radiant Warrior Retreat: Celebrating Women Veterans. This exclusive event was created to connect, rejuvenate, and celebrate the extraordinary journeys of women Veterans across Georgia.

Over two inspiring days, 19 women Veterans gathered to form meaningful connections, experience revitalizing wellness practices, and participate in the She Served photoshoot, proudly featured in this edition.

Humble Warrior Wellness and Yoga, a women-led organization, is dedicated to supporting female veterans and first responders by offering free wellness retreats, workshops, and classes designed to build social connections and promote overall well-being. Georgia Military Women, a thriving Facebook group with over 5,300 members, brings together women who have served or are currently serving, offering critical support and opportunities for meetups throughout the state. In this edition, we proudly spotlight both of these outstanding organizations and the profound impact they are making.

We are also honored to feature 19 extraordinary women Veterans, along with a remarkable family of three generations of military service: Ruth, who served in the United States Marine Corps; her daughter, Vedia, who served in the United States Air Force; and her granddaughter, Gabrielle, who served in the United States Coast Guard. Their inspiring stories of service and legacy are a must-read.

Additionally, don't miss our recommended reading list, where we've curated books on mindful body practices, combating PTSD, and plant-based eating. Plus, a special preview of Raquel Durden's upcoming book ***From Chaos to Calm***, offering insights into finding peace amidst life's challenges.

Martina Schmidt

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



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

WOMEN OF VALOR

Three Generations, One Legacy of Military Excellence

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Meet Ruth, Vedia and Gabrielle three generations of women whose military legacy spans across time, different military branches and personal triumphs.

RUTH: A PIONEER IN THE MARINE CORPS

Ruth served as a Marine during a time when women were treated as second-class citizens within the military. Reflecting on her experience she shared, "Military women in the seventies were treated as second-class citizens, even if they were officers." Ruth's boot camp experience was starkly different from what recruits face today. "We didn't have any physical training except for drilling on the field, no weapons training, and there was no 'Crucible,' like they have now. My basic training was eight weeks long, compared to the 13 weeks they have today."



When asked about her advice to her daughter and granddaughter when they enlisted, Ruth emphasized the importance of making the most of the military experience. "I advised my daughter to make a career out of the Air Force or to choose a field where she could gain skills for the future. When my granddaughter joined the Coast Guard, I encouraged her to pursue a career as well because I wasn't sure what educational opportunities the Coast Guard offered."

Ruth reflects on the pride she feels in having three generations of women serve: "Having three generations of women in our family gives me a feeling of pride and thankfulness that we are carrying on our family tradition. We not only care about our family but are also willing to serve and protect our country for future generations."

VEDIA: FOLLOWING IN MOM'S FOOTSTEPS

Vedia grew up unaware that her mother, Ruth, had served in the Marine Corps. "Like many women of her time, she never spoke about her service," Vedia reflects. Yet, despite the silence, her mother's strength had a profound impact on her life. "When I became a new mother, my mom encouraged me to join the Air Force, knowing it would provide the financial stability and structure I needed as a single parent." This advice marked a pivotal moment in Vedia's life, ultimately leading her to enlist and build a stable future for her daughter.

"Having three generations of women serve gives me an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude. We're not only caring for our family but also serving to protect the future of our country," Vedia says.

For Vedia, their service carries additional significance as Black women. "Our military journey is a testament to the resilience and strength passed down through our lineage. It's about turning oppression into empowerment and contributing to a country that didn't always see our worth."

GABRIELLE: THE NEXT GENERATION

Growing up surrounded by two generations of military women gave Gabrielle a distinctive perspective on life. "I always knew that if life got tough, the military was a viable option, thanks to my mother and grandmother's experiences," she shares. Although enlisting wasn't her initial plan, she ultimately chose to join the Coast Guard, forging her own path.

Gabrielle expresses deep admiration for the resilience of the women in her family. "Both my mother and grandmother encountered significant challenges and never backed down. They taught me the importance of perseverance and staying



grounded amid adversity. Their strength has always been a source of inspiration for me."



Looking toward the future, Gabrielle feels a strong sense of purpose in carrying on this legacy. "Having three generations of women in my family serve fills me with immense pride. It has instilled in me values such as duty, perseverance, and integrity — principles that guide my life today. Knowing that my mother and grandmother paved the way for me gives me a profound sense of identity and purpose." For all three women, their military service has deepened their family bond in extraordinary ways. "We share a unique connection," Gabrielle explains, "because we've all faced the challenges of boot camp, military relocations, and the delicate balance of service and personal life."

And while they've all chosen different branches, there's always room for playful rivalry. "My mom loves teasing us for not being Marines, calling us 'princesses' for choosing the 'easier' branches," Vedia laughs. "But we like to joke that the Air Force and Coast Guard are smarter — we get to save people and fly planes while she was stuck in the mud!"

For this remarkable family, military service isn't just a job—it's a testament to their strength, resilience, and unwavering dedication to each other and their country. Together, Ruth, Vedia, and Gabrielle exemplify the powerful legacy of women in service.

Ruth

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Ruth Walker served in the United States Marine Corps from June 3, 1970, to April 23, 1971, during the Vietnam War. Inspired by her brothers' military service — one in the Army, another in the Air Force, and one in the Marine Corps—Ruth felt a strong pull toward the Marines. She admired the distinct pride and discipline her Marine brother carried, which ultimately motivated her to follow his path. During her time in the Marine Corps, Ruth provided critical administrative support to senior military officers, contributing to the operational effectiveness of the unit.

Ruth has been married for 53 years to her husband, a Vietnam combat Veteran and takes great pride in their one daughter, two sons, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandson. Notably, her son, daughter, and granddaughter are also veterans. Living near her family, which hasn't always been the case, has been a blessing that allows her to maintain a close-knit family.

Being retired allows Ruth the opportunity to volunteer her time. She works with her high school alumni association, which includes the years 1936 through 1970. She also recently started compiling cemetery data from her local church records. However, she is most passionate about assisting and reaching out to the elderly in her eastern shore of Virginia community. She enjoys reading, listening to music, and traveling.

Ruth urges the public to recognize that women veterans are a resilient group who have persevered through some of the most challenging circumstances, often while serving in predominantly male environments.

"Take what you learned in the military and put it into practice, but remember that your life has been more structured than it will be in civilian life. You will need to learn to make allowances for others," is the advice Ruth offers her sister Veterans.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."
~ Maya Angelou





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Discipline - finish
what you start."
~ Vedia Barnett

Vedia

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Vedia Barnett served in the United States Air Force from 1993-1997 as an aerospace medical services specialist. She worked in the Labor Delivery and Obstetric Intensive Care unit at Wilford Hall Medical Center on Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. She worked with the most severe pregnancy cases. It required empathy and compassion to assist the thousands of families during their stressful and often devastating experiences. She developed a great sense of pride in being able to give others grace by withholding rash judgements. Her most meaningful takeaway was the opportunity to provide comfort, friendship, and care to numerous families as they navigated some of the most profound and delicate moments of their lives.

Vedia has been married to her husband, Donald, a United States Army Veteran, for 25 years. They have three children: Gabrielle, a Coast Guard veteran; Donielle, who is currently in graduate school; and Jakim, who works for Delta Airlines. Additionally, their family includes their 6-year-old grandson, Weylan, as well as their two dogs, Dusty and Roxie.

Currently serving her community, Vedia is the executive director and founder of The Vet Space, **www.TheVetSpace.org** an organization dedicated to empowering women veterans through nature. The Vet Space helps reconnect women veterans with joy, healing, and sisterhood by offering inclusive activities and experiences in the great outdoors. As executive director, her responsibilities include community engagement, educating women veterans about available resources, and advocating for their needs at the local, state, and federal levels. She volunteers her time as a board member for the Minority Veterans of America as well as a member of the Women Veterans Caucus of Common Defense. When she has free time, Vedia can often be found hiking, glamping or simply riding her bike!

Vedia believes it is crucial for the community to recognize that women veterans exist and are deeply dedicated to our country.

As a fellow Veteran, if you find yourself struggling, Vedia encourages, “Come see me! Together with my mom and my daughter, we can assist you and support your transition.”





Gabrielle

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Gabrielle Ditoto served in the United States Coast Guard from 2015-2022 as an operations specialist. She handled 911-like calls in Panama City, Florida launched rescue boats and managed vessel traffic in Texas. She also worked with various government agencies on anti-terrorism in Virginia. This involved investigating and deterring aerial threats over key sites like the White House and the Pentagon. She received a medal for serving during the War in Afghanistan.

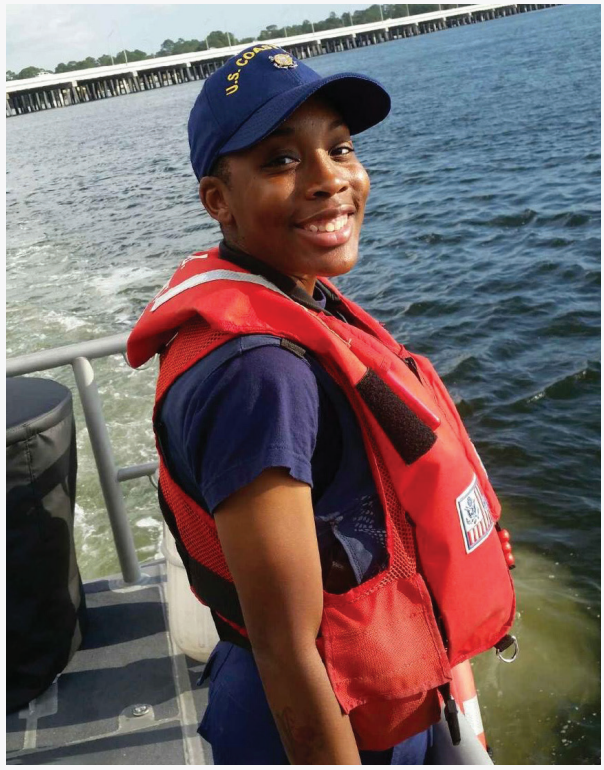
Every time Gabrielle moved to a different command, she had to readapt and learn something new. This created her most significant takeaway from her time spent in the military ... flexibility. The constant change and growth has helped her in her own life. She finds it easier to be fluid and change course whenever necessary.

Gabrielle is kept busy as a single mother with an autistic child while attending school online, full-time. She is learning Chinese. If time allows, she loves to read non-fiction historical books or watch horror films.

In a heartfelt message to the civilian public, Gabrielle highlights the importance of expanding opportunities for women in the military. She acknowledges that, despite its shortcomings, the armed forces provide a unique platform for women to pursue their goals and secure their futures. “Even if it’s just a stepping stone,” she urges, “we need more women veterans.” Gabrielle believes that her military experience has given her valuable direction in life, and is convinced that it can do the same for countless others. She hopes to inspire more women to consider the military as a viable path for personal and professional growth.

Gabrielle offers valuable advice to her sister Veterans that may be facing difficulties, emphasizing the importance of optimism. “It’s crucial to maintain a positive outlook,” she asserts. “Even on our worst days, there is always a spark of joy to be found if you seek it.” She encourages others to take a moment to appreciate the small victories and moments of happiness that life can bring. By cultivating a sense of hope and focusing on the brighter side of life, we can navigate even the toughest times with resilience and strength.






WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Take a step
every day."
~ Gabrielle Ditoto



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"RDB - Read Da Book."
~ Technical Sergeant
Sylvester G. Cotton,
USAF Retired

Sharon

BY BILL BEAN

Sharon Skellie served more than 25 years in the United States Air Force and the United States Navy. She began her active duty career in the Air Force as a demand processing clerk managing requisition requests for various flying squadrons. After leaving active duty, she joined the Air Force Reserves where she handled spare parts for C-141 aircraft. After moving to Florida, she transitioned to become a storekeeper with the United States Navy Reserves in order to attend her monthly drills closer to home. With the Navy, Sharon was frequently activated and assigned to various units in Cuba, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and several stateside bases. Her final role was with the Military Sealift Command supporting United States Merchant ships stationed globally to aid military operations. Her last assignment was as the senior enlisted chief managing port services at Dammam Port, Saudi Arabia.

Although Sharon is a Vietnam-era Veteran, it was through the Military Sealift Command that her units supported Operations Desert Storm, Southern Watch, and Provide Comfort. She says that her most significant take away from her military service was to always be prepared, because the mission could change any minute.

After her military service, Sharon worked for CVS as a certified pharmacy technician, and as a public health advisor for the CDC, until she retired in 2005.

Today, Sharon is an active member of the American Legion and serves as a Georgia Ambassador to the Military Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. She is also a key member of the leadership team for the Facebook group Georgia Military Women, one of the largest social networks for military women in the state. Sharon also supports the St. Joseph Indian School, a boarding school for Lakota children, and the Christian Appalachian Project charities. Outside of her volunteer work, she enjoys gardening, working on jigsaw puzzles, playing board games, and reading. Sharon particularly cherishes "snuggling up with a good book," finding relaxation and joy in her reading time.

Sharon wants the public to know that women Veterans embody courage, resilience, and dedication. Her advice to women transitioning to civilian life: Be prepared. Start your transition at least six months before separation. Lean on family and friends for support and focus on your education. Begin taking classes while still on active duty to get ahead.





Patricia

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Patricia Ross served in the United States Air Force from 1989 to 2014, retiring as a colonel. Her career spanned a variety of critical roles, including operations research analyst (statistician) and human resources. Her extensive experience includes significant accomplishments in numerous high-stakes environments. She was a senior fellow with the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California and held various key positions such as Director of Manpower, Organization, and Assignments for Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia.

Notably, Patricia served as the 78th Air Base Wing at Robins Air Force Base's Vice Commander, where she managed facilities and equipment valued at $3.5 billion and oversaw a $161.8 million operating budget. Her role also involved the execution of comprehensive support operations for more than 55,000 personnel, including active duty, reserves, civilians, contractors, retirees, and family members. Her contributions during global conflicts such as Operation Desert Storm, Operation Allied Force, and the Global War on Terror reflect her dedication and expertise.

Since retiring, Patricia has continued her commitment to service as the Georgia Department of Veterans Service Commissioner. In this role, she leads the state organization responsible for supporting nearly 700,000 veterans, their families, and survivors, ensuring they receive the care and benefits they deserve.

Patricia remains actively engaged in veteran organizations and community support. Her personal passions include spending quality time with her family, gardening, and kayaking, which provide a balance to her demanding professional life. Married for 20 years, Patricia is the proud mother of one daughter and three stepsons. Her family life is a central part of her identity, and she cherishes the time spent with her loved ones.

Patricia offers valuable advice to fellow women Veterans: "Don't do it by yourself. You succeeded in the military as part of a team, and that's also how you succeed in civilian life." Her own experiences underscore the importance of teamwork and support in both military and civilian settings.

Patricia wants the public to know that women Veterans are incredibly resilient and tough, demonstrating their strength and capability in all aspects of life.






WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do."
~ Mark Twain



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."
~ Angela Davis

Tiffani

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Tiffani Williams joined the United States Army in August 2001, eager to serve her country. However, her journey took an unexpected turn when she was medically discharged before reaching her first duty station. Though her time in the military was brief, it left a lasting impact. Her most significant takeaway from this experience was the realization that she could overcome any obstacle: "I can do anything!" This mindset has shaped her life and career ever since.

For the past 15 years, Tiffani has cherished life with her blended family. Alongside her partner Allen, they have raised three wonderful adult children who have brought immense joy and growth into their lives.

Since founding Hive Promo in 2017, Tiffani has flourished as a self-employed creative director and graphic designer. Her entrepreneurial journey goes beyond building a successful business — it's about creating a platform to uplift and empower fellow women entrepreneurs. With a passion for helping women bring their visions to life, Tiffani is dedicated to ensuring that women leaders make a lasting impact in the marketplace.

In addition to her professional endeavors, Tiffani is deeply involved in her community. She serves as the volunteer brand manager for Georgia Military Women, where she has designed the group's logo and created various merchandise that embodies the strong bond shared among the members. Tiffani finds fulfillment in contributing to this empowering group of women who have served their country.

Tiffani's passion extends beyond her work; she is dedicated to fostering a community where women support and inspire each other to achieve greatness.

Tiffani wants the world to recognize the resilience, courage, and dedication of women Veterans. She believes they are not just part of the story; they are the story, and their voices deserve to be heard and celebrated.

Her advice to fellow women transitioning to civilian life is to honor their stories and trust in their abilities. "You've already proven that you can thrive in challenging environments, and civilian life is no different," she says. Tiffani's journey is a testament to her unwavering strength and spirit, embodying the message that women veterans continue to lead and inspire in every aspect of life.





Cherika

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Cherika Grayson served for 10 years on active-duty in the United States Air Force and 12 years in the United States Air Force Reserves, from 1996 to 2018. As a medical technician/EMT, she provided critical care to cancer patients and terminally ill individuals while stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. In the Reserves at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, Cherika became the senior medical technician responsible for ensuring her unit's medical readiness for deployment and maintaining the proficiency of all medical technicians. Cherika supported several key military operations, including Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, and Noble Eagle.

Cherika's most significant take away from her military career was experiencing the comradery which resulted in one of her most valued friendships. Additionally, the growth from a young airman basic into a Senior Master Sergeant instilled in her the ability to know that she can be a leader who is well-rounded, tolerant, and empathetic.

Currently, Cherika works for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), focusing on ensuring the medical certification of airline pilots and air traffic controllers. She is actively engaged in her community through her sorority, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., where she chairs the Military Committee and serves on the Eldercare and Maternal Health Committees. Cherika is also a member of her church's women choir.

Cherika's greatest passion is music, having performed the national anthem at various military functions and even professionally. She was particularly honored to perform the national anthem at the chief nurse's retirement ceremony at Warner Robbins Air Force Base. Cherika also enjoys traveling, dancing, and spending time with her family, including her four adult children and granddaughter.

Cherika wants the public to understand that women Veterans have a powerful voice. They made the conscious decision to take the oath, serving our nation with dedication and pride. Despite facing unique challenges and responsibilities, their contributions often go unrecognized.

Her advice to fellow Veterans is: When transitioning from military to civilian life, it's natural to face uncertainty and a range of emotions, just like my daughter did when she was medically retired. I would advise any woman Veteran, to trust the process and believe that things will work out.







WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"If you don't get out there and define yourself, you'll be quickly and inaccurately defined by others."
~ Michelle Obama, ***Becoming.***



HUMBLE WARRIOR WELLNESS & YOGA

A Trusted Community for Women Veterans and First Responders

BY RACHEL DURDEN

Celebrating its sixth anniversary, Humble Warrior Wellness & Yoga has grown into a trusted resource for women Veterans and first responders, offering support through connection and holistic wellness. This nonprofit has touched the lives of countless women who have served their communities and country, providing no-cost wellness retreats, workshops, and virtual programs tailored to their unique needs. Led by an all-volunteer board of combat Veterans and holistic wellness experts, Humble Warrior has earned a reputation for care, compassion, and community.

Mission-Driven Wellness for Women Who Serve

At the core of Humble Warrior's mission is the commitment to enhance the well-being of women Veterans and first responders while combating social isolation. The leadership team, including Army Veteran and Chair Raquel Durden, Air Force veteran and Vice Chair Mary Beth Wheeler, and Army Veteran and Secretary Katie Duke, brings a wealth of experience to the organization. Their dedication is bolstered by Treasurer Stacy Wilson — military family member and Communications Coordinator Army Veteran Gabi Draxler, all united in building a strong, supportive network for women who serve.

A Year of Connection and Collaboration

Collaboration has been the theme of Humble Warrior's recent initiatives, leading to new partnerships and expanded outreach. The organization collaborated with entities such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and the Georgia Association of Women in Public Safety. Their efforts culminated in the Radiant Warrior Retreat, co-hosted with Georgia Military Women and She Served, celebrating women Veterans through yoga, mindfulness and photography. These events highlighted the importance of connection, resilience and honoring the contributions of women in service.

Holistic Wellness Through Retreats

The heart of Humble Warrior's programming lies in its immersive wellness retreats. Each year, the Newcomer's Wellness Retreat introduces participants to practices like yoga, meditation, journaling, and plant-based nutrition, fostering renewal and self-discovery. Alumni are welcomed back to deepen their

practice through advanced workshops featuring mindful art, sound baths, and essential oils. These transformative experiences leave a lasting impact, allowing participants to carry the benefits of self-care and connection into their everyday lives.

Virtual Communities: Expanding Connection Beyond Retreats

Recognizing the importance of accessibility, Humble Warrior has also cultivated a vibrant online presence, ensuring connection and support for women Veterans and first responders remotely supporting their sense of safety while growing connections. Through platforms like social media and YouTube, the organization offers virtual yoga classes, guided wellness practices, and other resources. One standout program is the Sip 'n Read Sisters Book Club, facilitated by Marsha Cox and Tammy Norton. For four years, this virtual book club has provided a monthly gathering space for women to share stories, insights, and a chance to win a surprise wellness care package by correctly answering a fun-fact question.



Raquel Durden

Participants also benefit from monthly virtual yoga sessions, allowing them to practice mindfulness and movement with their peers from the comfort of their homes. Whether attending online classes or workshops, the message is clear: Humble Warrior is there for all women Veterans and first responders, no matter where they are located.

Looking Ahead: A Bright Future

As Humble Warrior celebrates six years of service, the future holds even greater promise. The organization remains steadfast in its mission to support women Veterans and first responders through holistic practices, fostering a sense of connection and wellness. New collaborations and opportunities are on the horizon as Humble Warrior continues to intensify its impact.

One participant perfectly summed up the essence of Humble Warrior, sharing, "I enjoyed meeting other veterans and the safe, serene environment. The mindfulness exercises were my favorite." Another expressed, "I was burned out, and this gave me peace and a sense of belonging." These testimonials reflect the deep sense of community Humble Warrior has cultivated; a place where women Veterans and first responders can recharge, grow, and connect without judgment.

Humble Warrior's programs are funded by grants, donations, and community support. Those interested in contributing to this transformative work can visit **www.humblewarrior.org** to connect, volunteer, or donate.

With six years of service behind them and many more ahead, Humble Warrior is committed to building a legacy of connection and wellness for women veterans and first responders, helping them thrive on their unique journeys. The organization's focus on connection and holistic practices ensures that every woman who walks through their doors leaves stronger, more connected, and more resilient than before.





TESTIMONIES FROM PARTICIPANTS SPEAK TO THE PROFOUND EFFECTS OF THESE PROGRAMS.

Natasha, a recent attendee, expressed her gratitude, stating, *"Thank you for a great event and a new way to look at the future."*

Vedia, who participated in a retreat with her mother and daughter, all Veterans, added, *"We are so grateful."*

Tonya, another attendee, shared, *"My life is truly renewed and replenished by the experience!"*

These heartfelt reflections illustrate how Humble Warrior is changing lives for the better.

LEARN MORE:
HUMBLEWARRIOR.ORG



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"If you have breath,
you have time."
~ Mary Beth Wheeler

Mary Beth

BY BILL BEAN

Mary Beth Wheeler has served in both the United States Air Force and the United States Air Force Reserve from March 2006 to the present. As an operations intelligence specialist (AFSC 1N0), she has played a crucial role in analyzing raw data to provide actionable intelligence for mission success. Her responsibilities have included analyzing adversary threat systems, presenting intelligence briefings to commanders and aircrew, and ensuring that critical information is disseminated effectively for mission planning and execution.

Her career began at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, where she briefed aircrew for F-16 missions and supported deployments to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan and Kunsan Air Base in South Korea. Mary Beth's journey continued with the 6th Intelligence Squadron at Osan Air Base in South Korea, where she supported 24/7 analytical operations. She then spent eight years in Hawaii, providing operational and analytical support in the Pacific AOR. While there, Mary Beth deployed twice to Qatar AB to support operations and analytical efforts in the Middle East.

After transitioning to the U.S. Air Force Reserve, she was stationed in Germany, where she was recognized as the 2018/2019 Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa Outstanding Air Reserve Component ISR Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. She now serves as a senior enlisted leader for Air Force Global Strike Command in Shreveport, Louisiana, where she supports personnel providing critical analytical and operational support to the nuclear triad.

Raised in Gainesville, Georgia, Mary Beth comes from a family with a strong military tradition, including grandfathers, her father, and her brother. Although her decision to join the Air Force surprised some, it has been one of the most rewarding choices of her life. She is married to Aron Cartes, a retired United States Army Sergeant First Class with multiple tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Outside of her military and professional duties, Mary Beth is a SCUBA and yoga instructor, reflecting her belief in the importance of breath and steady focus. She is actively involved in supporting women through her role as co-chair for Humble Warrior Wellness & Yoga. She advises fellow women Veterans to find and engage with supportive communities, emphasizing the value of shared experiences in both transition and ongoing personal development. Her own journey underscores the importance of community in achieving success and fulfillment both in and out of the military.





Natasha

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Natasha Mossicott's journey in the United States Army, from May 15, 1996, to October 31, 2020, is a testament to her adaptability and growth. Starting as a tank mechanic (63H), she soon discovered her true passion in the Quartermaster Corps, where she served as a senior supply specialist. Her dedication to ensuring troops were well-supplied and mission-ready significantly impacted the quality of life and operations for her units. Natasha's service took her to Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Korea, and Japan, supporting various missions worldwide. A proud moment in her career was becoming the first female equal opportunity advisor (EOA) for the 71st Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit, where she found a strong sense of camaraderie and purpose.

Her service in Iraq and Afghanistan remains one of Natasha's most fulfilling experiences, particularly her time with the 71st EOD. This team's work-hard-play-hard mentality fostered a family-like environment. Her military service also taught her that achieving goals requires careful planning, consistency, and dedication.

After retiring, Natasha's commitment to service continued as she moved to Georgia to care for her father and began working as a logistics supervisor. In this role, she manages vehicle requisitions, government contracts, and supply transactions. Her dedication to her community is evident in her work with homeless women in Augusta and her volunteer efforts with the Veterans Administration particularly through initiatives like 'Fill the Purse," which provides necessary supplies for those in need.

In her personal life, Natasha is deeply passionate about inclusion and cherishes the strong community of women Veterans in Georgia. She enjoys spending time with her dog, Sage, watching movies, traveling, and exploring Georgia's rich history. Her daughter, Natalia, is the light of her life and a recent graduate of Texas Technical College with a degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Natasha's message to the public is clear: women have always been and will continue to be an essential part of national defense. Her advocacy for equality and recognition of women's contributions is a key part of her story.

Her advice to fellow women Veterans is simple: "You are not alone. Many women have served before you, and the road ahead is filled with opportunities. Embrace each chapter of life and enjoy the journey."







WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Life is going to give you just what you put in it. Put your whole heart in everything you do, and pray, then you can wait."
~MayaAngelou

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"If "It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent."
~ Madeleine Albright



Tonya

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Tonya Gage served in the United States Air Force from 1991 to 2001, as a dental assistant, later advancing to the role of dental hygienist. Her responsibilities included managing dental clinic operations, overseeing dental education programs, and ensuring compliance with medical standards. She held significant roles as the non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of both dental education and training and the hospital squadron's education and training department at Beale Air Force Base, California. One of the highlights of her career was her 1999 deployment to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, for a humanitarian mission.

Tonya's military career instilled in her a deep sense of camaraderie and equipped her with an unmatched set of skills from her work in hospitals and clinics. After retiring from the Department of Veterans Affairs, where she served as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, she launched her own business, Dragonfly Training and Logistics, LLC. Her company is dedicated to providing training on Veteran and beneficiary benefits, focusing on ensuring that no woman Veteran is left behind.

Tonya is deeply involved in her community, actively serving as the ambassador for the Military Women's Memorial representing Georgia and participating as a member of the Georgia Military Women social networking group. In addition, she holds a leadership position within Kappa Epsilon Psi Military Sorority International, Inc.

Walking local trails, traveling with friends, and cherishing time with her family are among Tonya's favorite activities. She enjoys moments with her beloved parents Jim and Lucy, her son Trevor, and her 7-year-old Rat Terrier, S'naya.

Tonya hopes the public will understand that women Veterans are often overlooked despite being among the first to take on missions. For years, we've worked behind the scenes in decision-making roles, contributing frequently without receiving recognition. Today, we are changing that narrative, stepping into the spotlight to lead and influence every mission. All women Veterans must be able to share their stories and leave their mark on history.

Her advice to fellow women transitioning to civilian life is simple yet profound: "Self-care is mandatory. Take care of your health, apply for your benefits, and always prioritize yourself."





Katherine

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Katherine Lorio served in the United States Navy and Navy Reserves from July 1990 to November 2010. She began her military career as an avionics technician, repairing military aircraft on flight lines, aircraft carriers, and in specialized workshops. Her transition into the role of an intelligence analyst, supporting Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, was a significant milestone. This shift allowed her to contribute to critical anti-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Eastern Horn of Africa.

Katherine served during pivotal moments, particularly in the post-9/11 period, where her efforts directly impacted missions related to international security. She was awarded a Joint Service Commendation Medal and a NATO Medal for her work in locating and detaining war criminals sought by the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Additionally, she received Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals for her contributions in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, as well as a Sea Service Ribbon following the repeal of the combat exclusion law for women. Her most significant take away from her military service was that leadership and advocacy are lifelong journeys that have profoundly shaped her as a person and a leader.

Now residing in Decatur, Georgia, Katherine is married to a fellow veteran. Together, they have a five-year-old son. She is a high school social studies teacher, a path inspired by her military travels and the deep connections she formed with various cultures, people, and places. She supports her community as a parent teacher association volunteer and also mentors members of Alateen and Al-Anon Family Groups.

Passionate about nature, hiking, yoga, and self-care, Kathrine finds joy in small but meaningful hobbies like doing her own manicures and pedicures.

Katherine emphasizes how important it is for the public to understand that women veterans are strong — physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Throughout history, they have and still play a vital role in our nation's defense.

Kathrine encourages her fellow women Veterans to recognize their strength and resilience, reminding them that their contributions are essential to the security and well-being of the country. She advises those women that may be struggling to keep saying "yes" to opportunities that align with their personal growth and vision. This will ensure that they continue shaping their lives with purpose and positivity.






WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"The fears we
don't face become
our limits."
~ Robin Sharma

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
“Never give up."



Hamite

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Hamite Arifi served in the United States Navy from 2002 to 2022, as a legalman chief. Her position involved serving as a chief legal advisor, where she provided comprehensive legal support within the military justice system. Specifically, she worked in the Office of the Chief Prosecutor for Military Commissions, where her responsibilities included handling complex legal matters related to military detainees.

During her service, she was involved in various legal processes, and supported Operation Iraqi Freedom at the Camp Bucca Detention Center. Her role entailed managing and processing detainee cases through the military justice system.

After transitioning from military service, she moved to Marietta, Georgia, in 2019, leaving behind her previous life in New York. Embracing her new surroundings, she has made valuable connections and enjoyed new adventures. Her current role as a paralegal specialist with the IRS Office of Chief Counsel involves resolving disputes related to tax deficiencies and penalties — a position that leverages her extensive legal expertise gained during her military career.

Hamite's commitment to community service continues in her civilian life. She actively participates with the Georgia Outdoor Shenanigans and contributes to local efforts such as providing supplies to a shelter in Atlanta and participating in a Christmas toy drive. Additionally, she has a budding passion for photography and hopes to combine her love for travel with capturing the beauty of her journeys through her lens.

For fellow women Veterans, her advice is both practical and motivational: "Find a group that you click with and join groups that interest you. It is critical to have a social life."

To the public, Hamite wants to convey that women Veterans are incredibly resilient and have made significant contributions during their service. Her story is a testament to the strength and versatility of women in the military, highlighting their continued impact and achievements long after their service ends.





Jennifer

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Jennifer McNeill served for more than 24 years in the United States Army from 1975 to 2000. She began her career as a dental assistant and then trained to become a dental hygienist. She served in numerous positions throughout her career, concluding as the senior HR Administrator at the Eisenhower Army Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Georgia (now Fort Moore). She served in support of the wars in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, and the Gulf War where she was involved in the operational phases of soldier qualification exercises ensuring every soldier was clinically and administratively qualified to deploy.

Jennifer says her most significant takeaway from her time in the service was a "can do" attitude. She says she learned to plan, organize, and strategize the Army way, and it works.

After retiring, Jennifer worked as Director of Patient Services and Patient Advocate for the Medical College of Georgia's Dental College. She also served as the area chair for the School of Business for the University of Phoenix.

Jennifer has been married for 47 years to her husband Louis, a Vietnam Veteran who also retired from the Army. They have one daughter, Montrece, who lives in St. Louis and a granddaughter, Alyxandra who lives in Atlanta.

Today, Jennifer is often involved with sharing and showing others the benefits of practicing physical fitness as we age. She started her business, "Get Fit with Jen" as her platform to encourage others to join her in "disrupting aging." She says the focus is on having fun while maintaining your quality of life.

Jennifer has been a member of Toastmasters International for more than 20 years. In 2021, she was awarded District 14 Toastmaster of the Year for leadership and service. She is now a division director where she has 12 teams to guide, support, and mentor. She says that she uses the leadership skills she learned in the military to help develop future organizational leaders. She is also the author of two books about leadership in the military and civilian communities.

Jennifer would like the public to know that military women are resilient, risk takers, and adaptable. They are observant, and given the opportunity they can serve as an organizational change agent. We practice emotional intelligence, think before taking action, and consider others and teamwork in the decision making process.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve."
~ Napoleon Hill





GEORGIA'S MILITARY WOMEN: FOSTERING COMMUNITY, DIVERSITY AND WELLNESS FOR VETERANS

BY DR. AMY STEVENS



The State of Georgia is home to a vibrant and resilient community of military women, united by a shared history of service, sacrifice, and commitment to support one another. Established in 2012, Georgia Military Women (GMW) is more than just a network of veterans; it is a collective deeply invested in the well-being and empowerment of its members. With over 70 percent of its 5,250+ members actively participating online and in regular meetups across the state, GMW plays a vital role in fostering wellness, mental health, and suicide prevention.

A Community Rooted in Diversity and Inclusivity

One of GMW's greatest strengths is its diversity. Women from all branches of the military, representing a wide range of ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, unite under a shared purpose. This diversity is celebrated as a core strength of the community. Every woman brings her unique experiences, skills, and perspectives, creating a rich tapestry of shared knowledge that benefits the entire group. GMW is open to all women who served, regardless of branch, service length, discharge status, combat era or rank.

Military women face unique challenges during and after their service — gender-related barriers, balancing career and family, and the mental toll of transitioning from military to civilian life. For many women Veterans, having a community of others who understand these struggles firsthand is invaluable. GMW provides a space where women can find solidarity, guidance, and true friendship, knowing they are connecting with those who have walked a similar path.

Online Engagement: Connecting Women Across Georgia

In today's digital world, GMW uses Facebook and other online platforms to keep its members engaged, no matter where they are. Women Veterans from cities like Atlanta, Augusta, and Savannah, to more rural parts of the state, can connect in online forums, participate in virtual events, and share resources. This digital connection is crucial for those who may face geographic or logistical barriers that make in-person interactions difficult. Online spaces are more than just social hubs—they provide access to Veterans' benefits information, mental health resources, and career development opportunities. The ability to connect virtually ensures that no Veteran in Georgia feels isolated, even in the farthest corners of the state.

Moreover, the online community fosters a sense of belonging and provides a safe space for women to share their experiences. Many veterans express that simply knowing there is a group of others who understand their unique experiences as military women brings them comfort and strength.

In-Person Meetups: Strengthening Bonds Face-to-Face

While online engagement is essential, GMW also emphasizes the importance of in-person meetups. Regular gatherings held in cities and towns across Georgia offer members the opportunity to connect on a deeper level. These meetups, often held in relaxed settings, encourage open, personal conversations and help build strong, lasting bonds. For many women, these face-to-face interactions provide much-needed reassurance that they are not alone in their post-service journeys.





Georgia Military Women founder
Dr. Amy Stevens, Ed. D

These personal connections are particularly valuable for veterans dealing with feelings of isolation or mental health challenges, including PTSD or Military Sexual Trauma (MST). By creating spaces for in-person interaction, GMW fosters a sense of camaraderie and support that can have a profound impact on emotional well-being and mental health.

Suicide Prevention Through Connection

Central to GMW's mission is suicide prevention. Women Veterans are at higher risk of mental health issues, financial difficulties, homelessness, and relationship challenges than their civilian peers. The pressures of military service, combined with the struggles of transitioning to civilian life, can leave many women feeling vulnerable and alone.

GMW combats these risks by fostering connection—both online and in-person. Whether it's a supportive message online or a face-to-face conversation over coffee knowing that another woman who has served is just a phone call or message away can provide a lifeline for those struggling with mental health issues. Many Veterans share that simply having someone who understands their experiences creates a safe space where they can express difficult emotions without fear of judgment.



Fostering Wellness in All Forms

GMW's commitment to wellness extends beyond mental health. The group embraces a comprehensive approach to veterans' well-being, encouraging physical health through fitness programs, providing access to career and educational resources, and ensuring women Veterans are aware of the benefits available to them. GMW organizes workshops on topics like financial literacy, healthcare access, and professional development, empowering members with the tools they need to thrive in civilian life.

This holistic approach to wellness recognizes that women veterans' needs are diverse and interconnected. Mental health, physical health, career satisfaction, and financial stability all contribute to overall well-being. GMW strives to address each of these areas in its programming and support efforts.

Conclusion: A Lifeline for Georgia's Women Veterans

GMW is more than just a network—it is a lifeline for women Veterans in Georgia. By fostering a community rooted in diversity, facilitating both online and in-person connections, and prioritizing suicide prevention, GMW provides critical support for veterans across the state. The bonds formed within this community have a lasting impact, offering hope, strength, and understanding to women who have served. Through its comprehensive approach to wellness and empowerment, GMW is paving the way for a brighter future for Georgia's women Veterans.

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain."
~ Vivian Greene



Denise

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Denise Cardin served in the United States Navy from 1982 to 1986 as a Cryptologic Technician - O with specialties in Tech Control and even Wizard. In this critical role, she managed highly classified information and tracked submarines in the cold northern seas and near the Arctic ice edge during a pivotal era in naval history. Her responsibilities included monitoring the newly upgraded Russian Oscar-class nuclear submarines and supporting sensitive communications at Winter Harbor, Maine, where she also provided top-secret communications support for President George H.W. Bush during his visits to Camp David.

Denise's service spanned the Cold War era and later included supporting Operation Desert Storm during her time in the active reserves. Her experiences fostered maturity, independence, and a profound work ethic, demonstrating that individuals can push beyond their perceived limits.

Today, Denise is the director of conservation and operations at a nature preserve, where she leads initiatives focused on land management and climate change research in partnership with local universities such as Georgia Tech, UGA, and Georgia State. Her role involves overseeing conservation projects and community engagement, reflecting her deep commitment to environmental stewardship.

Denise remains actively involved in her community through various roles. She serves as a board member and participates in an environmental group at her church. Additionally, she organizes volunteer efforts for conservation causes and is engaged with the Georgia Military Women group.

Family values run deep in Denise's life. Her father retired as a lieutenant colonel from the United States Army, and her son currently serves as a first sergeant in the United States Air Force. Her daughter-in-law is also in the Air Force. Denise also takes pride in her two grandchildren, who are experiencing diverse cultures around the world.

An avid environmentalist, Denise's passion extends to the arts. She enjoys photography, painting, pottery, mosaics, and jewelry making. Her love for these creative outlets complements her professional work and personal life.

Denise wants the public to recognize the significant contributions of women Veterans and acknowledge their long-standing role in the military. Her advice to fellow women Veterans adjusting to civilian life is to seek out available support and resources, emphasizing that help is now more accessible than ever.





Carrie

BY BILL BEAN

Carrie Roeger served in the United States Marine Corps for five years as a Russian linguist, translating international communications, and identifying international aircraft and military vehicles. She served in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. During her service, she was granted the opportunity to attend paratrooper training (jump school) in Fort Benning, Georgia (now Fort Moore). Upon completion of jump school, she continued to train with her unit and earned the United States Navy/Marine Corps Gold Jump Wings. Prior to that time, Marine Corps policies did not authorize gold jump wings for women, but that was changed due to Carrie's accomplishments in the training. She became the first woman United States Marine to earn these distinguished wings.

Carrie has been married to her Marine-Veteran husband for 30 years, and together they have one daughter. After their time in the military, Carrie and her husband were inspired to create a place where Veterans could tell their stories, and to honor military families and those who put their lives on the line every day. Along with their daughter, they started the Semper Fi Bar and Grill which quickly became the go-to restaurant in the area for veterans, their families, and the community who believed in them. The restaurant was the inspiration and foundation for the Rally Point Grille and was rebranded to include all branches of military service and first responders when they moved to larger quarters in 2024. It gives Veterans a place to feel like they fit in and belong, and to connect with other veterans, first responders, and their families. Today, the walls are covered with military memorabilia from local Veterans and their families. Carrie serves as CEO of the restaurant group, which has been so successful that they are now franchising the name and concept and have two other locations along with a food truck for catering.

Carrie is passionate about making a difference in the Veteran community as evidenced by her family's business. When she's not working at the Rally Point Grill, she likes to read, paint, and sew.

Carrie would like the public to know that "women Veterans are not invisible. We took the same oath, trained the same, and gave just as much as our male counterparts. We are veterans too."
For her fellow women Veterans she has this advice," Find your tribe. You will never really feel like you fit in with the civilian world. You are different; a good different. Connect with Veterans and find your tribe and thrive."







WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"You are your own biggest critic. People do not see the faults in you that you do. Realize that they are actually not faults, they are what make you you."

~ Unknown



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Strive daily to be
a better version of
yourself than you were
yesterday."
~ Unknown

Cassandra

BY KIMBERLY MULLINS

Cassandra Randolph served in the United States Army as a military police officer and traffic management coordinator for 30 years from September, 1982 to August 2012. Cassandra was responsible for the logistical aspect for all military shipments (air, rail, line-haul, vessel). She served during Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and New Dawn.

While serving in the Army, Cassandra felt the most significant take away was the professional challenges and a sense of accomplishment she gained after each one was met. Being in the Army made her feel she'd accomplished in a few years what most people did in a lifetime while also developing a sense of pride.

Cassandra Randolph is married to Curtis Randolph. Together, they brought six adult children into their family—three from each of their previous families. Sadly, Cassandra's eldest son passed away on September 22, 2022. She is, however, blessed with one grandson, ten additional grandchildren through marriage, and two great-grandchildren. They currently reside in McDonough.

Although Cassandra has retired from both the military and the civilian sectors, she remains actively involved with American Legion Post 291, where she has served as commander for over four years. During her tenure, Cassandra successfully arranged for eight Legion members to participate in an Honor Flight, a program dedicated to recognizing and celebrating veterans for their service.

Cassandra wants the public to recognize that women veterans have served with honor and made significant contributions to the military. Their roles and impact have been vast, shaping the military in profound ways.

To fellow women transitioning to civilian life, her advice is simple yet powerful: do your research and take one day at a time. Adjusting to a new chapter can be challenging, but by approaching each day with patience and preparedness, success is within reach.





Melissa

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Melissa Deane served 27 years in the United States Army and United States Army Reserve from 1986-2013. As a clerical administrator, her duties included maintaining personnel records, life insurance papers, issuing military ID cards, and issuing DD-214s. She also assisted the military Post Office, performed guard duty, and ensured that Red Cross forms were filled out and delivered.

During 1990-1991, Melissa supported Operations Desert Shield/Storm. She also participated in Operation Joint Endeavor/Guard in Bosnia during 1997-1998 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

For her assignments in Germany, Bosnia, and Kuwait, Melissa received three overseas medals. She was also rewarded with several good conduct medals, a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Professional Development Ribbon, two National Defense Service Medals, an Army Lapel Button, an Overseas Training Ribbon, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with "M" Device, an Army Forces Expeditionary Medal, an Army Achievement Medal, and four Army Reserve Component Achievement Medals.

Significantly, through teamwork and hard work, Melissa gained important life lessons as well as many great friends along the way. Early on, she realized the importance of receiving all the training that she could, which helped prepare her for a smoother transition to civilian life.

It is with a mother's pride that Melissa speaks of her only child. She boasts that her daughter uniquely exemplifies unconditional love and an unending need to help others. Sadly, Melissa's parents have both taken on the roles of guardian angels in heaven. She is, however, comforted by the protectiveness of her older brother. She has certainty in the knowledge that her parents had only love and pride for her.

Today, Melissa can be found working hard as a mail processor for the United States Post Office. She supports her community by volunteering at United Food Force, where she sorts and disburses food. Additionally, she volunteers with Soldiers' Angels and the Wounded Warrior Project. It is through helping others that Melissa's passion truly shines.

It is Melissa's hope that the civilian population understands that Veteran women are resilient; they recover quickly and will always find a way to get things done.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"We must believe we are gifted for something."
~ Melissa Deane



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"You are greater than your worst mistake."
~ Catherine Hardrick



Catherine

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Catherine Hardrick served in the United States Army from 1989 to 1995, where she worked as an executive assistant. In this role, she provided vital administrative support to senior officers, managing schedules, travel, coordinating meetings, and overseeing confidential operations. Catherine's duties extended beyond the office, as she handled financial reporting, training, and maintaining communication across her unit. One of her proudest moments was advocating for a female soldier's long-overdue promotion and having the honor of pinning her rank during the ceremony.

Catherine also supported Operation Just Cause in Panama (1989-1990), a mission that aimed to depose Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega and restore democratic governance. Her military experience left her with the invaluable lesson that "We are only as strong as our weakest link," reinforcing the importance of unity and mutual support.

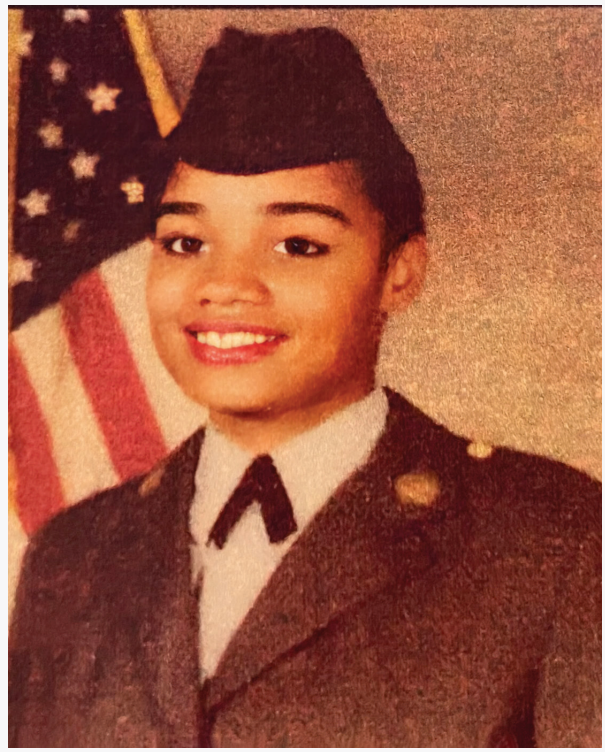
Today, Catherine is a wellness coach and owner of Journey Within, LLC, where she helps companies design corporate wellness programs and supports individuals in leading balanced lives. She also co-hosts the "Conversations with Karen and Cat" podcast, offering a platform for community change-makers. As a survivor of military sexual trauma, Catherine has become a fierce advocate for healing, community support, and mental health awareness.

Her dedication to giving back is demonstrated through her annual MLK Day Drive-Thru Food Giveaway, which has provided meals, essential items, and words of encouragement to more than 150 citizens, particularly Veterans in need of mental health and housing support. Catherine's passion for service continues to shape her life and work.

Catherine encourages women Veterans to connect with support networks, utilize VA benefits, and never hesitate to seek mental health care. Above all, she reminds them, "You are not alone!"

Catherine's story serves as a reminder of the strength, sacrifice, and contributions of women Veterans, urging the public to ask, "Did She Serve?" to honor the women who have played an integral role in safeguarding the nation's freedom.





Katrina

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Katrina White-Johnson served in the United States Army as an administrative specialist from January 1995 to November 1998. At her first duty station, she was tasked with tracking the use of ration control cards by military personnel and their dependents. This task helped cut down on counterfeiting in Korea.

Katrina went on to be stationed at Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg) where she tracked equipment that was used within the unit to ensure everything was up to standards. She also served during Operations Desert Storm/Desert Shield although she wasn't in the combat zone.

Katrina states, "Lasting friendships are something I'll always remember. Many of the drills and activities that I accomplished during basic training were things I have carried through life that have helped me throughout life's journey," and she will always value.

After serving her country,, Katrina continued a lifestyle of service and has amassed more than 25 years of service at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She's a very proud mom of two adult children and a three year old grandson.

As a Veteran, Katrina currently works as an administrative professional helping students with their housing issues and helping them make a home away from home. Additionally, within her subdivision, she serves on the activities committee where she plans activities for the 890 residents.

Although Katrina has a full schedule, she found time to establish the "Timothy White Backpack Giveback," in memory of her late brother. The program offers backpacks and school supplies to children in need.

Katrina is passionate about fighting hunger and children having adequate support for education is important to her. She also enjoys couponing and volunteering in her free time.

A message Katrina would like to pass along to her sisters in arms is, "Women Veterans are resilient and have had to go through many trials to get a portion of the recognition we deserve. Be patient with yourself. You didn't become a soldier overnight and once it's ingrained in you, it stays there. You will have to learn how to intertwine the two lives into one.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Don't quit!"

~ Katrina White-Johnson



THE MINDFUL BODY BY ELLEN J. LANGER

In The Mindful Body Learn how adjusting your thoughts can change your health—from the "mother of mindfulness" and first female tenured professor of psychology at Harvard.

THE iREST PROGRAM FOR HEALING PTSD BY RICHARD C. MILLER, PH.D

In The iRest Program for Healing PTSD, clinical psychologist and yogic scholar Richard C. Miller-named one of the top twenty-five yoga teachers by Yoga Journal-offers an innovative and proven-effective ten-step yoga program for treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

OH SHE GLOWS FOR DINNER BY ANGELA LIDDON

In Oh She Glows for Dinner, the newest cookbook from Angela Liddon, she offers vibrant, flavor-packed dinner and lunch recipes designed to simplify plant-based meal times.

MUST READ: ADD RAQUEL DURDEN'S BOOK TO YOUR SUMMER '25 LIST



Veteran and author, Raquel Durden

In ***'From Chaos to Calm: Holistic Wellness Strategies to Dial Down the Noise of your World'***, retired United States Army officer and nonprofit leader Raquel Durden offers a transformative guide to resilience and inner peace.

Ideal resource for Veterans and first responders! Drawing on powerful interviews with men and women who have faced immense challenges, this book reveals how they tap into their inner strength to quiet the noise of the world.

With practical, heart-centered strategies like yoga, journaling, meditation, prayer, clean eating, and reconnecting with nature, ***From Chaos to Calm*** is a roadmap for those seeking to move from stressed and burned out to peace.

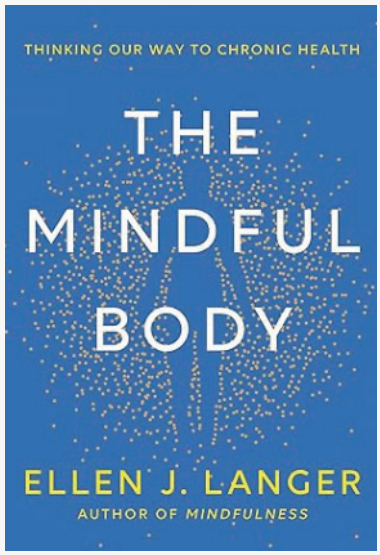
Look for its release in summer 2025, and discover how to cultivate wellness from the inside out!

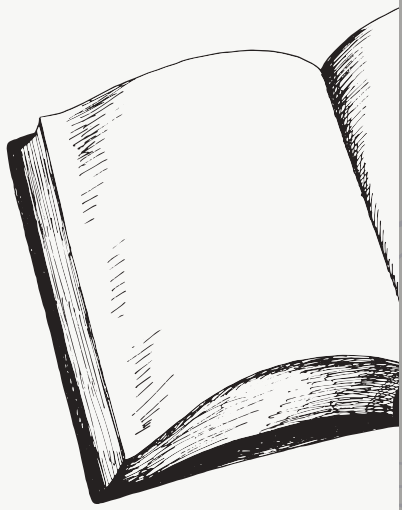
Recommended reading

EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

1

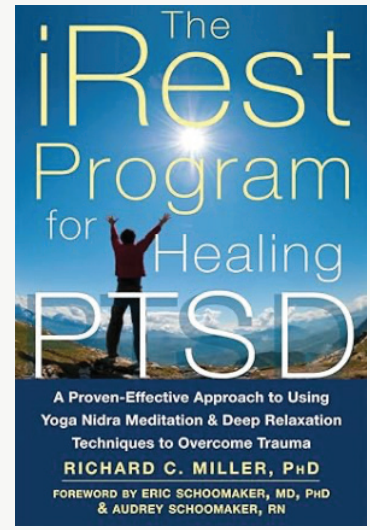
The Mindful Body by Ellen J. Langer





2

The iRest Program for Healing PTSD by Richard C. Miller

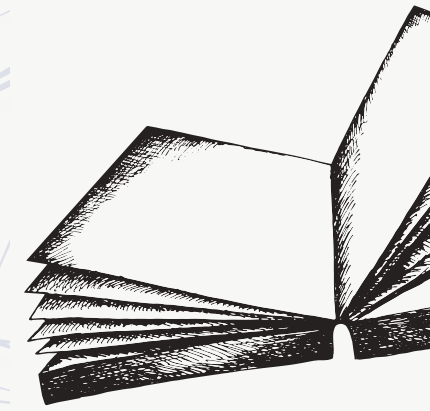




3

Oh She Glows for Dinner by Angela Liddon





BEHIND THE SCENES

Celebrating women Veterans: Here are a few photographs from the Radiant Warrior Retreat ***She Served*** attended.













WOMEN VETERAN BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Supporting women Veteran-owned businesses is a crucial step towards fostering equality and empowerment.

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

*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.

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