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WVI Newsletter

APRIL 2021



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Deborah Sampson Act of 2020

Changes are coming within the VA for women veterans thanks to the Deborah Sampson Act of 2020. Who is Deborah Sampson? Deborah Sampson (1760-1827) is an American Revolution War hero. She served as “Robert” for 17 months and was only discovered when requiring medical treatment. Post discharge she petitioned the Massachusetts State Legislature for pay which the Army held because of being a woman and later petitioned Congress for a pension. Both petitions were approved. Deborah Sampson was the only female to earn a full military pension for her part in the American Revolution. In recognition of her distinguished service and fight for women veterans rights, it seemed appropriate that the bill for women veterans rights be named after Deborah Sampson.

The Deborah Sampson Act was signed into law by the president on January 5, 2021. The Act provides for:

- * Creating a dedicated Women’s Health Clinic at the VA
- * Staffing every VA health facility with a dedicated women’s health primary care provider, train clinicians, and retrofit VA facilities to enhance privacy and improve the environment of care for women veterans
- * Providing access to legal services, expand child care for veterans receiving VA health care and require the Government Accountability Office to report on the VA’s efforts to support homeless or at risk women veterans
- * Improving access to care and benefits for survivors of Military Sexual Trauma (MST) of all genders by MST counseling to former Guard and Reserve members and allowing the VA to treat the physical health condition of MST and improve the claims process for MST survivors at the Veterans Benefit Administration.

ANNOUNCING CHANGE:

Kelly Burell, Public Affairs Outreach Coordinator, announced that the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System is renovating space on the 1st floor, near the front door, that will be dedicated to women’s healthcare.

Something to think about ...

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

Quote by Jane Goodall

VA Scheduling Number for COVID-19 Vaccine: 419-259-2000 Press 0

Women in the News

The Super Bowl flyover flight leader was **Captain Sarah Kociuba**. Captain Kociuba grew up near Cleveland, was an ROTC cadet at the University of Dayton, and was the first female to fly the lead stealth bomber over February's Super Bowl in Tampa. Read more about her Ohio roots on the ODVS Facebook page.

Free Wheelchair

LL (Army) is offering a "like new" wheelchair to anyone in need of a wheelchair for themselves, family member, or friend. Contact: cenagy@bex.net

Shout Out to Women Veterans

Ed Sachs, MSA (Military Historian) would to recognize all the women veterans who have helped with the COVID efforts. Since last year Sachs did 2300 COVID tests, has gone on deployment and worked at vaccination clinics. Many colleagues have been women veterans or currently serving in the National Guard.

Veteran Outreach Event

WVI has an opportunity to partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in presenting a virtual women veterans outreach event in late April. Information would include eligibility, VHA health care and more. We are trying to arrange for the Women Veterans Program Manager to be available for Q&A. We are looking for suggestions regarding day and time for this event. Forward interest and comments to cenagy@bex.net.

Women Veterans Experience Multiple Chronic Conditions (MCC)

National Health Statistics Reports that female veterans are more likely than female non veterans to have two or more chronic conditions. The study was published in an article titled "Multiple Chronic Conditions Among Veteran and Non veterans: United States, 2015-2018." (Number 153 - February 23, 2021). According to the study, the results may improve veterans' health and better serve their health care needs as MCC in adults is associated with increased mortality, increased health care spending and an increase in declining health. NCHS reports can be downloaded from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/index.htm>.

Rage Painting

A free Rage Painting Session will be held:
Friday, May 7, 2021 at 6:30 pm
Location: HOOVES; 4055 Wilkins Road Swanton, OH
Limited to 6-10 participants
RSVP: cenagy@bex.net by April 30, 2021
Sponsored by: Women Veterans Initiative

Let's Walk

WVI members will begin walking for exercise and comradery every Wednesday beginning April 21 at 6:30pm at Side Cut Park. Meet in the parking lot off River Road, lock side. For those interested in warming up for the June 27 5K, this will be a good opportunity to get in shape. Red, white and blue will mark the meeting spot. Contact cenagy@bex.net if planning to participate.

Women Veterans Have Access to VA Resources

“Women are the fastest growing demographic in the U.S. military and Veteran populations, and VA stands ready to provide resources.

There are currently more than 2 million women Veterans—and that number continues to rise, according to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. In fact, women are expected to make up more than 16% of the U.S. Veteran population by 2043.

Women have served the country in many capacities throughout history, However, they did not receive VA benefits until Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act in 1948. That act granted them permanent presence in the military, entitling them to VA benefits.

VA benefits are a vital part of economic stability. In fiscal year 2020, more than 4,900 women Veterans learned about benefits at nationwide woman-focused outreach events. More than 196,000 women Veterans used education benefits and more than 555,000 women Veterans received \$10.7 billion in disability compensation. Hundreds of thousands also engaged VA with pension, home loans, insurance, employment and memorial benefits.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

In FY 2020, more than 23,500 transitioning service women, including members of the Reserve component, learned about VA benefits as part of the VA Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The program’s VA Benefits and Services course, led by VA Benefits Advisers, helps transitioning service members navigate VA and its benefits. Transitioning service women have an array of gender-focused services.

In addition to TAP, both transitioning service women and women Veterans can take the online, self-paced Women’s Health Transition Training (2.5 hours) anytime, anywhere at TAPevents.org/courses. This course educates transitioning service women about VA women’s health care services, benefits, eligibility requirements and VA’s organization and culture. It also helps connect them with other women Veterans and networks. All women Veterans should use VA transition services and take the Women’s Health Transition Training to learn more about benefits. Learn more about the training at <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/whtt/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Women Veteran Coordinators (WVCs) are located at every VA regional office. WVCs provide specific information and comprehensive assistance to women Veterans, their dependents and beneficiaries concerning both VA benefits and related non-VA benefits.

To learn more about the programs, resources and benefits available, visit <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/index.asp>.

Call or chat with the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636).”