



WVI NEWSLETTER

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25th Anniversary: Military Women's Memorial

25 years of celebrating the women who have defended our precious freedom! And celebrate we did, the weekend of 14-16 October at our Military Women's Memorial. Here are some of the highlights:

- Inspirational keynote address by the Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin and an update of VA status from the Sec of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Honorable Denis McDonough
- Sunday morning wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by our President, Phyllis Wilson and Chair of our Board, Jan Edmunds
- Sunday dedication of the beautiful Wilma Vaught Center (the repurposed theater) and the frequent presence of our President Emeritus, Wilma Vaught who enjoyed being the center of attention!

But for me, personally, the highlight followed the candlelight walk across Memorial Bridge to our Memorial on Saturday evening. The "Rose Petal Ceremony" took place after several meaningful speeches outside and in front of our Memorial's reflecting pool. Each person in attendance individually took a rose petal, silently remembered a veteran, approached the reflecting pool and gently floated the petal on the water. Everything and everyone was silent except for the reading of the names of our women who have died on duty since 9/11. Then a lone bugler, standing atop our Memorial, played "Taps". It gives me chills just to recount it to you... The next few years will feature an amazing transformation and modernization of our Military Women's Memorial. We got a preview of the exhibit spaces that will be MUCH more interactive. Watch for future details. So...here's to 25 more years (and then some) of telling our women veterans stories and celebrating their lives!

Article: Judy Pearson (Foundation Ambassador)
Picture: Provided by J. Pearson

Homelessness

If you are a Veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838). Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness USDVA 11/3/22

Food Pantry

Feed our Community: Food Pantry distributes free food the third Saturday of the month beginning at 9:00am until the food is gone. Location: 5055 Jackman Road, Toledo. All zip codes welcome. Drive through food giveaway.

Medallion of Strength: Celebrating Women Veterans

The Center for Women Veterans and Veterans Engagement Office collaborated to bring women Veterans a tangible way to identify and acknowledge their contributions of service to the nation, thus “The Medallion of Strength.



“The Medallion of Strength serves as a unique marker that can make women Veterans feel more seen, celebrated, and acknowledged for their service as a Veteran, it provides a way to visibly show that women are a part of the Veteran community and encourages community and connection with other Veterans.

The Medallion can be worn to showcase pride about being a woman Veteran, it can be added to social media profiles to highlight this part of their identity, be displayed by VA and/or businesses to indicate service or support resources they may have for women Veterans.

We didn’t want to hold on to this gem – we wanted to release it so that women Veterans everywhere can be on the lookout for more information about the Medallion and ways we plan to use it to bring awareness to the service of our women Veterans.”

US Department of Veterans Affairs article and photo (October 31, 2022)

Military Women's Memorial: Vaught Center

On Sunday, October 23, The Military Women’s Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery celebrated 25 years with a weekend of events and a new facility named after its founder, retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught.



Phyllis Wilson, president of the Memorial, said Gen. Vaught (now 92 years old) joined the Air Force at 27 years of age, and look out! After that, nothing stopped her,” Wilson said. “The military truly does give women many opportunities that maybe they don’t find in their civilian sectors. So she just kept going. Gen. Vaught retired in 1985 and became president of a foundation that helped raise money to build the Memorial. She also served as the Memorial’s president for nearly 30 years.

Retired Maj. Gen. Jan Edmunds, board chair for the Memorial, said there would be no Memorial without Gen. Vaught. “In order to do something like this in Washington, D.C. – to raise the money to get the permissions – you need somebody who can’t take the word ‘no,’ and she’s a bulldog,” Edmunds said. She said Vaught wanted to create the Memorial so other military women would know that their stories are essential: “She wanted to do this to make military women understand that they are important and will continue to be important.”

Information and photo: VA Center for Women Veterans (October 19, 2022)

PACT Act Update

The PACT Act (Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins) was signed August 10, 2022. The Act covers veterans exposed to burning waste pits, oil fires, noise and other toxins. Many of the conditions listed are respiratory related, brain cancer and female reproductive cancer (includes breast cancer). The veteran needs to be enrolled in VA care. The veteran will undergo an initial screening (5-10 minutes) at a VA Medical Center. This will be followed by a screening once every five years. Each VA medical center will staff a trained Toxic Exposure Navigator to assist with the process. It is recommended that the veteran: stay informed, connect with their health care team and Navigator, schedule a registry exam and share this information. It is encouraged that the veteran begin this process by January 2023. Additional information can be obtained at 1-800-MyVA441 (press 8) or [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).

Source: Center for Women Veterans PACT Act Townhall Virtual 11/17/22

