



# WOMEN VETERANS' NETWORK

## Two Western Massachusetts Women Honored at State House



*(l-r) Brig. Gen. Marie T. Field, Lt. Margaret H. Haggerty, and Brig. Gen. Oliver J. Mason, Jr.*

Brigadier General Marie T. Field, the highest-ranking female to serve in the Massachusetts Air National Guard, retired after nearly 30 years of service. On July 27, 2007, her retirement ceremony was held at the State House. Ninety-seven-year-old Lieutenant Margaret H. Haggerty, the Commonwealth's longest living nurse officer, was in attendance as well. Brigadier General Field is a resident of Lenox and Lieutenant Haggerty lives in Pittsfield.

*Contributed by Rosanne M. Frieri, Pittsfield Veterans' Agent*

## Do You Know a Woman Veteran?

Did your Aunt Dorothy serve in the Army Nurse Corps? Did your girlfriend go to the Persian Gulf during Desert Storm? Was your neighbor a WAVE? Did your daughter deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan?

Women veterans are all around us. The female veteran population of Massachusetts is estimated to be a little over 28,000. Chances are good that you *do* know a woman veteran. Have you asked her about her service in the military? Have you thanked her for her service and sacrifice?

Women have served in every American conflict since the Revolutionary War. The number of women in the military today is approximately 203,000—or 15% of the active duty force. Over 2,350 Massachusetts women have been deployed for the Global War on Terror.

If you or someone you know is a woman who has served in the military, please contact the Women Veterans' Network at 617-210-5781. The Network is looking for *all* women veterans from Massachusetts.

## A Message from Heidi



*(l-r) Joan O'Connor (now Kelley), Mary Ellen Mesale, and Charlotte Fritz (now Brindley) staffed the Women Veterans' Network in its early years*

Happy anniversary to the Women Veterans Network! Ten years ago the legislature established the Network with a modest budget and a sweeping vision: to act as a central resource for the women veterans of the Commonwealth.

Former Commissioner of Veterans' Services Tom Hudner and the Network's first Coordinator, Joan O'Connor (now Kelley), chaired the initial meeting of the steering committee on January 29, 1997. Hudner and O'Connor were early architects of the Network. O'Connor coordinated the Network for six years, during which three Assistants helped her expand and operate the program. Mary Ellen Mesale, the Network's first Assistant, attended that initial meeting. Her legacy is the creation of the database of women veterans and this newsletter, as well as organizing the first luncheon. Mesale's successor was Charlotte Fritz (now Brindley), who planned luncheons and helped many women veterans in need. I was hired as the Assistant in 2001 and have had the pleasure of working with all of my predecessors in various capacities. I appreciate their thoughtfulness in laying the foundation of the Network. It is strong and stable because of their care.

In the past ten years the faces of the Network staff have changed and the number of women veterans living in Massachusetts has grown. One thing that has not changed is the Network's mission to serve women veterans—and that won't change in the next ten years' time either.

*Heidi Kruckenberg—Women's Coordinator*

## Upcoming Events

### Nominate a Woman Veteran

Do you know an outstanding woman veteran? If you think others should know about her extraordinary military and community service, please nominate her to be this year's Outstanding Woman Veteran. The Women Veterans' Network will celebrate the service of all Massachusetts women veterans at the State House in Boston on **Thursday, November 8, 2007, at 10:30 a.m.** Come to Nurse's Hall to hear presentations by women veterans and their supporters, as well as special recognition of an Outstanding Woman Veteran.

Nominees must currently serve or previously have served active duty in the regular military, National Guard, or Reserves. Nominations must include: an overview of military service and awards; a summary of contributions to the military; and a description of any personal sacrifices or hardships the woman endured in order to serve in the military. For an official nomination form, please visit [www.mass.gov/veterans](http://www.mass.gov/veterans) or call 617-210-5778.

Nominations are due no later than Thursday, September 27, 2007, and should be mailed to the Women Veterans' Network, 600 Washington St., Suite 1100, Boston, MA 02111, or faxed to 617-210-5755, or e-mailed to [DVSWomen@vet.state.ma.us](mailto:DVSWomen@vet.state.ma.us).

### Celebrate Women's History Month

Come celebrate Women's History Month at the **Female Faces of War Conference and Overnight Adventure** at the Battleship Massachusetts in Fall River, MA, on **March 7-8, 2008**. The event will support the YWCA of Greater Rhode Island and the Women Protecting US exhibit at Battleship Massachusetts.

The Female Faces of War Conference will be an opportunity to hear educational, inspirational, and consciousness-raising stories from women who have felt the impact of war. Activities include the opening of the Women Protecting US exhibit, discussion groups, speaker presentations, and the chance to sleep overnight aboard the Battleship on Friday, March 7.

This event is open to the public. Cost for the full program is \$125. For Saturday only, the fee is \$55. To participate as a volunteer, speaker, or workshop leader, please contact Laurie Carlson (508-678-1100) or Johanna LeClair (401-527-0431). For more information, visit [www.battleshipcove.org](http://www.battleshipcove.org) or [www.ywcagri.org](http://www.ywcagri.org).

### Bring a Friend to the Governor's Advisory Committee Luncheon

The Massachusetts Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans cordially invites all women veterans to attend the annual luncheon on **Sunday, September 30, 2007, at noon**. This annual event is a wonderful opportunity for women veterans to bring family and friends along to share the sense pride, honor, and courage that this unique group of women holds. The Committee encourages women to attend and bring someone with them for the good food, comradere, and celebration of women's service in the military.

This year's luncheon will be held at a *new* location in the AMVETS Hall, Post 147 in Haverhill, MA (576 Primrose Street). There will be a jewelry sale, raffle, and VA Health Fair immediately before the luncheon. The lunch menu includes roasted chicken or stuffed sole. A keynote address will follow the meal.

Please order your tickets (cost \$25 per person) before September 21, as no tickets will be sold at the door. Call Stephanie Landry (781-925-4486) for more information.

#### Governor's Advisory Committee Luncheon Registration Form

Sunday, September 30, 2007, Noon  
AMVETS Hall Post 147, Haverhill, MA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number of tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Choice of meal: roasted chicken \_\_\_\_\_  
stuffed sole \_\_\_\_\_

(please indicate choices by number, not a check mark)

**Checks payable to: Women Veterans' Committee**

**Mail this form with your check to:**

**Stephanie Landry  
290 Newport Rd.  
Hull, MA 02045**

**DEADLINE: September 21, 2007**

# Returning Veterans

## A Work in Progress



*Theresa (left) and Elizabeth O'Doherty (right) are sisters who both served in Iraq and currently reside in Acton, MA*

Sometimes things are better left unsaid. When we admit the truth, people pass judgment or don't know how to react, so we say nothing.

Women combat veterans are all alike. We have terrible memories that leave us feeling a constant pang of paranoia, believing that death is just a second away. We cannot shake the

fear and we cannot forget what we have seen and done, but we try. We have an innate ability to nurture, and when that is disrupted, we are merely shells of the women we once were. Our minds race with everyday challenges to push the memories and visions out of our minds and to move on like we know we should. But when we are broken down by the true horrors of war, is there really a chance that we can regain our entire self from the past?

We act like things are fine to our loved ones and even people we do not know. We try to leave behind the fear and regret, but guilt is a vicious cycle. We attempt to let go of the guilt, by any means necessary, but it stays with us and haunts us like a bad dream. We should seek help, but life sometimes gets in the way, so some are left behind, and cannot move forward. It's like we're drowning in a sea of horror, waiting for a miracle. Some of us give up, some of us self-medicate and some of us push through the muck because we keep faith that there is something better on the other side.

*By Theresa O'Doherty (Army Reserves) and Elizabeth O'Doherty (Army), Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans*

### VA Returning Combat Veteran Coordinators in Massachusetts

*The Returning Combat Veteran Coordinator will help all recently discharged veterans or Reservists make easier transitions from the military to the VA healthcare system.*

VISN 1 office	781-687-2082
Bedford VAMC (Elizabeth Price)	781-687-3067
VA Boston HCS (Mel Tapper)	857-364-6780
Northampton VAMC (John Laneve)	413-584-4040, Ext. 2143

## Making the Transition Home Seamless



*(l-r) James Crosby and Gail Cavanaugh-McAuliffe help returning veterans through the Seamless Transition Initiative*

The Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) has implemented a new program called the Seamless Transition Initiative to assist severely wounded servicemembers returning to the Commonwealth. This national initiative opens a line of communication and coordination between the

Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and state departments of veterans' services. As the returning veterans move from military hospitals to the VA medical facilities in their communities, DVS works in conjunction with the DoD and VA staff to ensure that these new veterans' needs are met.

Massachusetts has taken this national initiative one step further and opened the program to all servicemembers returning from combat. The transition from military to civilian life can sometimes be difficult. **WE ARE HERE TO HELP.** It is important to know that you, the veteran, are not alone during this time of change. DVS continues to serve you by providing you with information about your benefits and assisting you in this process.

Two full-time employees of DVS make up the Seamless Transition Team. James Crosby, Outreach Coordinator, is a Marine Corps veteran who served in Iraq and Gail Cavanaugh-McAuliffe, Program Coordinator, is an Army veteran who served during the Persian Gulf era. We understand the challenge of transitioning home and want to help make that transition easier for all veterans.

In addition to assisting veterans with their inquiries, the Seamless Transition Team sends a "Welcome Home Packet" to all servicemembers whose home of record is Massachusetts. This packet is a guide to help new veterans learn about benefits they have earned from the Commonwealth, as well as federal benefits and protections to which they may be entitled.

We hope to hear from you. Please contact James at 617-210-5762 or Gail at 617-210-5782.

*by James Crosby and Gail Cavanaugh-McAuliffe, Seamless Transition Initiative, Department of Veterans' Services*

Department of Veterans' Services  
Attn: Women Veterans' Network  
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Boston, MA 02111

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**Bedford Veterans Quarters to Open Doors**



*A typical room at the Bedford Veterans Quarters*

On September 1, 2007, the doors will open to a brand new housing development for homeless veterans at the VA medical campus in Bedford, MA. Known as "Bedford Veterans Quarters," the building was developed by a nonprofit organization, Caritas

Communities, to provide 60 comfortable, furnished, private rooms for homeless veterans. A separate wing with controlled access has been designed specifically for women and includes seven rooms and a bath. Most of the rooms have Section 8 subsidy, making rents affordable. The building has three large communal kitchens, three living rooms, free laundry facilities, and a full-time live-in manager. Applicants must have a general or honorable discharge, be clean and sober for 120 days, and pass a CORI review. This is a great opportunity for permanent housing in a setting that can provide social, medical, and supportive services. For more information, call Anne Dooley at 781-843-1242, Ext. 25.

*by Anne Dooley, Caritas Communities*

**Newly Renovated Women's Residence**



*The newly renovated women's residence at NESHV in Boston*

On April 12, 2007, the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans (NESHV) celebrated the re-opening of a newly renovated women's residence. In 1996 the staff of the NESHV established the Lt. Pamela D. Donovan Memorial Residence for Women, a 16-bed women's dormitory. The residence was created through a memorial fund established in the name of Lt. Pamela Donovan, a U.S. Army nurse and Massachusetts native, killed at the 25th Evac. Hospital near Qui Nhon, South Vietnam in 1968.

In 2007, in part through a gracious grant from Charlesbank Homes, the women's dormitory was renovated and updated. Besides new floors, ceilings, and tiling, the dormitory now features a new second bathroom and shower facilities, an extended television room, new lighting, and new fire-safety upgrades. Please call 617-371-1800 for more information.

*by Stephen Cunniff, New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans*