



## Women Veterans of America National Newsletter

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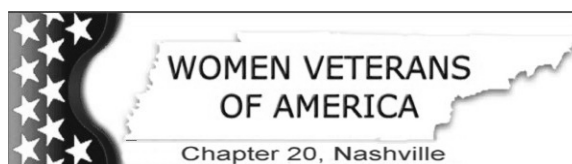
### **National Convention**

**September 10-12, 2010  
Nashville, Tennessee**

Women Veterans of America is pleased to announce that the National Convention will be held in Nashville, Tennessee, from September 10 to 12, 2010. The Convention will be hosted by Nashville Chapter 20, under the leadership of Commander Mary Ross. The Keynote Speaker on Saturday morning will be Dr. Patricia M. Hayes, Chief Consultant, Women Veterans Health Strategic Healthcare Group, Washington, DC (see related article). She will provide updates on the latest changes that have been made in the provision of comprehensive health care for women veterans and share with our group what is coming in the near future.

More details will be forthcoming as plans are finalized. The activities will begin on Friday evening with registration and hospitality. The Convention Committee is planning some optional fun activities in and around Nashville, with a chance to sign up for those festivities at the same time that you register for the Convention.

Saturday will be a full day, with ceremonies and speakers scheduled in the morning and a business meeting in the afternoon. One of the most important items of business on Saturday afternoon will be the review and consideration of the proposed changes to the Women Veterans of America National Constitution and By Laws. The election of officers will also be held on Saturday afternoon, with installation of the new officers on Sunday morning. A Memorial Ceremony will be conducted by the National Chaplain on Sunday morning, and the Convention will end about noon. Start making your plans now to attend.



*The Convention was previously scheduled to be held in Oklahoma City in August 2010, but Oklahoma withdrew their bid to host the Convention. Many thanks to Nashville Chapter 20 for stepping in with an offer to be the host once again. Those of you who attended the 2008 Convention in Nashville will remember what a great host Chapter 20 was.*

## **Speaker Confirmed for National Convention**



Dr. Patricia M. Hayes, Chief Consultant, Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group, Washington, DC, has accepted our invitation to be the Keynote Speaker at the Women Veterans of America (WVA) National Convention to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, September 10-12, 2010. Dr. Hayes' office provides programmatic and strategic support to implement positive changes in the provision of care for all women veterans. As part of VA's readiness for the expected influx of new women veterans, the Women Veterans Health Program was elevated to a Strategic Health Care Group in 2007. In 2008, facilities received \$32.5M in supplemental funding for investments in women's health equipment, training, and supplies. Dr. Hayes and her staff travel extensively throughout the VA healthcare system nationwide, working to make certain that women veterans requesting VA care are assured that comprehensive primary care is provided by a proficient and interested primary care provider; that privacy, safety, dignity and sensitivity to gender-specific needs are met; that the right care is provided in the right place at the right time; that state-of-the-art health care equipment and technology are available; and that high-quality preventive and clinical care, equal to that provided to male veterans, is provided for women veterans. Dr. Hayes has 25 years' experience and accomplishments serving veterans, including 16 years developing local and national programs, and has significant expertise in sexual trauma and recovery. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to hear first hand from someone who is involved at a very high level in the planning and delivery of health care for women veterans.

## **Chapter Reports**

### **Chapter 8, Houston, Texas**

Chapter 8 Commander Karen Shaver was pleased to see that the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston was featured on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) web site, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) in February, 2010. The title of the posting was "Patriotism Knows No Gender", and the Women's Health Center at Houston was profiled. Pamela Swope is the Women Veterans Health Program Manager. Currently, more than 8,000 women veterans receive their health care at the DeBakey VA Women's Health Center, with an additional 6,000 poised to enter the system. The current Women's Health Center is scheduled to be relocated and expanded, with more space, additional health care providers and a large, comfortable, friendly waiting room for women. Members of

Chapter 8, including Commander Shaver, Vice Commander Raenia Cantlow, former Vice Commander Jacqueline Hall, faithful members Kathy Forsberg, Gloria Maddox, Gracie Merchant and others regularly volunteer many hours at the Houston VA Medical Center, providing comfort kits to hospitalized women veterans and working with the dedicated staff of the VA Voluntary Service.

## **Chapter 20, Nashville, Tennessee**

Women Veterans of America Chapter 20 hosted a Pancake & SOS Breakfast fundraiser on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, in Clarksville, Tennessee. The menu consisted of pancakes, sausages, SOS (sausage gravy on toast), orange juice, milk and coffee. For all you



*National Sgt-at-Arms Kathy Bell (left) with  
Chapter 20 Commander Mary Ross*

veterans out there who have fond or maybe not-so-fond memories of chow hall SOS, Chapter 20 wants you to know that our SOS is real, authentic, rib sticking SOS cooked by veterans who know how to do it right. Chapter 20 has been told by many of our regular breakfast attendees that our SOS is the best they have ever had. Chapter 20 is hosting the 2010 WVA National Convention in September, and proceeds from this breakfast will be used to offset some of our convention-related expenses. As an organization, we do good things, and hope to continue to grow and make our footprint even larger in the community. We are always pleased to have our friends come out and support us, and have a great breakfast in the bargain! WVA takes pride in our

participation in local community activities, such as co-hosting the Fort Donelson, Tennessee, National Battlefield and Cemetery's Memorial Day ceremony in 2009 and marching in the Clarksville and Nashville Veterans Day parades annually. We also donated to the restoration of Clarksville, Tennessee's Doughboy statue and will be participating in the rededication ceremony in downtown Clarksville on April 15.

## **Chapter 23, Augusta, Maine**

Chapter 23 Commander Diane Turcotte sent the following message at the end of last year: "It is with great sadness that I must report to you that Chapter 23 will be dissolving as of January 1, 2010. We have been unable to fill the slate of officers for the upcoming term of 2010. We have recruited new members but most of them do not want to be active. It is a growing concern for most all organizations. Some of us who are and have held an office can no longer continue promoting Chapter 23 when we do not have members that will participate. There is also the concern that the National level has issues that need to be addressed. Chapter 23 will follow thru with the commitments we have made for 2009 regarding donations, etc. Once we have finished paying National our remaining 2009 dues, the Executive Board will donate the remaining monies of our treasury to area causes that promote outreaching to women veterans. Some of these will be: State of Maine Women Veterans Plaque; Homeless Standdown; VAVS and Beals

House (a home established at Togus Veterans Hospital for families of hospitalized veterans).”

Although Chapter 23 has now been placed in an inactive status, there are several members who have expressed an interest in reviving the Chapter. All Lifetime Members have been added to the WVA National Members at Large list.

## **Chapter 41, Manchester, New Hampshire**

In April 2008 a group of women veterans concerned with women veteran issues met to establish an organization. By August 2008, the group decided to start a New Hampshire Chapter of Women Veterans of America. At that time Trina Wycoff was named as the Chapter Commander until first elections were held in November 2009, resulting in Trina's election as Commander. Chapter 41 began with 25 charter members with women who served in WW II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Chapter 41's Vision is to give a voice, identity, and presence to women veterans in New Hampshire and to honor their service. Primary 2009 goals were to establish a presence at veterans' gatherings to inform women about Chapter 41 and of their veteran's benefits; advocate on behalf of women veterans by becoming a member of the NH State Veterans Advisory Committee; and to pursue grant money to establish peer training dealing with military sexual trauma.

Over 70 women veterans from WW II to current operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom attended a Veterans Benefits and Resources Fair sponsored by Chapter 41 at the VA Medical Center in Manchester. The highlight for many was having 12 WW II female veterans attend and share their stories with others. The photo to the right is of the WW II veterans and the current Commander of Chapter 41 (Trina Wycoff, seated on the floor). The women had the opportunity to informally connect with other women veterans, to network, and to support each



other and the women who currently serve in the military of the United States. Women were able to receive advice and support about issues ranging from jobs to counseling for military sexual trauma, and new healthcare options available to women veterans. They were also able to apply for VA benefits.

A special ceremony where the Women Veterans of America Chapter 41 presented its first Distinguished Woman Veteran Award was also conducted. The recipient, (pictured at left with Commander Trina Wycoff) was Margaret Nally, a WW II veteran

In addition to the Women Veteran's Benefit Fair, Chapter

41 members have attended many veterans' outreach events, and became a member of the NH State Veterans Advisory Committee (no small feat that took almost a year). Future goals include sponsoring training for care providers, educating them on what is unique about treating women veterans with PTSD and MST. Other plans include having a team participate in a Breast Cancer Walk and helping with a Homeless Vet Stand Down.

## Growing Pains, Part II

The task of identifying those Women Veterans of America (WVA) Chapters that were improperly established without the requisite number of members and those that have been struggling with inadequate membership and/or unacceptable records keeping has continued. As a result, the following Chapters have been placed in an inactive status, and have been removed from the WVA National web site: Chapter 3, Virginia; Chapter 7, New York; Chapter 9, New York; Chapter 30, California; Chapter 31, Texas; Chapter 32, Ohio; Chapter 34, Texas; Chapter 38, Virginia; Chapter 39, South Carolina; Chapter 40, Massachusetts; and Chapter 42, Missouri. These Chapters can be reactivated upon submission of proof of adequate membership, payment of any unpaid dues, and demonstration of an acceptable method of maintaining Chapter records. Chapter 25, Puerto Rico and Chapter 26, Hawaii chose not to continue as members of WVA and either closed or joined other organizations. (Previously, Chapter 22, Tennessee; Chapter 33, California; and Chapter 37, Oklahoma, either became inactive through lack of membership or withdrew from WVA). This has been a painful but necessary undertaking, with the integrity of our organization as our guiding principle. Vice Commander Judy Scott resigned her office in January, 2010. Your remaining National Officers are committed to making Women Veterans of America a stronger organization, and part of this process has been an effort to strengthen the credibility of our organization by ensuring that our National Officers and Chapter Officers adhere to our currently approved National Constitution and By Laws. Changes to the Constitution and By Laws are being proposed and will be considered at the National Convention in September, 2010. To ensure that your voice is heard, make plans now to attend.

## Nominations for National Office

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**Nominations are now being accepted for the offices of National Commander, Vice Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Sgt.-at-Arms, and Chaplain.** The term of office is two years, and elections will be held at the National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, in September 2010. Members must be present in order to cast a vote. You may submit names of nominees to the Nominating Committee. The names of those nominated will be announced in the next issue of the Women Veterans of America National Newsletter, and additional nominations will be accepted from the floor of the Convention. Nominating Committee members are: Chair, Sue Getz, [Sgetzrn@aol.com](mailto:Sgetzrn@aol.com); members Stacey Hopwood, [StaceyRay1@msn.com](mailto:StaceyRay1@msn.com); Lisa Quinn, [QuinnLA1Lisa@gmail.com](mailto:QuinnLA1Lisa@gmail.com); and Karen Shaver, [karenshaver@att.net](mailto:karenshaver@att.net).

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# News and Notes from the VA

## Care for Newborn Children of Women Veterans

On May 5, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law Public Law No. 111-163, the “Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010”. “As we all know, keeping faith with our veterans and their families is work that is never truly finished. As a nation, as the beneficiaries of their service, there’s always more we can do and more that we must do. And that’s what we’re doing today, as I sign this important legislation--the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act.” President Obama stated. “We’re expanding and improving health care for our women veterans, to meet their unique needs, including maternity care for newborn children.”



Women veterans' health services will be further enhanced, such as a development of a thorough study of the barriers to the provision of comprehensive health care women veterans encounter. There will also be a program established to provide graduate medical education for mental health professionals who provide counseling, care, and services for female veterans suffering from sexual trauma and post traumatic stress disorder. Other expansions include a pilot program to provide child care for veterans receiving intensive medical care.

This law also provides veterans' caregivers with training, counseling, supportive services, and a living stipend; provides health care to the family caregivers of injured veterans under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA); and requires independent oversight of the caregiver program. VA must provide a report to Congress on its comprehensive assessment of the barriers in providing health care to the 1.8 million women veterans' currently receiving VA health care and it requires VA to train its mental health providers in the treatment of military sexual trauma. It also mandates that VA implement pilot programs to provide child care to women veterans receiving medical care and provide readjustment services to women veterans. Other items included are the expansion of VA's authority to provide incentives so that VA can recruit and retain high-quality health care providers; the provision of travel reimbursements for veterans receiving treatment at VA facilities and grants for veterans service organizations transporting veterans residing in highly rural areas; authorization from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to utilize non-VA facilities for the care and treatment of veterans suffering from Traumatic Brain Injury when the Secretary: (1) is unable to provide such treatment or services at the frequency or for the duration necessary; or (2) determines that it is optimal to the veteran's recovery and rehabilitation. The law also establishes and increases eligibility for Iraq and Afghanistan service members, including National Guard and Reserve members, to receive readjustment counseling; requires VA to conduct a study on veteran suicides; and emphasizes VA's commitment to provide medical care for certain Vietnam-era veterans exposed to

herbicide and Gulf-War era veterans who have insufficient medical evidence to establish a service-connected disability; and eliminates copayments for veterans who are catastrophically disabled.

## **Expansion of Counseling for Combat Veterans**

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced that combat veterans will receive readjustment counseling and other assistance in 28 additional communities across the country where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will establish Vet Centers in 2010.

"VA is committed to providing high-quality outreach and readjustment counseling to all combat Veterans," Secretary Shinseki said. "These 28 new Vet Centers will address the growing need for those services."

The community-based Vet Centers -- already in all 50 states -- are a key component of VA's mental health program, providing veterans with mental health screening and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) counseling.

The existing 232 centers conduct community outreach to offer counseling on employment, family issues and education to combat veterans and family members, as well as bereavement counseling for families of servicemembers killed on active duty and counseling for veterans who were sexually harassed on active duty.

Vet Center services are earned through service in a combat zone or area of hostility and are provided at no cost to veterans or their families. They are staffed by small multi-disciplinary teams, which may include social workers, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, master's-level counselors and outreach specialists. Over 70 percent of Vet Center employees are veterans themselves, a majority of whom served in combat zones.

The Vet Center program was established in 1979 by Congress, recognizing that many Vietnam Veterans were still having readjustment problems. In 2008, the Vet Center program provided over 1.1 million visits to over 167,000 veterans, including over 53,000 visits by more than 14,500 veteran families. More information about Vet Centers can be found at [www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp).

The new VA Vet Centers will be in American Samoa, Arizona, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

## **Advisory Committee on Women Veterans**

The Advisory Committee on Women Veterans (ACWV) was established and chartered in November 1983 by Public Law 98-160. The Advisory Committee assesses the needs of women veterans, with respect to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs such as compensation, rehabilitation, outreach, healthcare, etc. The Committee reviews VA's programs, activities, research projects and other initiatives designed to meet the needs of women veterans; and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on ways to improve, modify, and affect change in programs and services for women veterans and follows up on all those recommendations.



In September 2009, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki appointed Lindsay M. Long to a two-year term on the Advisory Committee. Lindsay is a proud and active member of Women Veterans of America Chapter 20, the Women Marines Association, and the East Tennessee Women Veterans Network. Her continuing goal is to reach out to female veterans, letting those who have sacrificed for their country know that the nation is prepared to give something back.



*Lindsay Long at Women in Service for America Memorial in Washington, DC, in November 2007. Women Veterans of America Chapter 20 and the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System sponsored a bus trip to the 10th Anniversary of WIMSA.*

When asked about herself, Lindsay sent this information: “A little girl with the name of Lindsay Charley was born in the wrong generation and of the wrong sex. Little girls were not named Lindsay, it was a boy’s name or a last name, and they certainly didn’t have the last name of Charley. Everyone thought I should be a boy named Charley Lindsay.

“Then I joined the US Marine Corps.

“What a mess my name caused then, but I was still a young girl, only 17 when I joined my beloved Marine Corps, and in a man’s world.

I was only in the Marine Corps for one year, but that was long enough for my superiors to take notice, earning me a meritorious promotion to Private First Class and Lance Corporal. That American Indian from New Mexico may have had a man’s name but it didn’t matter – she was a Marine. This was the beginning of the course my life would travel.

“I have always been one of the few females in my work area, if not the only female, and had to fight many battles to be accepted. In the long run, each of those battles and the sincerity with which I fought helped me to earn the respect of the very men I was having to fight against, from the Marine Corps to my present day position as a Utility Operator at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and a representative for the Native American Committee.

*“Once a Marine, Always a Marine  
Semper Fidelis - Always Faithful  
More than a motto, making it a lifestyle,  
Continually serving fellow Marines,  
Veterans and the community.*

“I firmly believe in what I just wrote. I believe in serving our community.

“As a breast cancer survivor, I came across the opportunity to attend a retreat in North Carolina for women who have experienced breast cancer, utilizing the sport of fly fishing. Fly fishing is a gentle movement that is good for the soft tissues, providing flexibility to the areas affected by surgery and treatment. There were two instructors at the retreat from Townsend, Tennessee that worked their fly all weekend. They made the perfect cast, presented the right fly, hooked me, reeled me in, and then landed me. Once



they had me in the net, they did not practice “catch and release” but instead put me in the creel and kept me. Next thing I knew, I was involved in the first Casting for Recovery Retreat to be offered in Tennessee. In 2008, I became the Program Coordinator for the East Tennessee Program for Casting for Recovery, open to any woman living in Tennessee that has experienced breast cancer.

“The Women Marines Association firmly believes in community service for women veterans, men veterans, and the community. A perfect fit for my passion for my beloved Marine Corps as well as for community service. In 2002, the Rocky Top Chapter of Women Marines was formed, and we set off to help our sister women veterans, men veterans, and our community. The wonderful thing about this small band of women is that we serve our community as if we were 100 women. One of my biggest passions is the Salvation Army, which I have been involved with for over 20 years, and now it is also a passion of the Rocky Top Chapter of Women Marines. We are able to be out there and now East Tennessee knows there is a chapter of the Women Marines Association, from veterans’ organizations, plant societies, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity Women Build Projects, Steps House, Mission of Hope and others. We still have that Gung Ho attitude: “Once a Marine, Always a Marine” and definitely “Always Faithful”. This past December, I could not get enough volunteers for a Casting for Recovery event so I put out the call to the Women Marines. With that “Semper Fi” attitude, they answered my call without question and we had enough volunteers to get the job done. Outstanding!

“In December 2002, MaryAnn Woodward-Smith was the Women Veterans Program Manager for the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System for the mid-south region. She invited a group of East Tennessee women veterans to meet for an informational meeting. We then formed the Knoxville group of the Women Veterans Network. MaryAnn shared her passion for women veterans’ health issues and benefits, getting us involved in each other’s lives. The camaraderie we shared as women veterans was again established among this group of women, forming tight bonds that only women veterans can form.



*Lindsay Long (right) with former Women Veterans Program Manager (now Deputy Field Director), MaryAnn Woodward-Smith, at Knoxville Veterans Day Parade, November 2008*

“When I was in the Marine Corps it was peace time. In boot camp, instead of firing a rifle, I was attending tea parties, learning how to converse with officers. The niceties and common courtesies I was raised with and then had reinforced in boot camp caused me to write a Thank You note to the Director and Associate Director of the Center for Women Veterans for a function I attended in Washington, DC. I received a phone call from Dr. Mosley-Brown, Associate Director of the Center for Women Veterans, asking me to apply for a spot on the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. After much thought and consideration, I decided to take the next step. This committee was something I

firmly believed in, so I sent in my resume. In September of 2009, Secretary Shinseki appointed me to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans for the next two years.

“The women veterans who came before us paved the way for the women veterans of today. We now have a new breed of brave women serving their country, breaking new ground in the OEF and OIF arenas. The number of women veterans is increasing exponentially, as are the services they need.

“The World War II and Korean War women veterans that I know have made me stand a little taller. I love making them smile and letting them know that their efforts that I now benefit from were worth it. I want to be a part of the new changes that are needed to address today’s women veterans as well as those of the future. As a Marine, an American Indian, a Union Member, and a Woman Veteran from the great state of Tennessee, the ‘Volunteer State’, I am going to use my passion and veracity to make an ‘Out Standing’ difference.”

## **Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of WWII**

A Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony for Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at 11:00 AM at the U.S. Capitol.

“The Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony gives national recognition for the service of the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II” Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), who introduced the legislation last March together with Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), said. “The tremendous service and sacrifice of these women have earned them a place of honor in American history, and this medal serves as a small token of our nation’s gratitude for their courage.”



These women pilots have never received formal or public recognition for their wartime service to the United States. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) sponsored the House version of the bill. In the Senate, 75 Senators cosponsored the bill, which passed unanimously on May 18, 2009. The House version was sponsored by 334 Representatives and passed on June 16, 2009. President Barack Obama signed the bill into law (Public Law 111-40) on July 1, 2009. WASPs were the first women in history to fly American military aircraft. More than 60 years ago, they flew fighter, bomber, transport, and training aircraft in defense of America’s freedom. They faced overwhelming cultural and gender bias against women in non-traditional roles and overcame multiple injustices and inequities in order to serve their country. Through their actions, the WASPs eventually were the catalyst for revolutionary reform in the integration of women pilots into the Armed Services.



The Congressional Gold Medal is awarded by Congress and, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, is the highest and most distinguished honor a civilian may receive.

The award is bestowed for exceptional acts of service to the United States or for lifetime achievement. Once approved by Congress, the U.S. Mint designs and creates each gold medal so that it uniquely represents the individual or event being honored. The original medal will be displayed at the Smithsonian Institution.

Of the 1,102 women who received their wings as Women Airforce Service Pilots, approximately 300 are living today. Bronze medal duplicates of the Congressional Gold Medal were awarded to all 1,102 pilots and/or their surviving family members, 11 WASP trainees who died during training, and 1 to the family of Jacqueline Cochran, the founder of WASP.

Women in Military Service for America Memorial (WIMSA) is designated as the official organization for gathering information about all WASPs. More information on the WASP can be found at [www.wingsacrossamerica.org](http://www.wingsacrossamerica.org).

## **VA's Suicide Prevention Program Adds Chat Service**

The Suicide Prevention campaign of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is expanding its outreach to all Veterans by piloting an online, one-to-one "chat service" for veterans who prefer reaching out for assistance using the Internet. Called "Veterans Chat," the new service enables veterans, their families and friends to go online where they can anonymously chat with a trained VA counselor. If a "chatter" is determined to be in a crisis, the counselor can take immediate steps to transfer the person to the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline, where further counseling and referral services are provided and crisis intervention steps can be taken. Veterans, family members or friends can access Veterans Chat through the suicide prevention Web site [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org). There is a Veterans tab on the left-hand side of the website that will take them directly to veteran resource information. On this page, they can see the Hotline number (1-800-273-TALK), and click on the Veterans Chat tab on the right side of the Web page to enter.



Veterans retain anonymity by entering whatever names they choose once they enter the one-on-one chat. They are then joined by a counselor who is trained to provide information and respond to the requests and concerns of the caller.

Chat responders are trained in an intervention method specifically developed for the chat line to assist people with emotional distress and concerns. There are procedures they can use to transfer chatters in crisis to the Suicide Prevention Hotline for more immediate assistance.

Both Veterans Chat and the VA's Suicide Prevention Hotline have been established under the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which was established through collaboration between VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services. Since becoming operational in July 2007, VA's Suicide Prevention Hotline has received more than 150,000 calls, resulting in 4,000 rescues.