



www.womenveteransunite.com

July 2024

PO BOX 14681 Tallahassee FL 32317

womenvunite@gmail.com

Mission: Becoming Visible



Celebrating the 4th in Fellowship At Ease Campground



At Ease hosts a Meet and Greet the first Thursday of every month.

The Fall Retreat will be held Oct 18-20, 2024 at At Ease Campground. IF you want to attend you will need to sign up ahead of time (lodging must be worked out) and pay \$30.00 for the weekend. This includes food, lodging, activities. Activities include sunset cruise, fishing boats, kayaking, bonfire but most importantly fellowship and fun!!



Did someone leave their welcome packet with a XL polo shirt at the American Legion Hall after the WVU gathering? IF so, call Karen 914-772-5915.

Current Officers



Audrey Alexander, President



Paula Hubert, Vice-President



Shirley Combass, Treasurer



Sandi Smith Anderson, Secretary



Pia Woodley, Parliamentarian

Upcoming Elections

Nominations for the Vice-President and Treasurer positions will be open during the August 15th gathering. Voting for these positions will take place at the September

19th meeting. The membership approved the delay due to the need to discuss and approve the updated and amended Bylaws, which was completed in the June 2023. In the future, nominations for officer positions will be done in May for a June election. The election cycle: odd years President and Secretary, even years Vice-President and Treasurer. This staggering ensures smooth transtion of the duties associated with each position.

Duties for upcoming elected positions:

Vice President-

- Presides at E board and membership meetings in the absence of the President.
- Chair of the Advisory Council (Advisory Council consists of Public Information Officer, Armed Forces Laision, Historian, Chairs of

Membership, Standing and Ad Hoc committees).

- Submit proposals and recommendations from members to the Eboard for review and discussion.

Treasurer-

- Responsible for maintenance of Women Veterans Unite financial records, receipts and disbursements of organization funds and collection of organization dues.
- Work with an independent financial auditor at the close of the fiscal year (September 30) to review all records of the organization.
- Be an authorized representative on the WVU bank account (along with President and Secretary).

- Chair the Budget Committee

If you are interested in running for either Vice-President or Treasurer, be sure to attend the August 15 gathering so you can get nominated.

OR Maybe...

You are interested in participating in one of the committees. WVU continues to grow and evolve and we need input from members to ensure that process continues The E Board will be distributing sign up sheets for committee involvement. The committee options include:

Membership-

Budget and Finance

Bylaws/Nomination and Elections

Fundraising- (coordinating fundraisers, donations and sponsors)

Public Relations/Marketing

Technology

Hospitality (Obtaining meal donations for the monthly gatherings)

Special Events (coordinating Retreats, Veterans Day Parade activities, Holiday Gathering)

Community Service and Outreach

Social Amenities

National Observances

See email for details about focus of committees and responsibilities

Resources

Vanessa Thomas, State Women Veterans Coordinator for FDVA (Florida Department of Veterans Affairs)



Vanessa Thomas, FDVA

Vanessa works closely with Sharon Brooks who is the WVU regional representative for the Florida Women Veterans Advisory Council. Need

help with disability claims? Contact Sharon at **850-728-0067**



Sharon Brooks, Florida Women Veterans Advisory Council rep

Felecia Brown, BJC Missions, Inc. A former homeless Army veteran Felecia has a mission to provide transitional and permanent housing for homeless veterans and their families. **FREE**

Contact Felecia at 832-316-7475

www.bojohnsongirls.com



Felecia Brown

Debra Mann works for DAV. Her office is at the VA clinic.

DAV Debra Mann
850-272-6170
Disability Claims



Debbie Mann

Veterans Legal Collaborative-FREE legal information and help with disability or homeless issues meets every Thursday from 3 pm to 5 pm at the American Legion Hall Lake Ella Drive. Walk in encouraged.

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program
Brooklyn Enders 443-621-0579
Job information and retraining



Brooklyn Enders, DVOP



American Legion Update



Cindy Laskowski, Commander, was installed as the Commander for the Sauls-Bridges #13 American Legion Post on Thursday July 11, 2024.



Roxann Dressel, Commander of the Jake Pigott Memorial American Legion #114 in Wakulla, served as District 1st Vice, while Doyle Combs, District Commander performed the swearing in ceremony.

Cindy is excited to work with her newly elected board in promoting the American Legion activities. You may know Cindy, WVU member, as the cake maker for the WVU gatherings each month.

Stand Down July 2024

North Florida Homeless/At-Risk Veterans
FAMU
STAND DOWN
July 12-13, 2024
Lawson Multipurpose Center
1800 Wakulla Way
Tallahassee, FL 32310
www.lawsoncenter.org/standdown
Fri. & Sat. 10 am to 3 pm
Saturday only: spouses and caregivers

SERVICES OFFERED DURING THE STAND DOWN

VA Health Counseling & Clinic	Assisted by GAO
Financial Education	Community Health Worker
Free The Week & Non-Perishable Food Bags	Secretary Services
Habitat for Humanity Home Services	Substance Use Counseling
Legal Services	Tax Services Assistance
Life Skills Training	Wound Healing & Care Clinic
Mental Health Services	Wound Prevention Services
Peer Support Services	Wound Prevention Services
Peer Support Services	Wound Prevention Services
Peer Support Services	Wound Prevention Services

ATTENTION:
Pre-register with TVO for the Stand Down at
www.lawsoncenter.org/standdownregistration
To obtain a Director's License or ID, a birth certificate is required.
Legal fees.

Veteran status must be verified by presenting a VA healthcare card or a DD Form-214.

Stand Down Coordinator: Jovelle Robinson: talhassvetveterans@gmail.com



Special thanks to all WVU members who participated in the Stand Down 2024 at the Lawson Center, FAMU. In the final WVU report sent to the Stand Down committee, Sharon Brooks wrote: ***“There was a woman who came to the Women Veterans Unite table and the ladies told her about our organization. She started crying and said our organization is just what she has been looking for and needed. Other female veterans who understood the struggles of being a female veteran and functioning in the civilian workforce.”*** That was one of our most impactful stories from the Stand Down.

Impact Numbers and Stories

If you were to read the title, impact numbers, you might be anticipating a lengthy report listing goals and objective measures to determine if the activity of an organization is meeting their goals. While we may not have a detailed litany of numbers to support the organization's existence, we do have plenty of anecdotal stories of WVU members helping other women veterans.

Recommendations from a RESTOREHER fact finding group to assist women veterans with some of their difficulties included

- Raise awareness of existing services.
- Provide a support network
- Stronger mental health services

Women Veterans Unite puts their mission statement into action by participating in events in the community to raise awareness not only of what's available to women veterans, BUT also to educate the community about the gender specific needs for women veterans. WVU members have participated in numerous events in the past three years of the organizations operations to bring this to life.

For example,



Cardboard Boat Race provided an opportunity for team building and members to get to know each other, as well as being present in the community to educate the public about WVU.



WVU member participation in Military Appreciation events at local sports functions and High School events.



Members on Honor Flight 2024



Fellowship at Retreats



Monthly gatherings provide the most dominate activity WVU does to provide access to a safe and supportive environment for women veterans to come out of isolation and connect with women who understand their needs. Comments from women at the meetings include, *“I walked in and I felt at home.”*

Besides the monthly gatherings, the WVU retreats and special events activities help to further nurture connections and alliances to promote wellbeing and mental health. We have counseled members who are not sure if they are veterans or feel they don't “deserve” to participate in WVU activities. Educating our own that she may not have been a combat soldier, but she was part of a team to support that soldier (be it male or female). Behind the scenes personnel and operations are critical to each mission whether combat or not.

So, when one of our members was asked by a member of another group she belongs to, “What is your cause at Women Veterans Unite?” She responded, **“We are the cause. Women Veterans.** We are seeking to provide a safe place for women veterans to connect, get resources and support and continue to educate the public that, “Women are Veterans too.”

Example of making a connection to assist a woman veteran navigating the sluggish bureaucracy of disability claims and health care, one member writes:

Thank you so much. The men have been no help at all!!!! The last time I went by the VA the 2 older guys were absolutely no help at all, they talked over me and around me. When I left their office, I didn't know what to do at all. so I prefer to speak with a lady who will listen to me. Thank you so very much for helping me because I'm just lost.

Sponsors



Sherlock Springs Sherlock Springs may be North Florida's best kept secret. This sprawling nature retreat, event venue and environmental educational facility is in Crawfordville, Wakulla County about 15 miles south of Tallahassee, FL. Owner/operator Rich Abrams champions veterans and graciously offers WVU the venue for the fourth year in a row.



VyStar was founded in 1952 as the JAX Navy Federal Credit Union at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. Our goal was to serve the financial needs of military service members, civil service employees and their families.



Pam Moyer at **Haven Spa** provides half spa day as a prize for the WVU fundraiser.



INSURANCE • BONDS **Earl Bacon Agency** is one of the oldest and largest independent insurance agencies in North Florida providing business and family insurance services. Robert Bacon, CEO. Robert and his daughter Lauren have sponsored WVU for three years. They are the agents for the WVU event insurance.



A trusted Nissan dealer in Tallahassee, **Kraft Nissan** is known for its exceptional customer service including a wide selection of vehicles, helpful financial experts and trained service technicians. They pride themselves in their commitment to the community and welcome partnerships with local organizations.



Best convenience store and gas station. Bringing everyone amazing moments.



Mission BBQ always ready to feed veterans and first responders.



BARBRA BOUTIN Barbra Boutin is the daughter of Jack Richard Bayer, Vietnam Veteran, 183rd Airborne Brigade who served as a medic in the United States Army. She is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Jack's honor. Barbra is a multi-million-dollar Florida licensed Real Estate Advisor and Broker Associate with Engel & Völkers serving Greater Tallahassee.



The ALA answers the call of *Service Not Self*. They are the male and female spouses, grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The

American Legion. Some are veterans themselves. The American Legion, the ALA has grown to be one of the largest veterans' support organizations. Nell Hewitt, President of Tallahassee ALA #13.



The **NSDAR (National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution)** is a nonprofit, non-political volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting historic preservation, education and patriotism. **FT San Luis Chapter, DAR** Regent Becky Berensten.



Vietnam Veterans of Big Bend Chapter 96 works with other veteran organizations to provide veterans with services that enhance their health. Joe West, President



Healthy Trak-Karen Bauer, RN, MS, Wellness Coordinator. Juice Plus Rep-because no one eats the recommended daily number of fruits, vegetables, and berries.

Donors and Supporters Tallahassee Chinese Medicine Parrotheads of Tallahassee Charles Mohr
Maggie Finch Helen Wohlrab Savour Restaurant