

# Women Veterans of New Mexico

## January 2024 Newsletter



### View From The Top

Hello and Happy New Year to all our Women Veteran's:

First and foremost, I want to take this time to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as the next president of our Women Veteran's of New Mexico. I am excited to have this time to continue what all the awesome leaders have done in the past...to serve our women Veterans throughout the state of New Mexico with pride and passion. I also look forward to raising the bar and working on a few initiatives throughout the coming year.

The first few things I want to work on is connectivity with our Women Veterans throughout the state via "road trips". I plan on using these road trips to reach out on a personal level to learn more about the challenges they face in their part of the state and ways to be their voice in finding solutions. Additionally, sharing what our organization does and is capable of will be in that initiative. I am also passionate about planning. Working our Yearly calendar is important, so our membership knows exactly what we are supporting, volunteering for, attending and when. Transparency is also key for me in that we all know what is coming into and going out of our organization in those mentioned activities. Expanding

and growing our volunteer base for our committees will be another initiative as we work together.

I want all our members to know that if you have comments, suggestions or have something you feel needs looking into within or out of our scope, please feel free to do so. Both our Board members and I will work to ensure concerns are addressed or answered. We are the voice of our Women Veterans, our service to all is key.

I would be remiss if I did not mention our high-speed Board members. They each bring their own set of excellent skills to our organization and are very proficient in everything they do. Finally, I want to ensure everyone knows that Pat is still very much a part of our organization as a mentor and subject matter expert on our organization. As immediate past president, her expertise and advice to us will be invaluable.

Again, thank you for your trust and continued support to our awesome organization.

Liz Bryant  
President

## Mark your Calendars

1st Quarter 2024 - **Membership Meeting:**

**Date:** Saturday, January 27th 2024

**Membership Meeting Starts at:** 10:00 am

**Place:** Paws and Stripes - 617 Truman St NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110

\*\*\*Note: Board Members please show up at 9:00 am for meeting set up.\*\*\*

## WVNM Mission Statement

A forum committed to serving she who served, through education and advocacy.  
An advocate for the rights, issues, and benefits of women veterans.

## Happy Holidays Women Veterans Utilizing the VA



Gift Cards for Women Veterans who are utilizing the VA. WVNM member Linda Hughes organized the event for our organization to support women veterans receiving care at the Raymond G. Murphy Veterans Health System in Albuquerque New Mexico. Linda, Pat and Mary presented Chelsea and Mary with the Gift Cards that they will pass on to female Veterans!

## Women Veterans of New Mexico Annual Christmas Party



On December 17th all members were invited to our annual Christmas party. It was a great afternoon of feasting, communing and gift giving!!! It is events like this that bring us all together!!!

## Member Spotlight



Gareth was born in Albuquerque, where she currently lives. She is an Army and New Mexico National Guard veteran, having enlisted in Farmington in 2002. Gareth describes her final rank as “highly motivated Specialist”, i.e., E-4. She completed Basic Combat Training at FT Jackson, SC in 2003, then completed Advanced Individual Training at FT Gregg-Adams (formerly FT Lee), VA, earning the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 92A, Automated Logistical Specialist. Following her training, Gareth worked primarily in the motor pool/supply shop for two years at Joint Base Langley-Eustis (formerly FT Eustis), VA. While she loved the Army, Gareth’s time at Eustis was tremendously traumatic, leading her to leave active duty and return to New Mexico. Here she accepted an AGR (Active Guard and Reserve) position, working in the Rio Rancho, Socorro, and Santa Fe armories for six years as a Counterdrug Intervention Specialist. Gareth remembers her time in the Guard as the best part of her Army career.

Gareth says she enlisted, “First and foremost because of 9/11. I heard the call. And secondly, I wanted to get out of New Mexico.” Joining the Army was somewhat family tradition, as her father had been in the Army. Her father, especially, thought it was great that Gareth had enlisted. Eventually, her mother, who was a former hippy and a bit skeptical of the military, became supportive as well.

No longer married, Gareth has three teenage children, the oldest of whom is a daughter now living with her in Albuquerque. In fact, they are both attending UNM presently and occasionally run into each other on campus. Having completed an associate’s degree in pre-law at CNM in 2022, Gareth will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and English (concentrating in medieval studies) in May 2024. She hopes to attend law school following graduation. In addition to her studies, Gareth is currently president of UNM’s Student Veterans of America chapter and is a member of five academic honor societies.

Gareth believes her military service had both positive and negative impacts on her life. Having worked hard for years to overcome the military sexual trauma and the resulting PTSD from her FT Eustis experiences, Gareth believes that she has changed the narrative of her life from that of victim to survivor. She has regained agency in her life and tries to use the successes of the past several years of her life to help others, especially fellow veterans. Focus, motivation, professionalism, and humility are traits Gareth learned in the military that are helping her be successful in her studies. Although re-entering the civilian world was initially a shock – going from “we don’t pay you to think” to being paid to think – Gareth thinks of the financial aid she receives now as a continued form of government investment in her training. She views her university studies as “a really advanced AIT,” and applies military discipline to her academic work.

Despite the trauma of her own active duty, Gareth would advise anyone joining the military to not take basic training personally, to listen, and to do what your rank can afford as you progress. Gareth is sincerely grateful for having found Women Veterans of New Mexico through the Veterans Integration Center and Pat Gaston. Veterans are a strong and unique community, whose skills are invaluable and deserve to be better appreciated, and employed, by civilians. Gareth recommends any woman leaving active or reserve duty get involved with a veteran group such as WVN, the American Legion, or the VFW. Most importantly, she advises any veteran to not hesitate to ask for help returning to the civilian world. As she said, “It’s tough navigating those waters alone.”



## WVN Members Out & About

**This is something I thought to try. If you are out volunteering at Veteran events let us know send a picture(s) in .jpg or .jpeg and a sentence or two about what you are doing. Send to [WVofNM@gmail.com](mailto:WVofNM@gmail.com) and I will put it in the newsletter.**

**Info on Pictures**

# WVNM

## Volunteer Opportunities

### New Mexico Veterans' Memorial

Year 2024

Volunteers (2) for Veteran's Memorial in Albuquerque on Sundays:

Interested volunteers can email Gloria at [gloria09876523@gmail.com](mailto:gloria09876523@gmail.com)

NM Veterans Memorial  
1100 Louisiana Blvd SE, ABQ  
3rd Sunday of each Month ... 0900 - 1200

## She Ain't Heavy She's My Sister

### Veteran Organizations who assist all Veterans:

**Paws and Stripes** - 617 Truman St NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110 -  
[pawsandstripes.org](http://pawsandstripes.org) / 505-999-1201

Programs for Veterans struggling with PTSD, TBI, Sexual Assault and/or Mental Health Issues. Workshops for building Veterans self esteem and more. All programs are free for Veterans and their families. All you need is your DD-214 to receive services. See their website: [pawsandstripes.org](http://pawsandstripes.org)

### Qualified Listeners Corp.

Listening is the most important thing one human being can do for another. Most people are not broken, they do not need therapy, they may just need someone to talk to. Someone who will listen and not judge, someone who can relate to their experiences. We are Qualified Listeners!

We talk on the phone or video chat with you. Our listening Program is confidential and non-judgmental.

Veterans, Spouses of Veterans, Children of Veterans, Parents & Grandparents of Veterans

We inform Veterans and family members of the many resources available to them

### We have expanded to New Mexico

If you would like to connect to a Qualified Listener, call at 720-600-0860.

If you are interested in volunteering and becoming a Qualified Listener because we know Vets talk to Vets please contact us at 720-600-0860 or at our website:

<https://qualifiedlisteners.org>

## Healing America's Heroes

Healing America's Heroes (HAH) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that helps reconnect veterans, first responders, and their families to their inherent state of health and vitality through a balance of privacy and therapeutic excellence at no cost to them. Our instructors are experts in horsemanship, fly tying and fly fishing.

They are located at 115 Ft. Stanton Rd, Fort Stanton, New Mexico

If you are interested in volunteering contact Bernie Davila: 575-386-9949

See their Website: <http://www.healingamericasheroes.org> or call Debbie Smith: 575-693-3328

Never forget if you have a DD-214 you can sign in with the **Veterans**

**Administration!** Go to: <https://www.va.gov>

There is a wealth of information and you can sign up for Newsletters!

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## National and State Organizations that YOU can JOIN and VOUNTEER with

### Reserve Organization of America (ROA)

Formerly the Reserve Officer Association. **The ROA represents Enlisted and Officers in ALL Reserve components.** The Reserve Components of the United States Armed forces are named within Title 10 of the United States Code and include: (1) the Army National Guard, (2) the Army Reserve, (3) the Navy Reserve, (4) the Marine Corps Reserve, (5) the Air National Guard, (6) the Air Force Reserve, and (7) the Coast Guard Reserve.

Reserve service members face the unique burdens of balancing civilian and military commitments. Too often, the Reserve force is treated as an afterthought in law and policy, in modernization, training, use, and funding, and in benefits. ROA actively pursues legislation that will support the needs of our reserve service members. The Legislative Agenda features issues ROA is currently working on, as well as a number of the success stories where ROA has supported our reserve service members.

Your ROA membership powers our advocacy for a strong Reserve force. Membership also brings access to a carefully selected array of benefits that can save money, enrich your career potential, insure your family, provide financial services for your future, and offer great entertainment and leisure options. From professional development to travel, ROA members can benefit from everything ROA offers! ROA Website: <https://www.roa.org>

**Military Officers Association (MOAA)** - All Services Officers only - works with other Enlisted organizations.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of military service members and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but

they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. MOAA's experts in Washington are there to support legislation that benefits the military community and are equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice.

Membership is open to active duty, former, retired, and National Guard and Reserve commissioned and warrant officers of the uniformed services and their surviving spouses. MOAA Website: <https://www.moaa.org/>

**Veterans and Military Families Caucus** - Is an organization of the Democratic Party of New Mexico (DPNM). To join you must be a registered Democrat but if you are an Independent or Republican you can subscribe to their Newsletter.

If you join see below:

- Benefits include the speaker series, meetings, being able to run for VMFC office, and to vote when we send a ballot to our members. This is typically for electing officers to VMFC. One also receives the monthly newsletter, but membership is not required.
- The DPNM VMFC advocates on behalf of all veterans and military families in NM to ensure they receive the benefits they've earned during military service to our country. We also educate NM legislators on veterans issues, endorse and support legislators who vote for legislation that benefits veterans, and we represent all NM veterans through public testimony during the legislative session.
- By joining the VMFC our members make our collective voice stronger. Members are eligible to attend our guest speaker series and interact (on Zoom) with subject-matter experts on veteran-relevant topics. Members are also encouraged to attend our periodic (zoom) meetings, join us when we conduct outreach throughout the state, and provide testimony in support of priority legislation during the legislative session. Dues are \$30 a year, but are completely voluntary and used for our outreach.
- **Yes, we especially need a volunteer or two who is tech-savvy and can assist on the Communications Committee. Other volunteers are needed to work with our Committee for Veterans Advocacy during the legislative session to research and write position papers on legislation we are advocating for, attend committee meetings and testify in support of legislation, and track legislator's votes on these bills for our Legislative Report Card.**

Their website: <https://nmvetscaucus.org>

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Stay Informed and Up to Date



**Military Times** - is a free independent "e" Newspaper covering everything that is of concern to ALL military components and veterans. You can subscribe/join them or access them without a subscription. They are a great source of information! Website: <https://www.militarytimes.com>

**Stars and Stripes** - Stars and Stripes is a daily American military newspaper reporting on matters concerning the members of the United States Armed Forces and their communities, with an emphasis on those serving outside the United States. You can subscribe or not. Website: <https://www.stripes.com>

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## Networking Opportunities

### **Women Veterans Networking Cruise**

#### **8 Night Southern Caribbean Cruise**

Royal Caribbean's *Odyssey of the Seas*

April 13, 2024

Roundtrip from Fort Lauderdale, Florida to Willemstad, Curacao – Oranjestad, Aruba – Perfect Day Cococay, Bahamas

Ocean View Balcony (Cat 4 D) **\$Prevailing Rate** per person

Ocean View (Cat 2 N) **\$Prevailing Rate** per person

Interior (Cat 4 V) **\$Prevailing Rate** per person

**Note: \*\*\*Cabins still available but at Prevailing Rates which change daily\*\*\***

**MOORE TRAVEL**

5188 Hwy 190 W, Livingston, TX 77351

[travel@mooretrav.com](mailto:travel@mooretrav.com)

936-967-2929 or 888-327-5806



## Local Veteran Classes at VA Facilities throughout New Mexico

Did you know the VA has Recreation Programs throughout New Mexico? They produced a monthly schedule; it was too long to include but here is the link to their programs page. Scroll down to the bottom and you will see Recreational Therapy or you can call **Recreation Hall: 505-265-1711** ext. 2030 or follow this link :<http://Recreation Hall: 505-265-1711 ext. 2030>

### Note from the Editor

- Are you volunteering with a Veteran's organization?
- Have you gone through a Veteran's program and you would like to share?
- Are you in a national Veterans organization and you want to share what you do and invite others to join?
- If you answered "YES!" please submit a short, 1 or 2 paragraph, article about what you are doing and if you have pictures submit them to [wvofnm@gmail.com](mailto:wvofnm@gmail.com) In the Subject Line Put: **Article for Newsletter**

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Women Veterans of New Mexico

WomenVeteransofNewMexico.org

[WVofNM@gmail.com](mailto:WVofNM@gmail.com)

(505)907-4386

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