



Overview of U.S. Army Women's Foundation 4th Annual Army Women in Transition Symposium

Held Tuesday, March 13, 2012 in the Cannon Caucus Room

Several members of Congress and staff were able to join us on March 13, 2012, for our annual symposium. In this, our fourth year, we were truly honored by the number of people who took the time to participate as we discussed challenges facing women veterans transitioning. The theme of this year's symposium was "Changing Missions, Changing Roles".

Opening remarks were provided by Lieutenant General Patricia D. Horoho, the 43rd Army Surgeon General and the first nurse and female Army Surgeon General.

Two panels were conducted. The first panel was entitled "*Beyond the Battlefield: Coming Home*" and the second, "*Beyond the Battlefield: Back to Work.*" These topics resonate with our returning veterans because as General Horoho stated in her opening remarks, "Life in the military is more certain than life at home", for many of our veterans. These issues must be addressed because 14% of the military are women, of the Iraq/Afghanistan returning veterans 20% are out of work (~50,000).

- ***Beyond the Battlefield: Coming Home*** addressed the challenges veterans confront when returning from deployments and transitioning to civilian life.
- ***Beyond the Battlefield: Back to Work*** addressed the issues veterans face when trying to translate their military training for corporate America.

Reviewing the day, we found themes that particularly resonated from all presenters:

- ▶ Women veterans experience unique stressors when returning home because they are often the primary care provider of the family. All presenters agreed it is imperative for women veterans to reach out to programs that provide counseling and resources to assist in coping with the transition back to civilian life.
- ▶ Women often do not think of themselves as veterans. Much discussion centered on what can be done to make women self-identify as veterans. One panelist suggested asking the question "Have you ever served in the military?" rather than "Are you a veteran?" He saw a significant increase in his veteran employees when changing the question. Once identified, women in general are reluctant to admit their military accomplishments. The panel emphasized that women needed to understand their value, speak up for their talents, and transfer their military ethos to their civilian employment.

- ▶ Corporate representatives on the panel emphasized that veterans need to take military records and translate into industry jargon. They said emphasize values, team work, integrity, patriotism, etc. because they are always looking for high caliber people. One member spoke of the importance of a cover letter telling the employer why you are different, why you are special, and why you want to work for their organization.
- ▶ Corporate representatives agreed that they also had a responsibility when hiring veterans. Human Resource recruiters must understand how to read veterans resume and understand their license and certifications. They must also understand their return on investment when hiring a veteran.
- ▶ All agreed that networking was vital for gaining employment. Women veterans should use social networking sites and join professional organizations in order to meet potential employers.

The U.S. Army Women's Foundation is the premier center for educational excellence, the national network for today's Army women, and a dynamic advocate for telling the history of Army women.

Through its programs, research, and scholarships, the Foundation honors the service of Army women and supports the U.S. Army Women's Museum. Originally established in 1969, the Foundation is headquartered in Fort Lee, Virginia. For more information, please visit www.awfdn.org.

We hope that you will consider the Foundation a resource for you on matters related to both active duty servicewomen and women veterans, as well as a resource for your constituents who are transitioning from military to civilian life.

Sincerely,



Dee McWilliams
Major General, USA (Ret)
President



Peggy Trossen
Executive Director