

Learn about Nicole Watson, VA Women Veterans Forum and more

Per usual I would like to highlight some of our women veterans. Nichole Watson enlisted because she wanted to experience the world and do something positive rather than head straight to college.

After enlisting, Watson went to boot camp in Orlando, Florida. She described boot camp as programming and learning the “do’s and don’ts” of the military. She would fight off her homesickness with the occasional call she was able to make to her family back home as a reward for good behavior. Her most memorable experience in boot camp was her crash course in swimming, which included a 12-foot high dive.

After completing boot camp, Watson went first to San Diego, California, for A-school, where she received basic training. Later, she served on a submarine unit in Groton, Connecticut. Watson served in the Naval Reserve during the Persian Gulf War as a seaman. During the war, Watson was active and stationed on the submarine unit. Though she didn’t go into combat, Watson was the first woman in her unit.

After the Persian Gulf War ended in 1991, Watson was active in the Navy Reserve for another year and a half, where she was a certified nurse assistant. In 1992, following the birth of her daughter, Mya, Watson left the military. She went on to get her education with the help of the GI Bill at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio. Looking back, Watson said she is grateful to the Navy for turning her into a more motivated and independent person. She said she is grateful for learning skills, like focus and strength that she used in her job as a case worker for a job center.

Thank you for your service, Nicole!

On June 23, 2020, the VA Acting Deputy Secretary Pamela Powers and U.S. Air Force Veteran hosted a Women Veterans Forum. The topic was Evolving and

Improving Women Veterans Support and Access in a Virtual Environment during COVID-19. [View the slides](#) and [listen to the Forum](#).

One of the great misconceptions about PTSD among Veterans is that it only affects those who saw combat. Nothing could be further from the truth. As the name implies – post-traumatic stress disorder – the condition can result from any traumatic event in a person’s life.

Every month, I would like to highlight special veterans. And include important information specifically for women veterans. If there is anyone that would like to have additional information in this newsletter, please contact me. I will do my best to include it.

Starting next month I would like to report on each of the four new committee members. Yes I said four, we have a whole new committee this year. I’m proud to say I have again been appointed the committee chair. With COVID-19 it has been difficult to go to veterans events. We generally are visiting specific clinics, hospitals and medical centers. Due to unprecedented events our time has been limited. Once things start opening up again in the VA, we will again resume our visits to the Women Program Managers.

The women’s committee would like to welcome State Commander Matt Kempainen as our new leader for Wisconsin DAV. We wish him all the success in his new position. We look forward to working with him.

As with all our past newsletters, I wish you a safe summer, to stay healthy and to remember our outreach to our fellow veterans.

Respectfully submitted

Sandy Pharis
Women Veterans Committee Chair