

Our History

Women Veterans of Kansas How it all got started by Herb Duncan



While I was at the Wichita Bob Dole Veterans Hospital going from one appointment to another, I happened to round a corner and saw something that stopped me right in my tracks. I saw a young lady in a wheelchair. I was shocked to see that she was missing a right leg from the knee down.

The closer I looked I could see shrapnel markings on her face. I stopped and turned to my wife and said... “She’s a veteran”!

I am of the age that when I was growing up women never served in a combat role in the military. It twisted my thinking to see this young woman, in the prime of her life maimed and disfigured. But here we are in a Veterans Hospital and she is in a wheelchair with what I would call battle scars.

I couldn’t imagine what she might be going through physically and mentally. I was moved to approach her and say, what branch of service did you serve? She replied briskly... Army. I was wearing my old Navy hat which showed her I was also a veteran.

I reached out to shake her hand and she responded in like manner and as we shook hands I looked her square in the eyes and said, “thank you for serving our country and welcome home”. Took one step back, came to attention and rendered the hand salute of respect. She responded in like manner with a snappy hand salute and I could see a tear streaming down her left cheek.

As we started to go on our way, I said have a good day and she smiled. I’ll never forget that pleasant smile that appeared on her face. From that day forward, my life was changed.

I see women veterans in a different light. They are just like me and we all share a DD-214.

I am now on a mission to help bring honor and respect to women who are serving now and especially women veterans.

And the rest is history after I created the “WOMEN VETERANS OF KANSAS” organization.