

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Center for Women Veterans (00W)

810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington DC 20420
www.va.gov/womenvet

In Reply Refer To:

AUG 28 2018

General Janet Wolfenbarger (USAF, Retired)
Chair
Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services
Headquarters, Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA)
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 04J25-01
Alexandria, VA 22350

Dear General Wolfenbarger,

Please see the attached response, in reference to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services' (DACOWITS) request for information (RFI), regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs' motto/mission statement. Thank you, for the laudable work that DACOWITS does to support the women who diligently serve our country.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at 202-461-6193 or at Anna.Crenshaw@va.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Crenshaw".

Anna Crenshaw
Acting Director

Attachment

SERVICEWOMEN'S TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

RFI #10. The Committee requests a written response from the Department of Veteran Affairs on the Department's position regarding any ongoing review or anticipated update to the 1950s era Veterans Affairs' motto/mission statement, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan," in order to be more inclusive and welcoming to servicewomen transitioning out of the military.

Response to RFI # 10

The Committee requested that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provide a response on its position regarding its motto/mission statement, with consideration to its inclusiveness and perception of being welcoming to Servicewomen transitioning out of the military. VA does not anticipate making an update to its motto/mission statement. The mission statement is President Abraham Lincoln's direct quote from his 1865 second inaugural address, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan." The use of "him" assumes gender neutrality in this historical usage and context. VA is proud of Lincoln's words as a historic tribute to all Veterans, including women Veterans, whose service and sacrifice inspire us all.

The mission statement embodies VA's unwavering commitment to serving the needs of ALL Veterans, and honoring their service to our great Nation. That commitment to making women more welcomed is demonstrated in VA's ongoing efforts to transform the culture of the environment in which women receive care; reminding those who serve Veterans of their responsibility to treat ALL Veterans with dignity and respect; reminding their male counterparts that women also served; and enhancing the inclusiveness in VA's messaging and imaging to depict women in receipt of VA's care. VA goes a step farther, by engaging in internal cross-Administration collaboration to examine how the Department is addressing the needs of women who served and identifying gaps, as well as collaborating with external stakeholders (local and state governments/Veterans service organizations/other Federal agencies) to improve the manner in which the greater community serves women Veterans--and to encourage them to "Choose VA."