

New Members Appointed to Committee on Women Veterans

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WASHINGTON — Four new members have been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), an expert panel that advises VA on issues and programs affecting women veterans.

"I am pleased to welcome the newest members of this committee to the important job of serving America's women veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Members of this committee work tirelessly on behalf of women veterans to improve outreach, ensure access to VA benefits and recommend ways in which VA can better meet their needs."

Established in 1983, the advisory committee makes recommendations for administrative and legislative changes. The committee members are appointed to one, two, or three-year terms. The new committee members are:

* Davy Coke of Poway, Calif., a retired Navy second class petty officer who served in Vietnam. He currently is a trainer and mentor for new service members in the aerospace field.

* Yanira Gomez of Germantown, Md., a former Army medical specialist who served in Iraq. She is currently serving as national outreach officer for the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

* Gloria Maser of Alexandria, Va., a colonel in the Army Reserves. She is a former deputy chief of staff for health affairs with the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq. She currently works for a strategy and technology organization.

* Barbara Ward of Sacramento, Calif., a former staff nurse in the Air Force. She currently serves as the deputy secretary for women and minority veterans affairs in the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Women veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the veteran population. There are approximately 1.8 million women veterans. They constitute nearly 8 percent of the total veteran population and about 5 percent of all veterans who use VA health care. VA estimates

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

that by 2020 women veterans will make up 10 percent of the veteran population.

VA has women veterans program managers at VA medical centers and women veterans coordinators at VA regional offices to assist women veterans with health and benefits issues.