



Articles & Features

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MVAMC Commemorates Women's History & Lobby Re-Opening



Left to right: West Virginia Air National Guard 167th Airlift Wing Mission Support Group Commander Col. Patricia Burkhardt, Medical Center Director Ann R. Brown, Sen. Jay Rockefeller's representative Penny Porter, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce representative Tina Combs, and Cy Kammeier representing the Veteran Service Organizations during the cake cutting ceremony following the 2010 Women's History Celebration and Lobby Grand Reopening.

Photo: VA/Maria Tamez

By Kevin L. McIver, MVAMC Public Affairs Officer

MARTINSBURG—The Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center (MVAMC) commemorated the illustrious history and faithful service of American Women Veterans during the 2010 Women's History Celebration held here on March 26.

"Women have served valiantly in every major war and conflict throughout our Nation's history," said Medical Center Director Ann R. Brown. "Certainly we cannot forget the contributions they are making on today's battlefields—for they gallantly lead troops on the ground in Afghanistan to leading formations of helicopters in the air—to navigating our modern fleets of ships on the high seas."

Brown noted that women continue to honorably serve at every level of government and are the mainstay of any organization, including at the MVAMC where of 1,561 employees – 60 percent are female—including 42 of 85 physicians and 234 of 265 nurses.

"Truly women are leaders at all levels of military and government and it is fitting that we honor their courage and commitment for they have given so much to serve their country," she added.

Senator John D. Rockefeller IV likewise acknowledged the service of women to their country. In a personal letter delivered by Penny Porter of his Martinsburg office he wrote, "The women in our country's history lived their lives, left their legacy. Now it is up to all of us to honor it and create the next chapter of history in the extraordinary lives of women across our country today, including all of you."

Department of Veteran Affairs Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs L. Tammy Duckworth

also delivered a special message to MVAMC staff during the event.

"In doing your job, you allow our service members to focus on their mission overseas - because they know that when they come home, the Department of Veterans Affairs will be here to take care of them and that they will have that support network to help them through any challenges or troubles they may encounter. You are on the front lines serving our nation's Veterans and you ALL are a vital part of our successful team."

Colonel Patricia A. Burkhardt, Mission Support Group Commander of the 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg, served as keynote speaker, noting many dramatic changes toward women in the military throughout her career.

Highlights of the event included music provided by the MVAMC Veteran Choir and the grand re-opening of the lobby. A nearly two-year project that included four months of construction, the \$867,229 renovations culminated in many improvements

including additional space to interact with Veterans and more accessibility to check-in kiosks that will soon be installed along with artwork and signage.

Perhaps Assistant Secretary Duckworth's resounding remarks left upon the audience the true significance of the commemoration to Women Veterans. "The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have taught our country many lessons," said Duckworth. "One lesson is that there are no longer any traditional front lines. Our female Warriors have risen to this challenge and shown that we are equal to the task."

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Senator John D. Rockefeller IV

MVAMC Women's History & Lobby Re-Opening Photos by VA / Cali Coulthard



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