



**Army Women's Foundation
Seventh Annual Summit
March 18, 2015**

Army Women: Leadership and Political Engagement

Executive Summary

Each year, during Women's History Month, the Army Women's Foundation presents its annual summit and it awards scholarships to help Army women further prepare for their careers in or out of the military.

In this, our seventh year, the summit took place on March 18 at the Women In Memorial Service for America Memorial, at Arlington National Cemetery. Two themes dominated the discussion, Army Women: Leadership and Political Engagement.

The Summit consisted of two panels to examine the leadership skills that women develop in the U.S. Army, and how those skills are put to use in the military, and after military service.

Panel 1, Army Women: Leading the Workforce Today and Tomorrow, examined military and civilian professional opportunities and career transitions.

Panel 2, Army Women: Leadership and Political Engagement, focused on transitioning Army leadership skills from military service to community and public service.

Some of the key points made by participants were:

- Although an increasing number of civilian employers have programs to successfully integrate military veterans in their business culture, other private sector companies often don't understand that military leadership experience is management experience. Conversely, military veterans often don't know how to describe their qualifications in ways civilians would understand. "A 22-year-old military veteran, regardless of rank, ... has had more structured leadership training than a person in corporate America at 30 – 35 years old. Then lay on top of that, they've exercised these skills they've learned in the classroom, in real life. And lay on top of that, they've done it in places where leadership is challenging, to say the least."
- Career paths in the civilian workplace are not nearly as clear as they are in the military workplace. Military veterans must learn to ask for help. Networking and mentoring have tremendous value for a successful transition. When they transition from the military, men and women veterans suffer from not speaking up about themselves because they are accustomed to the military culture that focuses on group accomplishments.

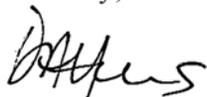
- Women service-members and women veterans represent an important and (unfortunately) largely un-tapped talent pool, well-positioned to make our nation's workforce more dynamic and globally competitive. But more research is needed to better understand them as a group in order to build appropriate pathways to post-military careers. "There is this sleeping giant waiting for us to poke and empower." Business ownership is a compelling opportunity.
- Women veterans differ from male veterans in that women veterans' top priority is reconnecting with family.
- Women veterans who run for office have the advantage of already appearing "tough" - a necessary quality for public office – without being accused of being mean.
- When engaging public officials for change, bring them the problems, but also bring them solutions.

We hope you find this information helpful to you as you work to serve the men and women in the military and your communities. Please consider the Foundation a resource for you on matters related to active duty servicewomen and women veterans, as well as a resource for your constituents who are transitioning from military to civilian life.

The U.S. Army Women's Foundation is the premier center for educational excellence, the national network for today's Army women, and a dynamic advocate for telling the history of Army women.

Through its programs, research, and scholarships, the Army Women's Foundation honors the service of Army women and supports the U.S. Army Women's Museum. Established in 1969, the Foundation is headquartered in Fort Lee, Virginia. For more information, please visit www.awfdn.org.

Sincerely,



Dee McWilliams
Major General, USA (Ret)
President



Peggy Trossen
Executive Director