

Women Veterans Continue Fight for Full Recognition and Improved Services

NEW YORK, NY (August 25, 2017) – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), the leading voice of the Post-9/11 generation of veterans, participated in the 2017 [VA Women Veterans Summit](#) in Houston, TX, which was forced to end early due to Hurricane Harvey. IAVA has more than 425,000 members nationwide, including member-leaders Abby Malchow and Brandy Baxter, who represented IAVA at the Summit.

IAVA launched our historic [She Who Borne the Battle](#) campaign in March to increase recognition and improve services for the nation's women veterans. 345,000 American women have deployed since 9/11 and women are the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population. That trend will continue as the number of male veterans simultaneously declines over the next decades. Yet only 27% of IAVA women veterans feel the public treats women veterans with respect. IAVA is proud to partner with the VA and other leading VSOs to host the summit that is a meaningful step in toward greater recognition of the 2.2 million women veterans in America.

IAVA Member Abby Malchow was scheduled to participate in the Culture Change panel to address the sentiment of women veterans lack of recognition, and highlight the efforts by IAVA to drive cultural change, including the fight to change the exclusionary VA motto, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan". IAVA Member Brandy Baxter was scheduled to participate in the MST panel to discuss lessons learned, and any gaps that need to be addressed in caring for women who have experienced military sexual trauma. Both panels were cancelled due to extreme weather in Texas that caused the Summit to end early.

Abby Malchow has over 15 years of military service in the United States Navy as a Logistics Specialist, spending eight years on active duty and seven in the Reserves. While on active duty, she deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006 and provided direct humanitarian aid to Hurricane Katrina and Tsunami victims. For her Reserve duty, she is currently the N4 Leading Chief Petty Officer for Commander Navy Installations Command Headquarters at the Washington Navy Yard. Abby currently works for Intel Corporation as a Commodity Manager in Chandler, Arizona. She is originally from California, a proud University of San Diego alum, and a 2017 MBA graduate of the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. Abby previously Stormed the Hill with IAVA in 2014 to garner support for the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for America's Veterans Act, and she also Stormed in 2017 with IAVA in support of the Deborah Sampson Act.

Abby is a passionate advocate for veteran suicide and homelessness prevention, and a proud spokesperson for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial.

Brandy Baxter is the Boots to Heels Program Director at Attitudes and Attire®

where she facilitates a workshop series teaching self-esteem, confidence building, interviewing skills and transition tools exclusively for women in the military community. Through these special group sessions, she creates an environment for female veterans and spouses to connect with peers who understand their unique military experiences and the challenges they now face. Brandy's passion for working with veterans began the day she realized she was a veteran herself; seven years after separating from the military! Because her husband remained on Active Duty, she only identified as a spouse for those seven years. While attending orientation for The Mission Continues fellowship, she was challenged to tell the story of her transition from the military. It was during this exercise that she became aware of her veteran status. As a result, she sought to rekindle her connection to the military community by associating with veterans. Soon after, she joined IAVA as a way to connect with local veterans and to continue serving her local community. Brandy is the mother of two darling daughters, happily married to her handsome husband and a Veteran of the United States Air Force. She is a Mission Continues Delta Class 2012 Fellow Alumna and an IAVA –Texas leader, a member of Veterans for American Ideals, an active member of her Church, and a Faith in Texas supporter. She has a B.A. in Communication, a M.S. in Management, is an Accredited Financial Counselor (AFC®), a Certified Executive Coach, a Financial Coach, and a Mental Health First Aider. Brandy is a member of the Dallas VA Community Veteran Engagement Board, a Military Veteran Peer Network Facilitator, a dynamic speaker, and an advocate for women veterans.

She Who Borne The Battle: More than 345,000 American women have deployed since 9/11 and over 2.2 million women veterans live in the US total. Women are the fastest-growing segment of the veteran population and that trend will continue as the number of male veterans simultaneously declines over the next decades. However, many women veterans are left without recognition and the proper care to support their needs when they return from their service. She Who Borne the Battle will change this by providing a foundation of public awareness, local support and policy changes solely targeted at recognizing and supporting women veterans. This includes changing the exclusionary VA motto, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and for his orphan," to a motto that includes "She Who Borne the Battle." Learn more at www.SheWhoBorneTheBattle.org.