

# Sec of Defense Mattis Welcomes IAVA to Pentagon

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 12, 2017)** – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) Founder and CEO, Paul Rieckhoff, participated in a roundtable for Veteran and Military Service Organizations held by Secretary of Defense James Mattis and senior Defense officials at the Pentagon. Following the roundtable meeting IAVA issued the following statement:

“IAVA tremendously appreciates the opportunity to meet with Secretary Mattis today. He is an incredible leader, a post-9/11 veteran himself and a voice for all who have served. Our members worldwide are grateful that he made time today to meet with IAVA and other leading groups serving our troops and veterans. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to hear about his vision for the future and discuss the top priorities from IAVA’s 2017 [Policy Agenda](#) with the Secretary and his senior team.” **Rieckhoff continued**, “We are grateful for the opportunity to underscore our focus on defending the GI Bill, combating suicide and reforming government to better serve our members. I was also very pleased to share the highlights of our [‘She Who Borne The Battle’](#) campaign focused on recognizing and supporting women veterans directly with Secretary Mattis himself. Hundreds of thousands of IAVA members are serving worldwide in the active duty, National Guard and Reserves and are inspired by his leadership and example. We look forward to working with Secretary Mattis and his team to increase support for all veterans—and especially for women veterans at this critical time. We thank the Secretary for engaging us in this important conversation and for all his efforts to make the Pentagon more supportive of women. And for continuing to lead with his powerful example of how veterans can continue to serve after they’ve taken the uniform off.”

**She Who Borne The Battle:** More than 345,000 women have deployed since 9/11. 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 five years. However, many female veterans are left without 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 supporting and empowering female veterans. Learn more at [SheWhoBorneTheBattle.org](http://SheWhoBorneTheBattle.org)

*IAVA is the leading voice of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in Washington D.C. and communities nationwide. Led by veterans, our non-partisan advocacy work ensures that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families are supported, protected and never forgotten. Since 2004, IAVA has been a juggernaut in Washington D.C., creating and driving the national conversation on issues ranging from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to women veteran issues to veteran unemployment.*

IAVA’s dedicated staff in Washington, D.C. leads this work, advocating on behalf of our members daily. We also train our member veterans to be powerful

advocates for their local community.

IAVA is focused on results and has delivered historic impacts. Every year since 2007, in an increasingly gridlocked political environment and with an extremely limited operating budget, IAVA has passed at least one major piece of groundbreaking legislation for our community ranging from the Post-9/11 GI Bill (2008), to the VOW to Hire Heroes Act (2011), to The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act (2015).

See [IAVA's Advocacy Program Digital Hub](#) for the full list of victories, our extensive policy recommendations and to learn more about how you can help.