



Recognizing the Service and Sacrifice of Women Veterans Since 1776: H.R.1925 / S.898

To designate the Manhattan Campus of the New York Harbor Health Care System of the Department of Veterans Affairs as the "Margaret Cochran Corbin Campus of the New York Harbor Health Care System"

New Yorkers need the full support of our state's Congressional delegation to name the Manhattan VA hospital in honor of Revolutionary War hero Margaret Corbin. This legislation will:

- Designate the **first VA hospital campus** named in honor of a woman veteran
- Honor the **nation's first woman veteran** recognized and pensioned by the U.S. military for her wounds in combat in 1776
- Commemorate **Manhattan's Battle of Fort Washington**, where Margaret Corbin made the Continental Army's final stand before falling to near-fatal wounds
- Signal the VA's **recognition of women's service and sacrifice** as members of the U.S. Armed forces since 1776
- **Increase VA access for women veterans**, a rapidly growing yet underserved population, by recognizing and welcoming them

About NYC Veterans Alliance:

NYC Veterans Alliance is a member-driven, grassroots policy advocacy and community-building organization that connects, advocates for, and empowers veterans and their family members to make change as civic leaders.

Background

On November 16th, 1776, Margaret Corbin was noted as the first woman to "take a soldier's part" in combat as the last cannoner firing against British and Hessian forces in the Battle of Fort Washington in Manhattan before being severely wounded. She was recognized for her heroic acts and was the first woman paid and pensioned as a soldier and veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. At a time when women veterans are accessing VA services at lower rates than their male counterparts, and they still face a VA that states its scope of service as caring for "him who shall have borne the battle, his widow, and his orphan," and facilities that often do not fully accommodate their needs—the NYC Veterans Alliance proposed for the Manhattan VA to be named in honor of Margaret Corbin. This would make the Manhattan VA the first VA hospital named for a woman veteran, and signal to women veterans that their service is both recognized and welcomed by the VA.

Support

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

"Despite having fought in every single conflict since this nation's founding, women service members have rarely received the same recognition as that of their male counterparts. Renaming the Manhattan VA Medical Center for Margaret Corbin, the first woman to be wounded in combat and receive a veterans pension, is a small yet significant step towards a greater appreciation of the sacrifices that women service members have made to keep our nation safe. I am proud to be introducing this legislation in the Senate, and will continue to fight to make the Department of Veterans Affairs more inclusive for women veterans."

U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (NY-12)

"I am thrilled to be introducing legislation in the House of Representatives to rename the Manhattan VA hospital in honor of the great American Revolutionary War heroine Margaret Corbin. The first woman injured fighting for our country and the first to receive a veteran's pension, Margaret embodies the heroism of American soldiers who are wounded in battle, as well as their struggles, often lifelong, resulting from their injuries and their time on the battlefield. It is more than fitting to give Margaret Corbin the honor of being the first woman to have a VA hospital named for her."

U.S. Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)

"Women have fought for our nation's freedom and independence since 1776. Some had to disguise themselves as men, while others were forced into the war by circumstances that led them into battle, which was the case of Margaret Corbin. Margaret saw her husband die in the fight and immediately took his post. Today, we honor her brave legacy and service as well as honor all women who have defended our nation proudly as women and as Americans from the beginning of our nation's history to help ensure our freedoms shared today remain equally strong for our future."

U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez (NY-7)

"Since our country's founding, women have played an instrumental role in our nation's armed services, yet often without the recognition they deserve. Not only did Margaret Corbin make

history as the first woman recognized for fighting in our nation's military, she, like so many other female servicemembers, put her life on the line while defending her country. I am proud to honor Corbin's legacy by supporting the NYC Veterans Alliance and their partners in naming the Manhattan VA, the 'Margaret Corbin VA Medical Center,' as well as making the facility's language more inclusive for female veterans. Today, women make up the fastest growing group of veterans and we must recognize the unique challenges they face and the sacrifices they make in defense of all our liberties."

New York State Senator Brad Hoylman (27th District)

"Women fight on the front lines for our country but seldom receive the recognition and support they deserve. Renaming the Manhattan VA hospital after Margaret Corbin--the first woman to be injured fighting for our country--is a fitting way to acknowledge the sacrifices our female veterans make each and every day. I applaud the NYC Veterans Alliance for their commitment to inclusivity and for recognizing the distinct challenges that face our female veterans on and off the battlefield."

New York State Senator Liz Krueger (28th District)

"From the very birth of our nation, women have been serving this country in countless ways, including in our Armed Forces. Today, women serve in every facet of our military, up to the highest ranks. It's important that their service be fully recognized by the VA, so that women can receive the care they have earned. Renaming the Manhattan VA in recognition of the heroism of Margaret Corbin is a fitting way to say that women are welcome."

New York State Assembly Member Harvey Epstein (District 74)

"The incredible women who serve in our armed forces are so often overlooked in favor of male colleagues and still suffer from the patriarchal influences that permeate every facet of our society. I am proud to support the NYC Veterans Alliance & Allies' work to rename the Manhattan VA the Margaret Corbin VA Medical Center—in honor of not just one incredible soldier, but in honor of all the women who have sacrificed in service of our country."

Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer

"All veterans deserve the best care we can give them, but VA services remain underutilized in general, and especially by women veterans. Renaming this hospital for Revolutionary War veteran Margaret Corbin can increase this hospital's visibility in the community and send an important message, that its services are here for women veterans as well as men. If even one more veteran receives care than before, it will be worth it."

New York City Councilwoman Carlina Rivera, Chair of the Committee on Hospitals

"I am happy to support the NYC Veterans Alliance's call to recognize a growing demographic in their ranks: women. What better way to highlight the growing contributions of women to our nation's military than naming Manhattan's VA Hospital after Revolutionary War hero Margaret Cochran Corbin, a New Yorker and veteran of the Battle of Fort Mifflin. With our fierce Congressional Delegation leading this charge, I am confident that this recognition of women's contributions to the U.S. military will soon become a reality, and that its passage means women veterans will feel welcome by the health system that serves them."

New York City Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner Loree Sutton, MD, Brigadier General, US Army (Ret.)

"Since the inception of our nation, women have served – whether by fighting on the battlefield themselves or by providing essential assistance that made it possible for others to do so. Margaret Corbin exemplifies the spirit of service that will inspire future generations of women to similarly serve their country. It is only fitting that we honor her service and sacrifice -- and indeed, the contributions of all women service members and veterans -- with the renaming of one of our nation's most essential institutions dedicated to veterans' care: the VA."

Melissa Bryant, Chief Policy Officer of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

"Almost two hundred and fifty years after the first woman veteran received her earned benefits from the U.S. government, women veterans, including myself, are still fighting for recognition for a country we've laid our lives on the line for. It is past time for women veterans to be recognized for their service and sacrifice and renaming the Manhattan VA facility to the Margaret Corbin VA Medical Center is one step in a larger campaign for recognition. We still have a long way to go so that all Americans recognize that veterans come in all shapes, sizes, and genders, but this is a step in the right direction."

Kayla Williams, Senior Fellow, Center for a New American Security

"While I was Director of the VA's Center for Women Veterans, I regularly heard from fellow women veterans who told me they felt unwelcome and unrecognized at VA facilities. Renaming this hospital after Margaret Corbin would simultaneously honor an inspiring trailblazer and demonstrate to the veterans of today and tomorrow - in a tangible way - that the rich legacy of women in America's military is recognized and respected."

Coco Culhane, Director, Veteran Advocacy Project

"Margaret Corbin challenged the status quo and became the first woman to receive a Soldiers Pension, so who better to be the first woman to have a VA facility named in her honor. For those who dare to be first, from Margaret Corbin to Ann Dunwoody, there is no better place to honor them than the heart of New York City. The Veteran Advocacy Project strongly supports the proposal to name the Manhattan VA medical center after Margaret Corbin as a step in the right direction in the VA's recognition of women who have served."

Captain Lory Manning, USN (ret.), Director of Government Operations, Service Women's Action Network

"Margaret Corbin, the first woman to receive a military pension for wounds and heroics in battle, is an inspired choice to receive the honor of being the first military woman for whom a VA medical facility is named."

Lindsay Church, President, Minority Veterans of America

"Women veterans have been serving in this country's military since the Revolutionary War with little recognition for their contributions to the larger cause. Naming the Manhattan VA the Margaret Corbin VA Medical Center is a step in the direction of recognizing the contributions of women veterans and their needs. As the Minority Veterans of America is an organization that serves women veterans, we see the disparities in outcomes in the rising suicide rates and homelessness among our women veterans. In nearly every epidemic facing the veteran community, you will find

that women veterans are overrepresented. It's time for that to change and the Margaret Corbin VA Medical Center is a step toward greater recognition."

Allison Jaslow, former Executive Director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

"Women have been under-recognized for their service to our country since its founding and Margaret Corbin's story is a great illustration of that fact. Renaming one of the nation's largest VA facilities in Corbin's honor is a meaningful step toward women veterans getting the public acknowledgement we've long deserved, but is still sorely lacking across America."

Beth Goldman, Executive Director, New York Legal Assistance Group

"The VA's motto reads, 'To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and for his orphan.' Yet women are the fastest growing veteran population, with 2.2 million women veterans representing every branch of the military. In 2017, the New York Legal Assistance Group opened the nation's first legal clinics to exclusively serve women veterans, held at the Manhattan VA Medical Center. In doing so, NYLAG hoped to help shift the VA's male-dominated atmosphere. A recent Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America study of women veterans found that fewer than half believed that VA staff treated women veterans with respect or provided a culture welcoming to women. New York can play an important role in leading this culture shift by renaming the Manhattan VA after Margaret Corbin, the first female veteran to receive a military pension after becoming disabled from injuries sustained in combat in 1776. It will be the first VA hospital in the country to be named after a female veteran and will signal the VA's commitment to recognizing the importance and contributions of women veterans."

Summary

NYC Veterans Alliance urges all New York State Members of Congress to support H.R. 1925 / S. 898, which would name the existing facility known as the Manhattan VA Medical Center or the Manhattan Campus of the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System as the “Margaret Cochran Corbin Campus” as the first VA hospital to be named in honor of a woman veteran—thereby signaling a major shift in VA culture locally and nationally to more appropriately recognize and serve women veterans.

Women Veterans Remain Underserved by the VA

VA hospitals nationwide were originally designed to cater mostly to men and the VA healthcare system has been slow to accommodate and meet the unique needs of female veterans. In 2015, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) surveyed 1,500 women veterans, more than half of whom said that VA facilities had a culture unwelcoming to women.¹ Frequent complaints of women veterans include having their veteran status questioned, feeling uncomfortable or even unsafe during inpatient stays, and not having adequate and targeted mental health services. The current VA motto is gendered and excludes women, thereby failing to acknowledge the immense and growing contributions to national security by women veterans. It is time for the VA to modernize its culture to embrace women veterans.

VA Care Reduces Veteran Suicide Rates

Failure to accommodate and welcome a significant and growing sector of the veteran population has potentially dire consequences. The VA reports that 70% veterans who died by suicide have not been in VA health care.² This alarming statistic raises concerns of whether increasing access to care can mitigate these persistently higher suicide rates among veterans. There several notable barriers to VA health care, but none so pervasive as the cultural barriers to care that women veterans face at the VA.

New York Has an Opportunity to Lead

New York can lead this cultural shift by renaming its Manhattan VA Medical Center after Margaret Corbin, the first female veteran to receive a military pension after becoming disabled from injuries sustained in the 1776 Battle of Fort Washington. It will be the first VA hospital to be named after a female veteran and signal the VA’s commitment to recognizing the existence and importance of women veterans. This credible signaling will usher in a more inclusive VA culture and will aid in the dismantling of harmful cultural barriers to care.

¹Iraq and Afghanistan veterans of America (IAVA). Fulfill the Promise to Today’s Veterans. Retrieved from http://iava.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/IAVA_Policy_2017_v8_125bleed.pdf

² Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. (2016, September 01). Retrieved from <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5114>

Veteran Suicide: A Crisis of Accessing VA Care

The most recent VA National Suicide Data Report reveals that inaccessibility to VA care is a lead factor in elevated suicide rates among veterans. Twenty veterans die each day by suicide, only 30% of whom are in VA health care.³ This is especially alarming as VA healthcare utilization by veterans is associated with declining absolute and relative rates of suicide.”⁴ As the VA tackles veteran suicides, it is crucial that special attention is given to suicides among women veterans. The majority of veterans are male; however, female veterans have a higher elevated risk of suicide than their male counterparts.⁵ This means that there is an uptick in the rate of suicides among female veterans, which creates an upward trajectory approaching the male veteran suicide rate.⁶ Furthermore, women veterans are almost twice as likely to die by suicide than non-veteran women,⁷ thereby compounding concerns of a growing risk of suicide among women veterans. Additionally, gender-based barriers to care are becoming increasingly crucial to better caring for veterans. Given that improved access to VA care may substantially reduce suicide rates,⁸ it is imperative that gender-based barriers to care be actively addressed to curtail growing risk of suicide among women veterans.

Shortfalls in Women’s Access to VA Care

The women veteran population is steadily increasing and warrants earnest attention by the VA to ensure they have adequate access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services. Women account for 10% of the United States veteran population⁹ and are projected to increase to 16% by 2040.¹⁰ In 2016, 17% of active duty military officers and 35% of all Post 9/11 military officers are female.¹¹ Despite their growing contributions to national security, the VA reports that female veterans are less likely to use VA benefits than male veterans.¹² This merits closer attention to possible gender-based barriers to VA benefits. In 2015, only 840,000 of the 2 million women veterans used at least one VA benefit.¹³ In addition, only 36% of women veterans are enrolled in the VHA compared to 44% of all veterans.¹⁴ As the women veterans grow in numbers, it is

³ Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. (2016, September 01). Retrieved from <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5114>

⁴Hoffmire, C. A., Kemp, J. E., & Bossarte, R. M. (2015, September). Changes in Suicide Mortality for Veterans and Nonveterans by Gender and History of VHA Service Use, 2000-2010. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25930036>

⁵ Id.

⁶ Dolsen, J. (2015, August 12). The Mistreatment Of Female Veterans Is Not Just A Women's Issue. Retrieved from <https://taskandpurpose.com/mistreatment-female-veterans-not-just-womens-issue/>

⁷ Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. (2016, September 01). Retrieved from <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5114>

⁸ Holliday, S. B. (n.d.). Mental Health Care Access and Suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/supplementary/mental-health-access-and-suicide.html>

⁹ United States Department of Labor. Fact Sheet- Women Veterans. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/vets/womenveterans/docs/2015-VETSFactSheetWomensveterans508.pdf>

¹⁰VA Utilization Profile FY 2016. (2017, November). Retrieved from https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/QuickFacts/VA_Utilization_Profile.PDF

¹¹ United States of America Department of Defense. 2016 Demographics Profile of the Military Community. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2016-Demographics-Report.pdf>

¹² Id.

¹³Women Veterans Report: The Past, Present and Future of Women Veterans. (2017, February). Retrieved from https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Women_veterans_2015_Final.pdf

¹⁴ Id.

becoming increasingly imperative that the VA intensify efforts to enhance access to care for women veterans. The National Survey of Women veterans, conducted by the VA, revealed a need for gender, age, and culturally appropriate VA services and point to shortfalls in care of women veterans.

Inadequate and untargeted care for women at VA hospitals is well-documented and contributes to lower VHA utilization among women veterans. Women veterans describe being viewed as spouses of veterans or civilians when seeking care at the VA.¹⁵ A recent women's health qualitative study also found that women veterans had recurring complaints of feeling unwelcomed, unsafe and uncatered to at VA hospitals. Some of the study's participants recounted being catcalled by male veterans at VA medical centers and even more expressed discomfort of being the only woman in the waiting room.¹⁶ These perceptions of being "othered" are intensified for women veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma (MST). Study participants also believed that the VA does not take MST into consideration, with some recounting instances of being unable to lock their hospital room door during inpatient stays and not having women-only mental health group therapy where MST could be openly discussed. Participants also reported access issues as many VA hospitals had too few private rooms or rooms with female roommates to accommodate women inpatient care stays, forcing women veterans to be diverted to civilian health facilities or delayed inpatient care for non-emergent care. Women health services at VHA facilities leave much to be desired as some women clinics were located basements with unclear signage and not all facilities provided women specific services such as prenatal care, obstetrics, and mammography.¹⁷ These complaints run the gamut of being culturally- to service-related barriers to care and all require attention to improve quality and accessibility of VA healthcare for women veterans.

A Motto of Exclusion: "To Care for Him"

The VA took steps to address the care disparities between men and women veterans but are simultaneously undermining their efforts. The VA clarified the responsibilities of the VA medical facility Directors including but not limited to ensuring "staff [care] for women veterans with dignity and sensitivity," adequate staffing, space, and equipment for women specific services, and "all aspects of gynecology are available at all facilities." In addition, the VA now ensures that all employees have access to "educational programs addressing recognition of women as veterans and sensitivity to issues of women veterans including but not limited to awareness of women's military experiences, awareness of sexual trauma and interpersonal violence."¹⁸ These trainings, however, are not always mandatory and do not directly address the discrimination women feel by fellow male veterans. The VA also recommends that VA medical facilities "represent women

¹⁵ Dolsen, J. (2015, August 12). The Mistreatment Of Female Veterans Is Not Just A Women's Issue. Retrieved from <https://taskandpurpose.com/mistreatment-female-veterans-not-just-womens-issue/>

¹⁶ Kehle-Forbes, S. M., Harwood, E. M., Spont, M. R., Sayer, N. A., Gerould, H., & Murdoch, M. (2017, May 30). Experiences with VHA care: A qualitative study of U.S. women veterans with self-reported trauma histories. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5450063/>

¹⁷ Thorpe, H. (2017, December 21). Opinion | The V.A.'s Woman Problem. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/opinion/sunday/the-vas-woman-problem.html>

¹⁸ VHA Directive 1330.01(2), Healthcare Services for Women ... (2017, February 15). Retrieved from https://www.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=5332

veterans with images throughout the VA medical facility,” but fails to address the most visible motif at any VA facility: a gendered and exclusionary motto. The VA motto is framed as referring to only male veterans and their loved ones and is plastered in prominent areas at many VA facilities. Training and imagery are being negated or even nullified by this gendered motto, which is a more visible and memorable representation of who the VA is devoted to caring for, since it is visible to staff and patients alike. Regardless of intent, the motto in its current state reflects a palpable bias, which contributes to both actual and perceived gender discrimination.

As it stands, the VA motto is contributing the gender discrimination women veterans face. The VA’s motto reads:

“To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”

The motto originates from President Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address in 1865, attesting the government’s duty to care for injured soldiers and their loved ones.¹⁹ The statement became the VA’s motto in 1959 to depict the VA’s mission. However, as the proportion of women veterans continues to rise, the motto is becoming increasingly unrepresentative of the veteran population in its current gendered state. This gendered language is exclusionary to women veterans and can have health and cultural implications by fueling perceived discrimination. Perceived discrimination is associated with increased participation in unhealthy behaviors such as smoking (as a coping mechanism) and health conditions, including hypertension, self-reported poor health, and breast cancer.²⁰ The wording of the motto is also influencing the VA culture through language, which is one of the most potent mechanisms through which sexism and gender discrimination are “perpetrated and reproduced.”²¹ By representing the target population for care as male veterans, women veterans are “othered,” regardless of intent. Therefore, the motto’s gendered language is not an innocuous depiction of the historic speech, but rather a ubiquitous barrier to care.

Despite the plights of women veterans and evidence proving the ills of gendered language, the VA remains adamant about maintaining the motto in its original form. Curt Cashour, a VA spokesperson, recently stated, “VA is proud of Lincoln’s words as a historic tribute to all veterans, including women veterans, whose service and sacrifice inspires us all.”²² Even if the VA intends for the motto to be inclusive, at face value the motto does not reflect this. Allison Jaslow, a former U.S. Army captain spearheading the effort to change the VA motto told *Newsweek*, “The motto is not only emblematic of the cultural barriers that women face at the VA, but the resistance to this simple request is indicative of how the agency is utterly out of touch with the changing face of

¹⁹The Origin of the VA Motto Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/vamotto.pdf>

²⁰Pascoe, E. A., & Richman, L. S. (2009, July). Perceived Discrimination and Health: A Meta-Analytic Review. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2747726/>

²¹Menegatti, M., & Rubini, M. (2018, May 16). Gender Bias and Sexism in Language. Retrieved from <http://communication.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-470>

²²Wax-Thibodeaux, E. (2018, February 14). VA employees wanted a gender-neutral mission statement. The agency refused. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2018/02/14/va-employees-wanted-a-gender-neutral-mission-statement-the-agency-refused/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.e6bb3241e41b

America's veteran population."²³ Beyond being out of touch, the VA's refusal to make the motto gender-neutral reinforces the exclusionary culture by trivializing the impacts of a gendered motto.

Margaret Corbin: First in 1776 and First in VA Healthcare

In light of federal opposition to move the needle on gender inclusivity within the VA, another change agent is at the local level, through the renaming of the Manhattan Campus of the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System. By appointing the Manhattan Campus to be named the Margaret Corbin VA Medical Center, New York can lead the efforts to transform the VA into a more inclusive agency. The VA explains that VA facilities all over the country bear the names of Americans who made significant contributions to their country.²⁴ Yet none of the 1,243 VA health care facilities are named after women veterans. This sends a clear message that the contributions of women veterans or military affiliated women are not noteworthy enough for such recognition. New York can champion the recognition of women veterans by having the first VA hospital to ever be named after a woman veteran, signaling a clear and highly visible commitment to meeting the needs of women veterans. This name change is not a mere superficial act, but rather a mechanism by which the culture of the VA can begin to reflect its intent to care for all of those who borne the battle, their surviving spouses, and their orphans.

There is no more fitting choice for naming the Manhattan VA and the first VA medical center named for a woman veteran than Margaret Corbin. On November 16, 1776, Corbin stood by her husband in the Battle of Fort Washington in Washington Heights, Manhattan, then quickly took over as cannoneer against the British when he fell in battle.²⁵ She was touted by witnesses as having excellent aim and manning the last cannon fired in the battle. Corbin was eventually hit by enemy fire, sustaining severe injuries that rendered her left arm unusable for the rest of her life. The British won this battle and Corbin became a prisoner of war, but was later released.²⁶ After making a partial recovery, Corbin joined the Invalid Regiment at West Point, where she cared for her fellow wounded soldiers. On July 6, 1779 the Continental Congress awarded Corbin a military pension for her service.²⁷ As a female veteran who fought valiantly, sustained a lifelong battle-induced disability, and received a military pension, she epitomizes the care VA provides for those who borne the battle. Given that these valiant events all took place in Manhattan, Corbin is also a geographically suitable choice for the name change of the Manhattan campus. New York can commemorate Corbin's heroism and foster the onset of greater inclusivity at the VA for the 12,000 women veterans that currently reside in New York.²⁸

²³LaPorta, J. (2018, October 12). Veteran groups demand the VA change its "outdated and sexist" motto that excludes women veterans. Retrieved from <https://www.newsweek.com/va-donald-trump-veteran-motto-sexist-outdated-1167509>

²⁴Behind the Names Part 1. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/docs/behind_the_names.pdf

²⁵ Margaret Cochran Corbin. (n.d.). National Women's History Museum. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/margaret-cochran-corbin>

²⁶ Id.

²⁷ Id.

²⁸ Veteran Status: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. (2010, October 05). Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

The premise of advocating for this name change is to address access to healthcare. The experiences previously recounted of feeling unrecognized, uncatered to, unsafe, and unheard boils down to cultural misalignment at the VA. These complaints cannot be fixed entirely by updating VA care facilities, expanding services covered, or even women-sensitivity training because it transcends the tangible components of care to the implicit notion of who a veteran is. If there is no clear representation that veterans need not be male, then it provides a breeding ground for implicit biases in health service decisions, facility design, and organizational culture. Healthcare is too crucial to life and well-being to disregard any cultural issues that impede comprehensive care. In light of the recorded uptick in suicide risk among women veterans it is imperative that even the seemingly superficial solutions to addressing barriers to care not be trivialized. New York can effect change by embarking on a top-level visible signal of VA commitment to respecting, valuing, and caring for women veterans. This proposed VA hospital name change can begin the process of evolving the VA culture to be inclusive of all those who have borne the battle.

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