

Connecting with Strong, Inspiring Female Veterans at the Butler VA

U.S. Air Force Veteran Marshana Harris (Marz), graduated high school in 2004, celebrated her 18th birthday on the 4th of July, and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in August 2004.

Marshana served as a load master for the B-1 bomber plane, primarily responsible for safely guiding crewmates to retrieve and install weapons into the aircraft. However, at just 19-years-old her military career was cut short when she found herself a survivor of Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

VA uses the term “military sexual trauma” (MST) to refer to sexual assault or harassment experienced during military service. MST includes any sexual activity that you are involved with against your will. Like other types of trauma, MST can negatively affect a person’s mental and physical health, even many years later.

“While I did receive an honorable discharge, I hadn’t realized at the time that it came with some restrictions, to include being disqualified for future enlistment,” shared Marshana. “I had a hard time accepting that my life in a sense had been stolen from me once again, and I turned to alcohol to cope.”

Casual drinking got progressively worse over the years for Marshana. A close friend, and woman in recovery, introduced her to a 12-step program. After meeting with other Veterans in recovery meetings, she mustered up the courage to check out her local VA facility at the time. The VA helped her realize that she was struggling from anxiety, depression, substance abuse disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

“I got connected here with other strong, inspiring female Veterans who also experienced MST. That women’s group was such a game changer and truly enhanced my recovery.”

- Marshana Harris (Marz), U.S. Air Force Veteran

MST can be a very difficult life experience, but recovery is possible. VA has a range of services available to meet MST survivors where they are in their recovery. VA provides free treatment for any physical or mental health conditions related to a Veteran’s experiences of MST. No documentation of the MST experience or VA disability compensation rating is required. Some Veterans can receive free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other VA care.

In 2017, Marshana moved back to her hometown in western Pennsylvania, and started care at the Butler VA Health Care System.

“I got connected here with other strong, inspiring female Veterans who also experienced MST. That women’s group was such a game changer and truly enhanced my recovery.”

Recovery is possible. For more information, Veterans can contact the Butler VA’s MST Coordinator Amber Portik at 878-271-6268 or Amber.Portik@va.gov. Veterans also can call VA’s general information hotline at 1-800-827-1000.



Choose VA

75 Years

We have 75 years of health care innovation! Learn more information about VHA’s 75th anniversary:

www.va.gov/vha-history/

Enroll today! www.choose.va.gov

MAKETHECONNECTION.NET

Visit this site to view stories from Veterans who have overcome mental health challenges, including those related to MST (www.maketheconnection.net/conditions/military-sexual-trauma).

Make the Connection is a one-stop resource to explore information on mental health issues, hear fellow Veterans and their families share stories of resilience, and access the support and resources they need.



BENEFICIARY TRAVEL

24 / 7 / 365

NEW ONLINE PORTAL TO SUBMIT TRAVEL CLAIMS

access.va.gov

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

REMINDER: BENEFICIARY TRAVEL SELF-SERVICE SYSTEM AVAILABLE 24/7/365

Veterans, caregivers, and beneficiaries who are eligible for reimbursement of mileage and other travel expenses to and from approved health care appointments can now enter claims in the new Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS). BTSSS simplifies the current claim submission process for beneficiaries and ensures timely processing and payment of travel reimbursements. Travel claims submitted through BTSSS will be processed within three business days, while all other claims filed through the kiosk or hard copy may take up to 45 days to be processed.

Learn more: www.visn4.va.gov/VISN4/features/beneficiary-travel-reimbursement.asp

Need help: Call the Beneficiary Travel Help Desk for Veterans and caregivers: 1-855-574-7292

COVID-19 VACCINES: SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED

We're working to get COVID-19 vaccines to Veterans as quickly and safely as possible based on CDC guidelines and available supply. We need your help to prepare, and want to keep you informed at every step.

Sign up to help us understand your interest in getting a vaccine. We'll send you updates on how we're providing vaccines across the country—and when you can get your vaccine if you want one. We'll also offer information and answers to your questions along the way.

Sign up here: www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed

You don't need to sign up to get a vaccine. And you can change your mind about getting a vaccine at any time. We'll use the information you provide to understand your interest and keep you informed.

VETERANS, TRY THESE ONLINE TOOLS

Call Centers are experiencing unusually high call volumes. To provide the best customer service, please check out the following self-service tools:

Request: Update contact information*

Tool: www.va.gov/change-address/

Request: Schedule or view appointments online

Tool: www.va.gov/health-care/schedule-view-va-appointments/

Request: Get email updates on COVID-19 vaccines

Tool: www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed

Request: Read questions frequently asked about the COVID-19 vaccines

Tool: www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/

Request: Enroll in VA Health Care

Tool: www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction

Request: Volunteer for VA's COVID-19 research

Tool: www.va.gov/coronavirus-research

SALUTE YOU

Thank you for your service PHILIP LEACH, U.S. Navy



Philip enlisted in June 1970 and served with VA-75 on board the USS Saratoga, VAW 78, NAS Willow Grove, VP64, VF84, VR-22. He retired in 1991 from MEPS in Newark, NJ where he held several positions as an Aviation Structural Mechanic (AME).

Let us "Salute You!" Contact the Butler VA Public Affairs Office for more information.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Butler VA Health Care System



353 north duffy road . butler pa 16001

800.362.8262
724.287.4781

www.butler.va.gov



butler.va.gov



facebook.com/vabutlerpa



twitter.com/vabutlerpa



A Legacy of Service. The Future of Care.