March is designated as Women's History Month, an opportunity to remember the role women have played in U.S. history since our nation's inception.

During the Revolutionary War, Deborah Sampson, a school teacher, disguised herself as a man to become one of only a handful of women with documented military combat service from that era. She served in the Continental Army and was wounded in battle in 1782 just outside Tarrytown, N.Y., where she was struck by two musket balls in the leg. Fearful she’d be discovered, Deborah removed one of the bullets herself using a pen knife and allowed the other to heal over.

Today, women serve in every branch of the military and represent 15 percent of our active duty military and nearly 18 percent of National Guard and Reserve forces. Women serve as gunners, police, pilots, truck drivers and fuel suppliers. By the year 2020, VA estimates women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population.

VA recently launched a “Stories of Service” video series depicting the role of women in the military, available at www.womenshealth.va.gov. In these three- to five-minute video vignettes, women Veterans spanning various eras and service branches talk about their experiences in the military and how they made VA benefits work for them.

Editor’s Note: There are over 10,000 women veterans in Nebraska, according to VA Demographics and currently over 200,000 women serving in the US Armed Forces.

The call upon all citizens to express our gratitude to the women, who have served our Nation with tenacity, courage, and professionalism, must be done year-round. These service members are deserving of their fellow citizens’ deepest gratitude and unfailing support.
AMBER CRAMER

Amber Cramer enlisted in the Army Reserves in 1998 as a dental assistant (91E). Her first deployment was 18 months to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington DC shortly after 9/11 when the demand for increased staff in the Operating Room was on the rise, Amber assisted 3 surgeons and 4 residents in the Maxillofacial Surgeries.

Her second deployment was 2008-2009 stateside in Minnesota gearing Soldiers up for Deployment, and her third was Afghanistan 2009-2010, working as an Enlisted Aide to a BG General as well as serving as the Brigade Photographer. Amber is still currently serving in the Army Reserves as a Staff Sergeant, Human Resources NCO.

Amber earned a Bachelors of Science Degree in HR & Business Management at St Mary’s University in Minnesota. Amber currently operates her own business in Photography while attending CCC to build on her skills with a Visual Communications Degree and hopes to apply those new skills to her business endeavors. Amber is also VRC work-study on the Columbus campus.

Amber, thank you for your service and we are excited to have you on the team at the VRC!

CASSI BLACKMON

Cassi Blackmon joined the Air Force in 2002. After basic training and Tech School Cassi was stationed at Elmendorf, AFB in Alaska and was deployed in the summer of 2003 to Camp Al Saliya, Qatar.

She is going to school for a Bachelor’s degree in Nursing. She is married and has a 14 year old son. Cassi is the current president of the Grand Island Military Service Union (GIMSU)

and a work study for the Grand Island Campus Veterans Resource Center. Cassi has been instrumental to the success of the VRC and the Veterans Club. “I really enjoy helping other veterans with their educational and reintegration. I also enjoy reading, outdoor activities, and spending time with my family.” Cassi Blackmon.

Cassi, we thank you for your service and dedication to our country and for your fellow Veterans. You are a crucial part of the VRC’s success!
Stacey Gasper is from Lathrop, Missouri and joined the US Navy in 1993. She attended boot camp and Seaman Apprenticeship Training in Orlando, Florida. From there she was stationed at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Virginia where she met her husband, Marine Corps CPL George Gasper. They were married on base at the NWS on January 10, 1995. They have 3 sons: Joshua, 16, and identical twins Hunter and Tanner, 14.

Stacey graduated from Central Community College-Columbus in May 1999. She is currently working at Columbus CCC part-time as a Learning Support Specialist. Her favorite things to do include watching, cheering and supporting her boys in every activity they participate in, being a proud wife of a firefighter/paramedic and scrapbooking.

Women Serving in the Military (Percent Women)

| Active Duty | Army | 11.9% |
| Marine Corps | 9.9% |
| Navy | 10.0% |
| Air Force | 10.2% |
| Coast Guard | 13.3% |
| Total Active | 14.9% |

| Reserve | Army | 22.9% |
| Marine Corps | 5.6% |
| Navy | 16.7% |
| Air Force | 20.3% |
| Coast Guard | 11.4% |
| Total Reserve | 25.3% |

| National Guard | Army National Guard | 14.9% |
| Air National Guard | 10.4% |
| Total National Guard | 21.4% |

Military Moms

- 5.3% of single parents are in the U.S. military
- 12% of women in the Army are single parents
- At least 25% of the military women who died while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan were mothers
- Percent of military women who have been divorced: 8%
- Percent of military men who have been divorced: 3%

Divorce Rate is Higher Among Women in the Military

Historical Glimpse: Women in Military Conflicts (Number of Women Involved)

- 1898 Spanish-American War: 1,500
- 1914 - 1918 World War I: 35,000
- 1939 - 1945 World War II: 400,000
- 1950 - 1953 Korean War: 1,000
- 1955 - 1975 Vietnam War: 7,500
- 1983 Invasion of Grenada: 170
- 1989 Invasion of Panama: 770
- 1991 Operation Desert Storm: 41,000

The Grand Island Military Service Union (GIMSU) held their Care Package Day on March 15, 2012. Left to Right: Katherine Spence, Nicholas Stamp, Tina Loveless, Benjamin Synder, Travis Karr, Cassi Blackmon, Kenya Skeen, and Morgan Felton.

During the Spring 2012 semester, GIMSU decided to do a project called The Giving Flag. With this project, GIMSU made tags to put on the American Flag. These tags had items written on them that would later become an essential part of a care package for the service men and women overseas.

Once enough items were collected, GIMSU set the date for the assembling of the care packages. This event happened on March 13, 2012 in Room 396 of Grand Island Central Community College. This date was chosen because Major General Lyons was scheduled to visit the campus that day.

With the many items that were collected, forty-eight care packages were made. GIMSU decided to make the process of assembling the packages easier by pre-packaging similar items together. This made the process go smooth and quick.

Along with the actual packing of the items, there was also a letter writing station for those that wanted to share their thanks with our soldiers overseas.

Major General Lyons, Adjutant General of Nebraska stopped by to visit the Veterans Resource Center and to package up some goodies for his troops overseas.

Overall, the Care Package Day was a success that GIMSU is proud of. The members of GIMSU had a good time with those that came in to help with the packages. Last, but not least, GIMSU would like to thank everyone who donated their time, effort, and generosity.

IN THE NEWS
Colleges see surge of Veteran applicants

KHAS-TV News 5's Katie Gauthier stopped by Grand Island's VRC

Watch the video here
The CCC’s Student Veterans of America Chapters (DD214ers- Hastings, GIMSU - Grand Island) was among many SVA chapters throughout the state of Nebraska that attended the first SVA Nebraska Leadership Conference on March 23 at Bellevue University.

Each chapter had an opportunity to share their upcoming projects and events. The conference also featured a series of speakers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and the VA Hospital. Speakers presented topics such as applying for VA benefits, current volunteer opportunities, suicide prevention and available resources.

Attendees also had the opportunity to network and collaborate with chapters on upcoming events and ideas, such as an SVA end of the year barbeque.

The Student Veterans of American (SVA) is a national organization of veteran students at college campuses across the globe. These member chapters are the "boots on the ground" that help veterans reintegrate into campus life and succeed academically. There are currently 500 chapters nation-wide and CCC is home base for 3 chapters.

Bellevue President, Dr. Mary Hawkins, spoke to the group about the importance of colleges understanding the growing Veteran population. Bellevue’s president also discussed plans on establishing a dedicated building for Veterans returning to college.

CCC Club members headed to Omaha on Thursday and invited the other clubs to hang out at Dave & Busters as a social event to build camaraderie.

What a great group of Veteran students and supporters. They are your next leaders... the next greatest generation. They proved it at this leadership conference, leading by example and sharing with the other clubs.

Travis Karr, Veteran Student Coordinator
NEW Policies that affect you!

Approved, Veterans Appreciation Cord

Many of the Veterans who graduate complete college by using educational benefits such as the Post 9/11 GI Bill. The Secretary of Veteran Affairs, Erik Shinseki, recently acknowledged our nation’s commitment to providing education benefits stating, “The original GI Bill in 1944 lasted only 12 years, but educated 6 million returning service members, changing the course of our nation for a full generation. This investment in 1944 added 450,000 trained engineers, 238,000 teachers, 91,000 scientists and 67,000 doctors to a rebounding economy. Again, this country has invested in its veteran population by providing assistance to over 900,000 service members and their families since 2009.”

As a symbolic new initiative honoring our CCC graduating Veteran students, red- white-and blue honor cords will be made available to any graduating Veteran student interested in wearing one during commencement. These cords signify CCC’s appreciation towards our military and veteran students for their service and sacrifice.

Contact Travis Karr for you cord 308-398-73796 Deadline April 30th

Veterans Appreciation Scholarship

CCC Foundation announces first awardees

Brian McDonald
Hastings Campus

Anne Faith Divo
Columbus Campus

The new Central Community College Foundation Veterans Appreciation Scholarship was created to express gratitude to the men and women who have served our country honorably. This fund offers multiple scholarships up to $500 awarded to CCC students to help offset the cost of higher education and make college accessible for hardworking talented individuals who have served or are currently serving in the U.S Armed Forces. This is also available for their dependents.

Central Community College now offers in-state tuition to ALL Veterans

Recent changes (August 1st 2011) to the Post 9/11 GI Bill (also known as Chapter 33) have created financial hardships for eligible individuals seeking enrollment at CCC. The change only allows the Post 9/11 GI Bill to cover in-state tuition. The additional out-of-pocket expense is unexpected and as a result affects possible first-time enrollment for Veterans CCC. To better serve the Central Community College Veteran population the college will now award in-state tuition to all qualifying Veterans (honorable discharge) of the United States Armed Forces who wish to attend CCC, regardless of state of residency.

www.cccneb.edu/veterans
Vets4Vets is a non-partisan group dedicated to helping veterans and military through a social aspect, through the use of peer support. Lutheran Family Services in Grand Island a trained 40 year military veteran leads the support group that is open to all Veterans who would like to join.

- **Grand Island**, meetings biweekly starting April 12th at 4pm – Location- Veterans Resource Center
- **Hastings**, meetings biweekly starting April 11th at 4pm – Location Veterans Resource Center
- **NEW Columbus**, meeting biweekly starting April 4th at 2pm- Location-VRC

I have discovered the benefits of Vets4Vets Peer Support and I am enthusiastic about having all Veterans in our community participate.

Travis

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**Karr Awarded The Spirit of Nebraska Award**

On March 30, 2012, Travis Karr was award the Spirit of Nebraska Award by the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska at this year’s state conference for his dedication and efforts to educate the community about Brain Injuries. Karr gave a presentation at the conference about the challenges and barriers that Veterans face when returning home after military service and was also voted in to the Board of Directors for the Association.

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**VETS 4 VETS**

Camaraderie • Respect • Confidentiality • Well-Being

FREE PEER SUPPORT FOR IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN-ERA VETS

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**NEW GROUPS ON CAMPUS!**

**We Serve Too**

Monday April 16th @12pm, RM 396

Support Groups for Spouses, Significant Others and Loved Ones

- Connect with others to discuss the challenges and the rewards of the military lifestyle
- Find support by meeting others who share common experiences
- Offer support to others by sharing your story

We Serve Too is free to all participants. To ensure confidentiality, meetings are not documented in any way.

**MEETINGS:**

- For Spouses & Significant Others
  - Grand Island, Thursdays at 4pm

- For All Loved Ones
  - Grand Island

**At Ease**

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc. www.lfsne.org

Great Western Bank Building • 1411 West 2nd Street, Suite 360 • Grand Island, NE 68803

(402) 382-4242 • Fax (402) 382-6109 • Attcallgrandisland@lfsne.org

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<td>Understanding Brain Injury Training for CCC Staff-GI</td>
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<td>Columbus Graduation!</td>
<td>Grand Island Graduation!</td>
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Hastings Graduation!
YOUR VETERAN CERTIFYING OFFICIALS

Ronda Ryan – Columbus Campus
402-562-1278 or 877-222-0780 ext 1278
Email: rryan@cccneb.edu

Liz Luna – Grand Island, Lexington, & Kearney Campuses
308-398-7413 or 877-222-0780 ext 7413
Email: lluna@cccneb.edu

Sherri Portenier – Hastings & Holdrege Campuses
402-461-2416 or 877-222-0780 ext 2416
Email: sportenier@cccneb.edu

Travis Karr
Veteran Student Coordinator
308-398-7376 or 877-222-0780 ext 7376
Email: tkarr@cccneb.edu

SVA CLUB PRESIDENTS

Cassi Blackmon
GIMSU President
Email: cassi99253@cccneb.edu

Brian McDonald Jr
DD214ers President
Email: brian89767@cccneb.edu

Joey Ossian
Columbus VRC President
Email: joey06452@cccneb.edu

Gi Jobs Top 20% Military Friendly Schools 2012

G.I. Jobs, the premier magazine for military personnel transitioning into civilian life, has awarded Central Community College the designation of Military Friendly School. The 2012 Military Friendly Schools list honors the top 20 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace America’s military service members and veterans as students.

CCC is a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success: A U.S. Department of Education program funded through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FISPE). However, these contents do not represent an official endorsement by the Federal Government. Please visit their website at http://fipsdatabase.ed.gov.