



Vet Centers

Readjustment
Counseling Services

Amy Marcotte, LCSW

Team Leader, Sanford Maine Vet Center

VET CENTERS



"Dedicated to serving those who have served."

The primary mission of the Vet Center is to seek out veterans suffering life readjustment problems related to their combat experiences, or as a result of sexual assault/harassment occurring while on active duty. Vet Centers provide free counseling and referral services to facilitate a successful readjustment to civilian life.



History of Vet Centers

260 community Vet Centers are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands and were established by congress in 1979.

300 Vet Centers are projected to be on line by the end of the year

Eligibility

- **Veterans who have served in a combat zone (new legislation for Active Duty)**
- **Family Therapy for Military Related Issues**
- **Survivors of military sexual trauma (MST) (sexual assaults or sexual harassment)**
- **Bereavement**



Vet Center Intel

- Confidential
- Community Based
- Staff is 60% Veterans
- Staff is 41% Female
- Family Members Involved
- Women Veterans on Most Teams
- Specialized MST Therapists
- Reserve and National Guard
- Services are at no cost



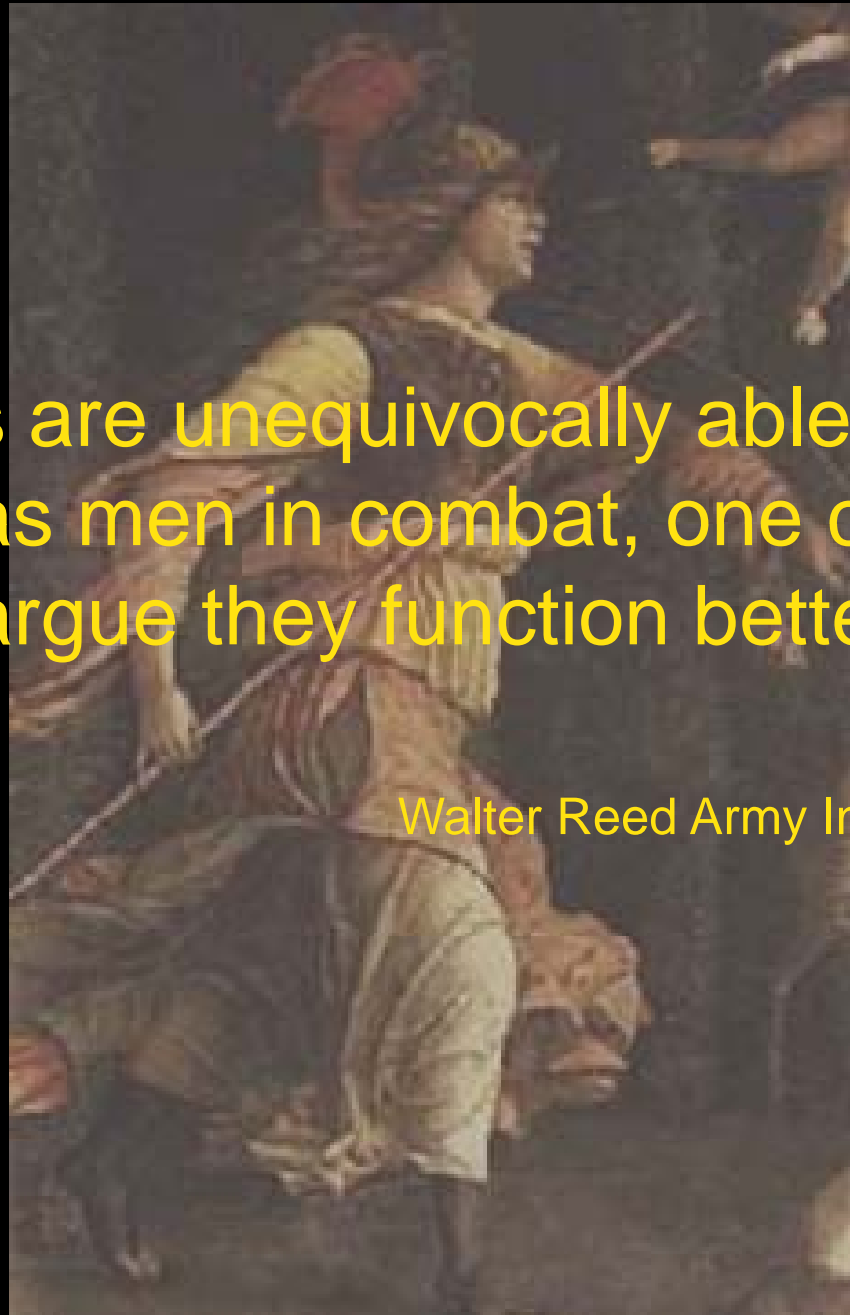
Vet Center Services



- Assessments
- Individual, Group and Family Therapy
- Substance Abuse Assistance
- Employment Services
- Benefits Assistance
- Liaison with VA
- Recreational Activities

“Females are unequivocally able to function as well as men in combat, one could even argue they function better.”

Colonel Carl Castro
Walter Reed Army Institute for Research



Readjustment / PTSD

- Readjustment is gender neutral and universal
- Most readjustment symptoms subside within 6 months; some can become problematic
- Symptoms indicate resilient coping mechanisms
- Approximately 15% will develop PTSD as a result of exposure to combat trauma
- For either Readjustment issues or PTSD:
 - Not a personal weakness
 - Help is available to attack problems early

When to Seek Assistance

- Feeling out of Synch
- Jumpiness
- Worry
- Irritability
- Can't Sleep
- Relationship Issues
- Sadness
- Low Motivation
- "Need for Speed"
- Distressing Thoughts
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Substance Abuse
- Work Problems
- Isolating

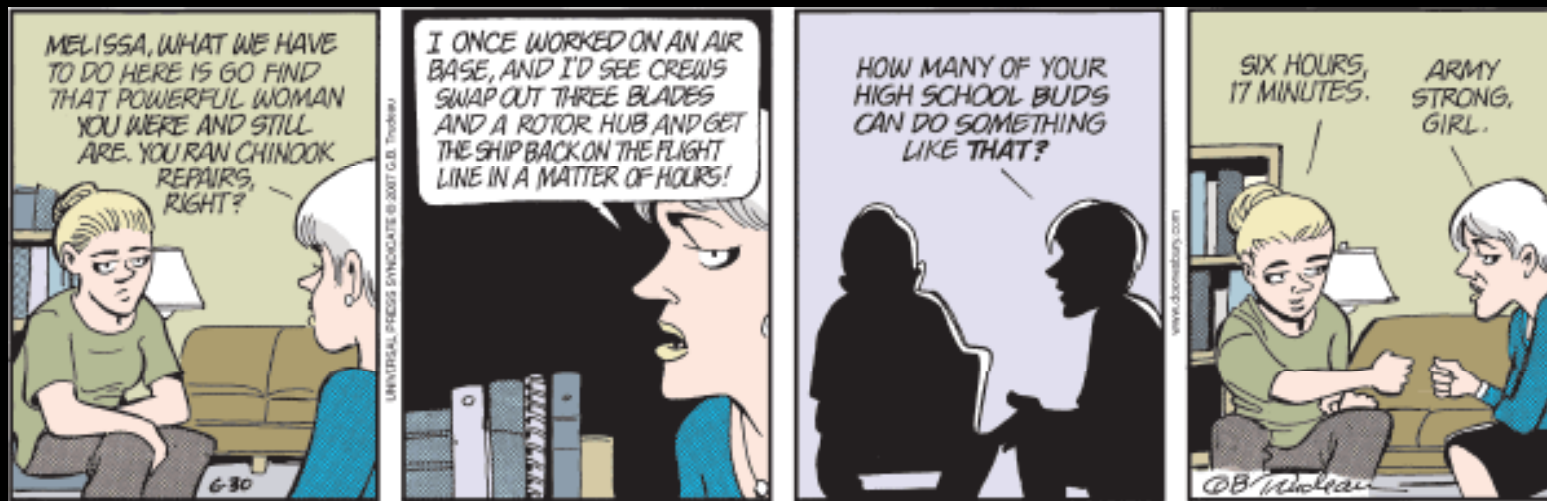
Keys to Readjustment



- Understand Readjustment
- Capitalize on Strengths
- Understand Impact of Service
- Learn New Strategies
- Set Goals
- Interact with Others
- Involve SO's
- Use Supports ("Sucking it up" doesn't work long term)

Military Sexual Trauma

- Free services to survivors
- 8-20% of service women have experienced MST
- Official reports belie extent of problem
- Many are discharged without treatment or awareness of eligibility for care
- Eligibility is based on veteran's report
- MST therapists are specially trained to provide care



RCS Enhancements to Services For Women Veterans



- Enhanced Access to MST Counseling
- Improved Access to Family Counseling
- Increased Hiring of Female Veteran Staff
- Gender Sensitivity Training for all RCS Staff
- Partnering to Facilitate Women Veteran Therapeutic Retreats



To locate a Vet Center near you call
1-877- WAR VETS (877-927-8387)

Or

visit us on the web at www.vetcenter.va.gov