

Women's Health Newsletter

DECEMBER 2024



My Fellow Veteran,

The holiday season is upon us and we are preparing to say goodbye to 2024 and say hello to 2025. 2024 certainly was a busy and exciting year for the Women's Wellness Center; between new staff members; new programs; expanding our outreach events; and the return of our public forums and focus groups we have been quite bust and are thrilled to be able to offer these services to you. We have more exciting ideas already in the works for 2025 and I look forward being able to bring these services to you.

As we start to gather with friends and family this holiday season, let us all take a moment and honor the men and women that are deployed serving and protecting our country who are not able to with their families this year. Let us reflect on our time in service and honor those whose served along side of us as well as those that paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The holiday season for some may not be as joyous as it is for others. Please remember that our Women Veterans Call Center is available to you 24 hours a day 7 days a week. There you will find trained staff that will help you navigate through any questions, concerns, or struggles you may encounter. They can be reached at 1-(855)829-6636.

As always thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve you and your needs. And wishing you all a Happy, Healthy, and Safe Holiday.

Respectfully,

Christine Goodwill

Women's Health Program Manager
Albany Stratton VA Medical Center



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FAMILY BUILDING CAMPAIGN

Every Veteran's journey to building a family is unique, and whether you're just beginning to think about your options or already exploring fertility treatments, it's important to know that VA can support you along the way. You have access to a wide range of services that can help make parenthood a reality—and **MORE Veterans** can now receive the care you need to build your family.

If you and your partner need help conceiving or you're a single Veteran wanting to become a parent, you may qualify for fertility services, in vitro fertilization (IVF), or an adoption reimbursement. Additionally, reproductive health care, mental health care, and maternity care coordination are available to support you.

The first step to receiving fertility care is to speak with your VA primary care provider—they will refer you to a fertility specialist in the community for an initial evaluation and determine your treatment needs. You can also reach out to the [Women Veterans Call Center](#) at 1-855-VA-WOMEN to speak with someone who can walk you through VA fertility benefits and connect you to health care you can trust.

Learn more by visiting our [Fertility Services](#) webpage.



Did you know that December 26th is National Candy Cane Day?

NATIONAL PEAR MONTH

All **December** long, National Pear Month recognizes the flavor and versatility of this delicious fruit. Whether they are enjoyed fresh off the tree or as a preserve, pears add significant nutritional benefits to any diet. In the United States, there are ten varieties of pears.



DIAPER DRIVE



The Women's Wellness Center received a very generous donation from VFW Post 8692 Auxiliary.

Pictured above from left to right: Karen Covey; Courtney O'Keefe, BSN, RN Maternity Care Coordinator; Christine Goodwill, BSN, RN Women Veteran Program Manager; and Jamie Harrigan, Women Health Program Assistant.

The Women's Wellness Center entire staff would like to extend our most sincere gratitude for the generosity bestowed from VFW Post 8692 Auxiliary, Colonie, NY.

WOMEN VETERANS TO VA HEALTH CARE



Women Veterans are more satisfied with their VA health care than ever before! A recent survey shows 83% of women Veterans who use VA feel safe here, 82% are pleased with their VA provider and 74% feel a strong sense of belonging at VA.

<https://www.womenshealth.va.gov/building-a-culture-of-respect.asp>

Did you know that December 17th is National Wright Brothers Day

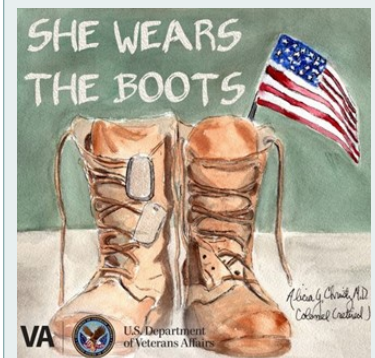
ANNUAL GOLDSTAR MOTHER CHRISTMAS TREE

The Women's Wellness Center was once again honored to welcome members of the Goldstar Mothers Albany Chapter on December 3, 2024. Each year these amazing volunteers decorate our waiting area with magical holiday warmth. We look forward to them coming each year. In addition to decorating, they wrapped gifts left for our patients under the tree. December 3rd is called Giving Tuesday and these amazing volunteers certainly gave a lot! Stop by and enjoy the tree .



SHE WEARS THE BOOTS

[She Wears the Boots: A Podcast for Women Veterans](#) is an official VA sponsored podcast that focuses on topics relevant to Servicewomen and women Veterans. The goal of this podcast is to enhance the lives of women Veterans by sharing information on women's health care services offered through VA.



Women's Winter **Coats Available**

**Center for Development
&
Civic Engagement**

9th Floor D-Wing

For more information contact:

Jason Goman

518-626-550 or

Email: Jason.Goman@va.gov

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**
Stratton VA Medical Center

Department of Veterans Affairs
Samuel S. Stratton VA Medical Center

ADHD Workshop

9am-12pm Thursday December 12, 2024

*Empowering Strength and Confidence in
Veterans with ADHD*



If interested speak to your provider or contact:

Caitlin Holley, Ph.D. (518) 626-5365

Kelly Wentworth, LSW (518) 626-5166

- Learn ways to manage your ADHD
- Shift your mindset and focus on resiliency
- Develop increase self-awareness around your unique needs
- Connect with and learn from other Veterans

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
Stratton VA Medical Center

NAVIGATING MENOPAUSE

NAVIGATING MENOPAUSE

Do you have mild symptoms such as occasional hot flashes?

YES

Try these tips

- Dress in layers
- Eat a healthy diet
- Sleep with a fan
- Exercise regularly

Avoid these triggers of hot flashes

- Spicy food
- Hot beverages
- Overheating
- Alcohol

Do you have symptoms that interfere with your daily life?

YES

Ask your VA primary care provider about medications and other treatments

Your VA primary care provider can help with a personalized holistic plan including prescription medications such as hormone therapy, mental health care, and whole health classes like yoga and tai chi.

DID YOU KNOW?

Menopause is a normal part of aging where the ovaries stop producing estrogen.

Perimenopausal symptoms may begin around age 45 and include hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and vaginal dryness.

Menopause occurs around age 51 when menstrual periods have stopped for a year.

Women Veterans Call Center: 1-855-829-6636
www.womenshealth.va.gov | #WomenVets

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

People often begin having symptoms of menopause in their mid-40s. But no two people are the same. Menopause might happen earlier or later for you and symptoms vary for each person. You may have sudden symptoms that occur only occasionally or that occur more often. In addition to irregular periods, many have experience:

- Hot flashes
- Sleep problems
- Night Sweats
- Mood Changes
- Vaginal dryness, making sexual activity uncomfortable or painful
- Changes in interest in sexual activity
- Weight gain
- Thinning hair and dry skin
- Loss of breast/chest fullness
- Anxiety or depression

These symptoms could be worse for those who have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Talk to your VA primary care provider if you are experiencing mental health concerns. Treatment options are available and effective.

Your healthcare provider will assess your symptoms and health risks. Then they'll work with you to find the treatment that best suits your needs. You and your healthcare provider will work as a team to review all of your options and fine-tune your treatment as needed.



Prepare for VA's secure sign-in changes

In, 2025, you'll need to start using a Login.gov or ID.me account to sign into all VA websites and apps.

Why this matters to you

In 2025, you'll have 2 secure sign-in account options (Login.gov and ID.me) for all VA websites and apps. We'll remove the My HealtheVet option after **January 31, 2025**, and the DS Logon option after **September 30, 2025**. NOTE: My HealtheVet is not going away, just the mechanism you use to login. You'll still be able to use your My HealtheVet health portal—you'll just need to sign in to it with a Login.gov or ID.me account.

Create a Login.gov or ID.me account now

We encourage you to create a Login.gov or ID.me account now. If you already have one of these accounts but haven't yet used it, start now so you have time to get used to it before the change. With Login.gov or ID.me, you'll have access to all the same information and services you use today.

For more information and detailed instructions please visit www.va.gov or www.myhealth.va.gov



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REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

In July 1939 the U.S. announced the termination of the 1911 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Japan. Beginning in the summer of 1940, the U.S. began to restrict the export to Japan of materials useful in war. Between June 1940 and the fateful crisis of December 1941, the tension constantly mounted. In July 1941, by which time the Japanese had occupied all of Indochina and had entered into an alliance with the Axis powers (Germany and Italy), the U.S. government severed all commercial and financial relations with Japan. Japanese assets were frozen, and an embargo was declared on shipments to Japan of petroleum and other vital war materials. Militarists were steadily gaining in influence in the Tokyo government; they bitterly resented U.S. aid to China, which by this time had been stepped up. They saw in the German invasion of the Soviet Union an unrivaled opportunity to pursue a policy of aggression in the Far East without danger of an attack upon their rear by the forces of the Red Army. Nonetheless, negotiations looking to find some kind of understanding between the United States and Japan took place through the autumn of 1941, and not until near the end of November did it become clear that no agreement was possible.

The first Japanese dive-bomber appeared over Pearl Harbor at 7:55 AM (local time). It was part of a first wave of nearly 200 aircraft, including torpedo planes, bombers, and fighters. Within a quarter of an hour the various airfields at the base were subjected to savage attack.

At the same time a massive action was directed against Battleship Row. The ships anchored in the harbor made perfect targets for the Japanese bombers, and, because it was Sunday morning (a time chosen by the Japanese for maximum surprise), they were not fully manned. Most of the damage to the battleships was inflicted in the first 30 minutes of the assault. The battleship USS *Arizona* blew up with a tremendous explosion.

At 8:50 AM the second wave of the attack began. Less successful than the first, it nonetheless inflicted heavy damage. The battleship USS *Nevada* had sustained a torpedo hit during the first wave, but its position at the end of Battleship Row allowed it greater freedom of action than the other moored capital ships. It was attempting to get underway when the second wave hit. It was struck by seven or eight bombs and was grounded at the head of the channel. The battleship USS *Pennsylvania* was set ablaze by bombs, and the two destroyers moored near it were reduced to wrecks. The destroyer USS *Shaw* was split in two by a great explosion. Shortly after 9:00 AM the Japanese withdrew.

The Pearl Harbor attack severely crippled U.S. naval and air strength in the Pacific. However, of the eight battleships, all but the *Arizona* and *Oklahoma* were eventually repaired and returned to service, and the Japanese failed to destroy the important oil storage facilities on the island. The “date which will live in infamy,” as U.S. Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt termed it, unified the U.S. public and swept away any earlier support for neutrality. On December 8 Congress declared war on Japan with only one dissenting vote (Rep. Jeannette Rankin of Montana, who had also voted against U.S. entry into World War I).



MAJOR KRISTEN MARIE GRIEST

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY

Over centuries, mountain communities have developed solutions to adapt to their harsh environments, deal with climate change, reduce poverty and protect or restore biodiversity. .

Of the 20 plant species that supply 80% of the world's food, six originated and have been diversified in mountains: maize, potatoes, barley, sorghum, tomatoes, and apples.

Mountains are natural jewels we should treasure. They are home to 15% of the world's population and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots. They provide freshwater for everyday life to half of humanity, helping to sustain agriculture and supply clean energy and medicines.



Kristen Marie Griest (born October 2, 1989) is one of the two first women, along with Shaye Lynne Haver, to graduate from the United States Army Ranger School, which occurred on 21 August 2015. Griest and Haver were ranked 34th on *Fortune* magazine's 2016 list of the World's Greatest Leaders. In April 2016, Griest became the first female infantry officer in the US Army when the Army approved her request to transfer there from a military police unit.

Griest began Ranger training in the spring of 2015 as part of a one-time pilot program to see how women would do in Ranger School. She started the course with 380 men and 19 other women, marking the first time women have ever been allowed to participate through the course. 99 men and 2 women graduated from this starting pool. The third woman repeated the mountain phase. The three of them began training with Ranger Class 08–15. Haver and Griest failed the first phase of the course twice, though their performance impressed Ranger leaders enough to be offered a chance to start over from day one, commonly referred to as a "Day 01" recycle. They admitted to press that it was hard to start over, but said they weren't going to quit. "We decided right then and there that if that was what it was going to take to get our Tab, that's what it was going to take," Haver said. School officials report that in addition to Haver and Griest, five male candidates were also offered to start over the course from day one; one in four candidates completed Ranger school without a recycle.

At that time, women were not allowed to serve in Ranger/Infantry roles due to the Pentagon's exclusion policies on women in combat. That policy changed on 3 December 2015 when Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced the United States military would open combat positions to women with no exception.

Upon graduating from the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC), she took command of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment on April 7, 2017. She deployed to Afghanistan in 2019. As of April 2022, Griest was a student at Columbia University, where she was pursuing a master's degree in Socio-Organizational Psychology, with plans for a follow-on assignment as a West Point Tactical Officer. She was promoted to major in May 2022. She is currently serving in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.



STRESS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A 10-WEEK EDUCATIONAL GROUP



- Understand the impact of stress on health and wellbeing
- Identify stress triggers and reactions
- Learn effective stress management practices

WHEN: Fridays at 9:00-10:00AM | Starting January 10, 2025

WHERE: In-Person (Albany VAMC; Room 603 Core) & Videoconference

If interested, speak to your provider or contact:

Tom D'Agostino, PhD

Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI)

(518) 626-6497

SLOPPY JOE SHEPHERDS PIE

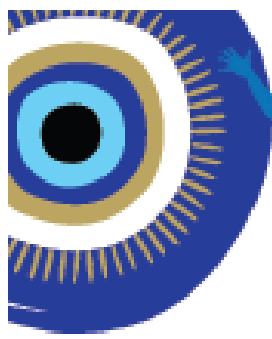
INGREDIENTS:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 lb ground chuck
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 1 (3/8 ounce) beef bouillon cube
- 1-1/2 teaspoons light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 (14 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup beef broth
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 (32 ounce) package refrigerated mashed potatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded Colby jack or cheddar cheese

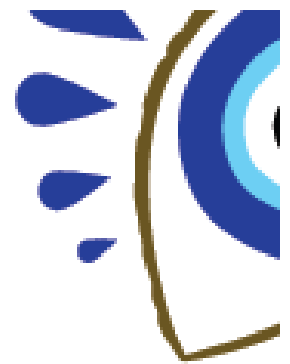


DIRECTIONS:

1. GATHER ALL INGREDIENTS. PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 375 DEGREES F (190 DEGREES C).
2. HEAT OIL IN A 12-INCH CAST-IRON SKILLET OVER MEDIUM-HIGH. ADD GARLIC; COOK, STIRRING CONSTANTLY, UNTIL FRAGRANT, ABOUT 1 MINUTE. ADD GROUND CHUCK; COOK, STIRRING TO CRUMBLE BEEF INTO SMALL PIECES, UNTIL BROWNEED, ABOUT 6 MINUTES. REMOVE FROM HEAT, SPOON DRIPPINGS INTO A SMALL BOWL. LET DRIPPINGS COOL, THEN DISCARD.
3. ADD ONION TO SKILLET; COOK OVER MEDIUM, STIRRING OFTEN, UNTIL ONIONS HAVE SOFTENED, ABOUT 3 MINUTES. STIR IN BOUILLON, SUGAR, MUSTARD, AND PEPPER UNTIL WELL COMBINED. STIR IN CRUSHED TOMATOES, KETCHUP, BROTH, TOMATO PASTE, AND WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE UNTIL WELL COMBINED. BRING TO A SIMMER OVER MEDIUM-HIGH; COOK, STIRRING OCCASIONALLY, UNTIL SAUCE IS SLIGHTLY THICKENED AND GLOSSY, 2 TO 3 MINUTES. REMOVE FROM HEAT.
4. SPOON MASHED POTATOES OVER BEEF MIXTURE IN SKILLET AND GENTLY SPREAD INTO AN EVEN LAYER TO COVER BEEF COMPLETELY.
5. SPRINKLE EVENLY WITH CHEESES.
6. BAKE IN THE PREHEATED OVEN UNTIL POTATOES ARE HEATED THROUGH AND CHEESE IS MELTED, ABOUT 10 MINUTES. INCREASE OVEN TEMPERATURE TO BROIL; DO NOT REMOVE SKILLET. BROIL UNTIL CHEESE IS LIGHTLY BROWNEED, 4 TO 5 MINUTES. LET STAND 5 MINUTES THEN SERVE.



Come Join the FUN!



POPA-cize™
— GREEK DANCE FITNESS —

Weekly Greek Dance & Exercise Class

Wed.'s at 6:30pm

St Sophia Greek Orthodox Church Hall
440 Whitehall Road, Albany, NY

Session Starts Jan. 8th, 2025

NO Experience or RSVP required

\$7 per week

50% of proceeds will be donated to

WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM AT

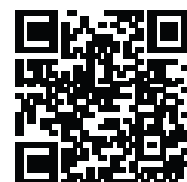
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Join our mailing list

We donated \$2,600 in 2024!



VA



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