

ALBANY STRATTON VAMC

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Albany Stratton
VA Medical Center

WOMEN VETERANS — MONTHLY NEWSLETTER —



Stronger Together

SUPPORT ★ EMPOWER ★ COLLABORATE

Your monthly source for updates,
resources, stories, and events
for women Veterans.

★ Thank you for your service,
your strength, ★
and your continued contributions
to our community.



Albany Stratton VA Medical Center
113 Holland Ave, Albany, NY 12208



www.albany.va.gov



518-626-6140

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ALBANY STRATTON VA

Women Veterans COLLABORATION CLUB

CONNECT | SHARE | LEARN | SUPPORT

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

Sharing BREAST CANCER Survivor Stories

EDUCATION | PREVENTION | SUPPORT | EMPOWERMENT



WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 21, 2026



10:30 AM



WOMEN'S HEALTH
CONFERENCE ROOM
8 DELTA



IN PERSON AND VIRTUALLY

Together
WE MAKE A
Difference



RSVP to Jamie Harrigan at
518-626-7274
no later than Monday, October 19.



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

RISK FACTORS FOR BREAST CANCER

Women comprise more and more of the population in the U.S. military, both active duty and veterans. In 2000, only about 4% of veterans identified as female; however, that number **is expected to grow** to 18% by 2040, making them the fastest growing demographic of veterans. Yet these women also represent another growing statistic: breast cancer incidences.

Military women have higher rates of breast cancer compared to the general population. **A retrospective cohort study** from 2011 to 2022 found that within the 3.4-million-member cohort of active-duty service members, 1,064 were diagnosed with breast cancer (18.23%), with higher incidence rates among Black and non-Hispanic service members. In comparison, the lifetime risk of breast cancer among civilian women is 12.5 percent. In 2010, breast cancer **represented 30%** of cancers diagnosed in female veterans.

Unique Risk Factors

Why are the rates so much higher for ADSMs and veterans? “It’s multifactorial,” says David Traynor, MD, internal medicine physician and chief medical officer at the Palatka Community-Based Outpatient Clinic Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center. Traynor, a veteran himself, also served as a toxic exposure screening navigator for the VA health system in Georgia and Florida

Lifestyle and reproductive factors contribute — many ADSMs delay family building due to their careers, and tobacco and nicotine use is also higher among military members. And there are occupational factors. “Although we don’t have the data yet to know for sure, there is concern regarding the impact of occupational exposure to toxins, often as a result of burn pits,” says Jasmine Locklin, MD, radiologist at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center and member of the **ACR Veterans Affairs Committee**.

In response to these growing numbers, Congress enacted the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans in Combat (SERVICE) Act in 2022. Although the VA usually advises screening according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations, the SERVICE Act gives veterans who were deployed in specifically listed international military operations during certain time periods the ability to receive breast cancer assessment and clinically appropriate screening mammography under the age of 40, expanding access to younger women.





Breast Cancer Awareness

What Is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is a disease in which cells in the breast grow and multiply abnormally. This can happen if the genes in a cell that control cell growth no longer work properly. As a result, the cell divides uncontrollably and may form a tumor. You may be able to feel it as a lump under the skin, or you may not realize it's there at all until it's found on an imaging test, such as a mammogram (breast x-ray).

What Are the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

Many breast cancers are discovered through routine breast screening exams such as mammograms, even when a woman has no other signs of disease. However, on your own, you may notice symptoms that could be suspicious. See your doctor right away if you have any of these conditions:

- A lump or thickness in or near the breast or under the arm.
- Unexplained swelling or shrinkage of the breast, particularly on one side only.
- Dimpling or puckering of the breast.
- Nipple discharge (fluid) other than breast milk that occurs without squeezing the nipple.
- Breast skin changes, such as redness, flaking, thickening, or pitting that looks like the skin of an orange.
- A nipple that becomes sunken (inverted), red, thick, or scaly.

Am I at Risk for Getting Breast Cancer?

Your risk for breast cancer rises as you get older. About 80 percent of breast cancers are found in women over age 50 — many of whom have no other known risk factors for the disease.

Although you're two to three times more likely to get breast cancer if you have a strong family history of the disease, only 5 to 10 percent of breast cancers are inherited, meaning that they are linked to gene mutations passed down in families, such as the BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations. Several other risk factors may slightly boost your chances of getting breast cancer.

When Should You Be Screened?

Women age 25 and older:

- Practice breast self-awareness.
- Begin yearly clinical breast exams by a doctor.

Women age 40 and older:

- Begin yearly mammograms.
- Ultrasound may be recommended for women with dense breast tissue.

Women with a family history of breast cancer:

- Begin yearly imaging exams ten years before the age of the earliest diagnosis in your immediate family, but not earlier than age 25 or later than age 40.
- Consider additional screenings exams.

If you have any questions about when you should start having mammograms, you should talk to your doctor. If you think you are at increased risk of getting breast cancer, you can make an appointment to see one of our specialists.

Did You Know?

- Mammography has helped reduce breast cancer mortality in the United States by **40%**.
- A woman is diagnosed with breast cancer **every 2 minutes**.
- **3 out of 4 women** who are diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history of the disease and are not considered at a high risk for developing it.
- **1 in 8 women** will be diagnosed with breast cancer.
- **1 in 6** breast cancers occurs in women ages 40 to 49.
- The NYCDCC Welfare Fund has a partnership with MSK through MSK Direct, which offers guided access and **personalized support**.

To schedule your mammogram appointment at any of our locations, call the NYCDCC Welfare Fund dedicated phone line at **833-786-3368** or **646-449-1541**.

For more information, visit mskcc.org/mammogram.

Information courtesy of mskcc.org.

VILLAGE OF COLONIE 2026 VETERAN STAND DOWN

VILLAGE OF COLONIE REC CENTER
3 THUNDER RD, ALBANY, NY 12205
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
9 A.M TO 1 P.M.

FREE VETERAN SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED:

BREAKFAST AND BOXED LUNCH
MEDICAL SCREENING
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
CLOTHING
TOILETRIES
HAIRCUTS
PROGRAM INFORMATION
FEMALE SERVICES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
DOM DOMINGUEZ 518-522-1175
VILLAGE HALL 518-869-7562



SIGN UP HERE:



DONATE HERE:



WEAR PINK ON FRIDAYS IN OCTOBER



Albany Stratton
VA Medical Center
Women's Health Program

*Stronger
Together* ♥

OCTOBER IS
BREAST CANCER
Awareness Month

AWARENESS ♥ PREVENTION ♥ EARLY DETECTION ♥ SUPPORT

Wear Pink on Fridays ♥

**Let's wear pink
every Friday in October**
to raise awareness,
show solidarity,
honor survivors and
support those that battle
this disease.

*Hope
Strength
Courage
Together* ♥

Together We Make a Stronger Tomorrow ♥

Women's Health
Caring for Women Veterans. For Life.



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AMERICAN WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES & BETTY WHITE

When World War II broke out in Europe, women were equally compelled to aid in the war effort, even if they could not serve as directly as men on the front lines. The Women's Voluntary Services (later referred to as the British Women's Voluntary Services) was founded on May 16, 1938, by Stella Isaacs, Marchioness of Reading.

The Lady Reading established the WVS at the request of the British government, specifically the Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare, with the vision of creating a voluntary organization that would mobilize women across the country to support the nation during times of crisis. World War II was on the horizon — and the WVS was soon put to the test. Women of the WVS helped to organize evacuations, provided emergency food supplies, and supported the armed forces. In all, more than one million women volunteered to help.

Two years later, as the war raged on and it seemed ever more likely that the United States would be called to arms, a woman by the name of Alice Throckmorton McLean founded the American Women's Voluntary Services. The AWVS was modeled closely after its British counterpart, working to prepare the United States for the possibility of war. By the time of the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, the AWVS had more than 18,000 members ready to assist in national defense efforts. And soon, 19-year-old Betty White would be among them.

Despite her dreams of becoming an actress, White put her plans on hold to join the AWVS as well. She was assigned to motor transport services and worked as a PX truck driver carrying toothpaste, soap, candy etc., to the various gun emplacement outfits that had been set up in the hills of Hollywood and Santa Monica for the entirety of the war until 1945. At night, White, dressed in her blue uniform, would attend dances and events at recreation halls throughout the San Fernando Valley, chatting, dancing, and playing games with servicemen who were on leave or preparing to deploy.

While Betty White only ever spoke briefly of her experience during World War II, her shoulder bag, now at the National Museum of American History, reveals more information about that period of her life. The bag itself was decorated with 29 different pieces of military insignia spanning all branches, likely belonging to the servicemen White had danced and chatted with before they went overseas. The bag's contents were very much the same. There were more pieces of uniform insignia, including some from allied nations, such as a Free France badge, a Soviet Red Army hat badge, and a British Army officer's rank star. There was also a note listing the names of the service members who had gifted her the insignia.

White also carried items that would have been applicable in the field, such as blank V-mail letters, gasoline ration stamps, food ration tokens, War Ration books with stamps, and other booklets for War Savings and Defense Savings bonds.

After White's death on Dec. 31, 2021, the U.S. Army commemorated the actress and war volunteer in a statement posted to Twitter: "We are saddened by the passing of Betty White. Not only was she an amazing actress, she also served during WWII as a member of the American Women's Voluntary Services. A true legend on and off the screen."



SARAH OSBORNE (1643 TO MAY 29, 1692)— SALEM WITCH TRIALS

Born Sarah Warren, Osborne was born in Watertown, Massachusetts in the Mid 1600s. She later married a prominent man by the name of Robert Prince. Prince was the brother-in-law and neighbor of Captain John Putnam, a member of the notable Putnam family. She moved with her husband to Salem Village in 1662, where the couple had two sons and a daughter: Joseph, James, and Elizabeth. Robert Prince died in 1674. Shortly following Robert Prince's death, Osborne hired an Irish indentured immigrant. Eventually, Alexander Osborne paid off his indenture, and the two married. Despite late Prince's wishes to carry-over his 150-acre farm to his two sons, Osborne upset social norms when she overtook the property for herself and her new husband. Because Prince's will designated that the land would go to his sons once they came of age, Osborne's taking of this property entered her into legal issues with her children. Putnam, as the executor of Prince's will, was also inevitably involved in these legal proceedings.

Sarah became one of the first accused of witchcraft at the beginning of the year 1692, when Betty Parris became ill with an unidentified sickness. Together, she and Abigail Williams claimed that Sarah Osborne, along with Tituba and Sarah Good, had been afflicting them. Elizabeth (Betty) Hubbard also accused Osborne of afflicting her, describing it as her pinching and poking her with knitting needles.

All three women were considered social outcasts, albeit for different reasons. Tituba was an enslaved woman for Samuel Parris and his family; she and Sarah Good were both poor women, whereas Osborne was not. Osborne had not attended church in almost three years due to a long illness suspected to be depression, and was still dealing with legal issues with the Putnam family. The accusations against Osborne likely were the product of powerful suggestions from the Putnam family. The warrant for Sarah Osborne's arrest was written for March 1, 1692. She was to be placed in the Boston jails for the duration of her examinations and trials and was sent to Boston along with Tituba and Sarah Good on March 7, 1692. During her examinations, she claimed she was innocent and denied being involved with evil spirits or hurting the children. She did not confess, nor did she accuse anyone else. This contrasts Tituba's account, who confessed to witchcraft and claimed that Osborne and Sarah Good participated in witchcraft with her. Osborne died in jail on May 29, 1692, believed to have been 49 years of age.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The national observance grew out of the domestic-violence advocacy movement’s efforts to bring communities together to mourn people who have died because of domestic violence, celebrate survivors, and connect people and organizations working to end violence.

Purple is the color most widely associated with Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) in the United States. The purple ribbon has become a unifying symbol of courage, survival, honor, remembrance, and dedication to ending domestic violence. Purple Thursday extends that symbolism into a collective public action: people and organizations wear purple during October to demonstrate support for survivors, honor those lost to domestic violence, and create opportunities for education and connection to resources.

The precise origin of the purple ribbon as a domestic-violence symbol is not definitively established. The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence's Domestic Violence Awareness Project (DVAP) notes that multiple sources have been credited with its origin. Accordingly, professional materials should avoid attributing the purple ribbon to a single person or event unless a specific historical source is identified.

The National History of Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Year	Milestone
1981	A national Day of Unity was first observed in October, bringing together advocates working to end domestic violence.
1987	The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed nationally. The enduring themes of DVAM include mourning those who have died because of domestic violence, celebrating survivors, and connecting people working to end violence.
1989	Congress passed Public Law 101-112, designating October 1989 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
1995	The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence convened national domestic-violence organizations to coordinate awareness and education efforts. This collaboration developed into the Domestic Violence Awareness Project.
Today	DVAM is observed each October by survivor-service organizations, government agencies, health systems, workplaces, schools, communities, and advocates throughout the United States.



Wear Purple Day

October 15th, 2026

Wear purple to raise awareness about domestic and intimate partner violence.

Emily Siegel, MSSA, LCSW
Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program Coordinator
518-626-5151



Contact Your VA Coordinator
Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program
www.socialwork.va.gov/IPV/Coordinators.asp

The National Domestic Violence
HOTLINE
1.800.799.SAFE (7233) - 1.800.787.3224 (ITTY)

MACYS DEPARTMENT STORE CELEBRATES 168 YEARS

Macy's, (October 28, 1858), is a major American department store chain. Its principal outlet, the 11-story department store that occupies a city block at New York City's Herald Square (34th Street and Broadway), was for many years physically the largest single store in the country.

The company grew out of a partnership founded in Lower Manhattan in 1858 by Rowland H. Macy (1822–77), whose several previous attempts at retailing had all failed. Under the close supervision of Margaret Getchell, a Macy cousin and pioneer businesswoman, the store prospered after the American Civil War, relying on extensive advertising and its reputation for value. The company's red star trademark was derived from a tattoo borne by its founder.

In 1887 Nathan and Isidor Straus agreed to a deal to purchase part interest in the company. The acquisition was made official the following year, and by 1896 they had assumed full control. The Strauses moved the store to its present site and began purchasing or building branch stores around the country.

In the mid-1930s, a modern merchandising standard was set when Fred Lazarus Jr. arranged garments in groups of a single size with a range of style, color and price, basing the technique upon observations made in Paris. As well, Lazarus convinced President Franklin D. Roosevelt that it would help American economy to change the Thanksgiving holiday from the last Thursday of November to the fourth Thursday, thus extending the Christmas shopping season. An act of Congress perpetuated the arrangement in 1941. Black Friday became a nationwide sensation and the most profitable day for Federated. (Robert Lazarus Jr. worked at Federated until he died in 2013, the last remaining family member with an official role at the company.

By the late 20th century, Macy's chain of department stores was managed through regional store groups operating in a number of states under several different names. The company was among the first retailers to place stores in suburban shopping centers, and it now owns or has interests in a number of such shopping centers.

After Macy's was purchased in a debt-ridden buyout in 1986, a combination of questionable purchases and an economic recession forced it into bankruptcy in 1992. In 1994 it agreed to a merger with Federated Department Stores, Inc., which included key retailers such as Bloomingdale's. Already the largest department store company in the United States, Federated increased its size again by acquiring The May Department Stores in 2005 and gaining popular store brands such as Lord & Taylor (sold 2006) and Marshall Field's. The company changed its name from Federated Department Stores, Inc., to Macy's, Inc., in 2007.



DOROTHY CONSTANCE STRATTON, US COAST GUARD

Dorothy Constance Stratton (March 24, 1899 – September 17, 2006) is best known as the first director of the SPARS, the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve. She was the daughter of Reverend Richard L. Stratton and Anna (Troxler) Stratton, born in Brookfield, MO. Her brother, Richard C. Stratton, served as captain in the U.S. Army's Medical Reserve Corps during World War II.

In 1933, after receiving her Ph.D. from Columbia, Stratton joined the staff at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and became as its first full-time Dean of Women. She was also an assistant professor of psychology at Purdue and became a full professor in 1940. During her nine years at Purdue, the university's enrollment of women increased from 500 to more than 1,400. A large part of the increase was attributed to her efforts to develop an experimental curriculum that attracted women who preferred to study subjects other than home economics. Stratton created a liberal science curriculum for women in the university's School of Science, as well as a women's employment placement center. In addition, she helped establish a specialized training program that provided intensive training for fraternity and sorority housemothers across the country. Stratton also managed the construction of three new residence halls for women on Purdue's campus in West Lafayette.

In 1942 Stratton took a leave of absence from Purdue University and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Naval Reserve, which was also known as the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service). Stratton was among the members of the first class of the U.S. Naval Training Station at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. After completing her initial training, she briefly served as Assistant to the Commanding Officer of the radio school for WAVES at Madison, Wisconsin.

In November 1942, after Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an amendment to Public Law 773 to create a women's reserve for the U.S. Coast Guard, Stratton became the first woman to be accepted into the new program. She was immediately transferred from the U.S. Navy to the U.S. Coast Guard and was sent to the office of the Commandant of the Coast Guard in Washington, D.C. to organize the Coast Guard Women's Reserve. Stratton was appointed the first director of the Coast Guard Women's Reserve, promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander, and became the first woman commissioned an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard. She rose through the ranks and in February 1944 was promoted to the rank of captain.

Stratton developed the Coast Guard Women's Reserve program and gave it the name of SPARS, an acronym created from the Coast Guard motto, *Semper Paratus*, and its English translation, *Always Ready*. As director of the SPARS, a position that Stratton held until 1946, her primary role was to originate policies for SPARS that related to procurement, training, utilization, and maintenance of its members' morale. She oversaw significant growth in the program. More than 10,000 enlisted women and 1,000 commissioned officers served as SPARS in the remaining years of the war.

Stratton retired from the military in January 1946. Stratton remained proud of the fact the U.S. Coast Guard used the highest percentage of women of any military branch of service during the war. Stratton remained active in the years following her military service. From 1947 to 1950, she worked for the International Monetary Fund as its first director of personnel. In 1950 she became national executive director of the Girl Scouts of the USA, a post she held until her retirement in 1960. She served as a United Nations representative of the International Federation of University Women and chaired the women's committee of the President's Commission on Employment of the Handicapped. Stratton died on September 17, 2006 at the age of 107.

In 2004 U.S. Representative Steve Buyer of Indiana publicly commended Stratton for her leadership and patriotism. At the time of her death two years later, Purdue University president Martin C. Jischke noted that Stratton's roles as Dean of Women at Purdue, director of the SPARS during World War II, and her postwar career at the International Monetary Fund and as the national executive director for the Girl Scouts made her "a trailblazer in helping to create opportunities for women." As its first female officer Stratton was also a pioneer for women in the U.S. Coast Guard. In 2008 the Coast Guard named its third National Security Cutter the USCGC *Stratton* (WMSL-752) in her honor. It is the first National Security Cutter to be named after a woman. In 2016 the National Women's History Project selected Stratton as one of its honorees for National Women's History Month for her public service and government leadership.



ALBANY STRATTON VA

Women Veteran CLOSET



SUPPORTING HER. HONORING HER. ALWAYS.

The Women Veteran Closet provides clothing and essentials to women veterans in need.

Your donations make a difference!

WE ARE IN NEED OF:

CLOTHING

- ♥ T-SHIRTS AND TANK TOPS
IN SOLID COLORS
- ♥ LEGGINGS
- ♥ SWEATPANTS
- ♥ SWEATSHIRTS

ALL SIZES
Small to XXL



ESSENTIALS

- ♥ DIAPERS
SIZES NEWBORN 1, & 2
- ♥ UNSCENTED
WIPES



LOCATION: *9 Delta*



Please contact Jason Goman, Chief CDCE
at Jason.Goman@VA.gov with any questions.

*Thank you for helping us care for
the women who have served.*



HONORING OUR SERVICE



EMPOWERING OUR FUTURE



SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

VA



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

ROTISSERIE CHICKEN & LOADED VEGGIE NACHOS

INGREDIENTS—for the base

- 12 ounces tortilla chops
- 2 cups shredded cheese blend, divided
- 2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
- 1 cup canned pinto beans, drained & rinsed
- 1 cup sweet corn (fresh, canned, or frozen)
- 1/4 cup jarred jalapenos, drained & sliced (can substitute canned green chillis for less spicy option)

INGREDIENTS—for the toppings

- 1-1/2 cups salsa
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 large avocado, diced
- 3-4 radishes, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cilantro, chopped (can substitute Italian parsley or omit entirely, if preferred)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Line a large sheet pan with foil or parchment paper.
2. Spread tortilla chips evenly across the sheet pan and sprinkle about half of the cheese over the chips.
3. Distribute the shredded chicken, pinto beans, corn, & jalapeno slices (or green chillis) evenly. Top with remaining cheese.
4. Bake until the cheese is fully melted and the chicken is heated, approximately 7-8 minutes.
5. Once removed, scatter the fresh toppings evenly—salsa, sour cream, avocados, radish slices, and cilantro (or Italian parsley if opted). Serve hot.

NUTRITIONAL FACTS

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings	
Serving size	N/A
Amount per serving	
Calories	740
% daily value*	
Total Fat 40g	62%
Saturated Fat 13g	83%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 125mg	42%
Sodium 1237mg	54%
Total Carbohydrate 61g	20%
Dietary Fiber 10g	39%
Total Sugars 5g	
Protein 40g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	2%
Calcium 384mg	38%
Iron 2mg	12%
Potassium 686mg	20%

Prep Time: 10 mins Cook Time: 10 mins Servings: 6