



Governor Northam Proclaims March 14-20 Virginia Women Veterans Week

Continuing a tradition he began when he took office in 2018, Governor Northam has proclaimed March 14-20 to be **Virginia Women Veterans Week** to honor the service and sacrifice of women veterans across the Commonwealth. Virginia has the highest percentage of women veterans per population of any state in the nation, with many of our DJJ employees among them. Women veterans are the fastest-growing segment of Virginia's total veteran population.

"I personally served on active duty with many women service members who consistently demonstrated tremendous skill, leadership, and unquestioned commitment," said Governor Northam in issuing the proclamation. "Our Administration will continue working to connect women veterans with the support and resources they need to return to the civilian world as leaders in business, government, education, medicine, and beyond. As a fellow veteran, I remain focused on ensuring women veterans across the Commonwealth are equally valued and served."



For all our women who have served or continue to serve in our military, all of us at DJJ give you our heartfelt thanks for your determination, bravery and sacrifice. It is an honor to work with you. Below is the story of one of our colleagues, Northern Regional Program Manager Dee Kirk.

Click [HERE](#) to see Governor Northam's full proclamation.

– Valerie Boykin, Director
Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice



Dee Kirk

How It Started

Of my siblings it was my sister, who is 10 years older than I am, who joined the US Army first, then my brother, and then finally came my turn. When my sister told our extended family that she would be joining the Army, at an annual Christmas party of all events, I distinctly remember the very negative response from the oldest of our uncles. They made several not-so-nice comments about women in the military. Undeterred, my sister joined anyway!

I was confused by the responses of the older men, but their negativity only fueled my rebellious spirit. I wanted to do everything a girl was not supposed to do. The climate was not ideal, but "the times" had changed a little when I entered service. There were still many conversations to be had and controversies to be addressed, but we women had established a real presence in the military.

My rebellious spirit and "the times" have caused me to again become outspoken and has taken me to Washington, D.C. on multiple occasions to march in the struggle for civil rights for all. I believe that as women we have to continue to stand for equal rights for all. We should remember that in the not-so-distant past women had few, if any, rights and still face unequal treatment in many areas.

How It's Going

Our work in the DJJ, especially over the last seven years, has been about ensuring the agency is carrying out its mission both fairly and with an eye toward equity. While we still have work to do, we have also come a long way. If my military experience taught me anything, it taught me to be dedicated and confident while doing the best I can at all tasks. I carry this message with me in all aspects of my life, and I hope it lends itself well to my work here at DJJ!