



**Department of
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News Release

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Duckworth Takes Charge of VA's Public Affairs and Outreach Programs

WASHINGTON – Tammy Duckworth returned Wednesday to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, a key site in her long recovery from wounds suffered in Iraq, to take the oath of office as the chief spokesperson for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“I am so honored to serve the Obama administration by helping to care for our Veterans,” Assistant Secretary Duckworth said. “They are our nation’s greatest treasure and deserve the best care available. I fully support Secretary Shinseki as we work to provide that care.”

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki presided over the swearing in ceremony as Duckworth, a major in the Illinois National Guard, became VA’s assistant secretary for public and intergovernmental affairs. Shinseki stated that “Tammy has traveled a unique path to be here today, a journey far from over with many, many contributions yet to be made.”

As assistant secretary, Duckworth will direct VA’s public affairs programs and its intergovernmental efforts. She also will oversee programs for homeless Veterans and consumer affairs.

Duckworth was an Army helicopter pilot flying combat missions in Iraq in 2004 when she suffered grave injuries when her helicopter was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade, and she lost both legs and partial use of one arm. She spent 13 months at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Although Walter Reed is not part of the VA’s extensive network of medical facilities, Duckworth chose the Army site for her swearing in to recognize the facility’s role in her recovery and to encourage other disabled service members and Veterans.

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“Walter Reed is where I first saw how effective the DoD-VA partnership in caring for our Veterans can be,” she said. “My VA coordinator had an office at Walter Reed, and I saw her on a weekly basis even before I was discharged to VA care.”

Duckworth comes to VA from Illinois state government, where she had been director of the state Veterans office in Illinois since 2006.

Her previous managerial experience includes coordinating the Center for Nursing Research at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, and managing clubs and districts for Rotary International’s Asia-Pacific region from 2002 to 2003.

She earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Hawaii and a master’s degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Born in Thailand, she is the daughter of a U.S. Marine who fought in Vietnam. She is married to Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran and National Guard officer, Major Bryan Bowsbey.

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