

# Dept. of Veterans Affairs: Announces 2022 Woman Veteran of the Year

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has awarded the 2022 Woman Veteran of the Year to Natalie Isensee, a former Marine Corps Captain and long-time veteran advocate. Isensee was formally presented the award by Governor Tony Evers and WDVA Secretary Mary Kolar at a Veterans Day reception at the Executive Residence in Madison.

“It is an honor and a privilege to recognize outstanding Wisconsin women veterans who live their lives in the service of others,” said Secretary Kolar. “I was thrilled to present this award to Natalie Isensee, a woman who has been a true leader and advocate in the veteran community. Natalie’s commitment to service, even after wearing the uniform, serves as a shining example to civilians and service members alike.”

Created in 2009, the [WDVA’s Woman Veteran of the Year Award](#) recognizes women veterans in Wisconsin who have compiled records of exemplary service as military service members, veterans, and outstanding members of their communities.

Isensee, a New Berlin native, served as an officer in the Marine Corps from 2000 to 2005, including service in Kuwait and Iraq. Achieving the rank of Captain, Isensee followed her Marine Corps service by establishing herself as a stalwart advocate for military veterans and their families.

Putting her passion and veteran expertise to task, Isensee is currently the Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at WPS Health Solutions, leading a team of DEI professionals as they work to instill behaviors, systems, and inclusivity-awareness into the company’s culture. Serving military veterans and their family members is a key aspect of their DEI strategy, as WPS seeks to be an employer of choice and a

committed healthcare partner for military service members, Veterans, their families, and communities.

Through her current and past civilian positions, Isensee has been instrumental in developing and growing the influence of employee resource groups for veterans resulting in increased proactive and tangible corporate and middle management support for veterans and employees serving in the military. As the former Vice-President of the WPS Veterans Employee Resource Group, she built sustaining connections for veterans and service members in the workplace.

Isensee's leadership and volunteer initiatives in support of veterans and families are extraordinary and extend far beyond the workplace. Earlier this year, Isensee was appointed to [Governor Evers' Blue Ribbon Commission on Veterans Opportunity](#), co-chaired by Secretary Kolar. Isensee was instrumental in developing a comprehensive plan to ensure Wisconsin continues to provide a post-military environment where veterans and their families may thrive.

As a Founding Member, Executive Committee Member (Secretary), and continuing active Board member of the Veterans Community Action Network of South-Central Wisconsin (VETSCAN) Board of Directors, Isensee has been the organization's linchpin for connecting that VA-recognized Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) to Veteran-serving organizations in South-Central Wisconsin, including but not limited to the Madison VA Hospital (VAH), CVSOs, VSOs, and UW-Madison, Edgewood College, and Madison Technical College.

As the VETSCAN's Secretary, Natalie has been instrumental in effective and timely communications and collaboration with Veterans and families, the Madison VAH, WDVA, and non-VA community leaders and stakeholders.

Currently a Madison resident, Isensee is a leader in the Madison Chapter of Team Red, White, and Blue, serves as a mentor for veterans experiencing mental health crises, and is a member of the Dane County Veterans Service Commission. Her past volunteer service also includes donating her time to interview fellow veterans for the [Wisconsin Veterans Museum Oral History Project](#).

Visit the [WDVA Flickr album](#) to see photographs from the presentation ceremony.