

# 2011

## Women Veteran of the Year



Trista Matascastillo

Trista has honorably served her country throughout her whole life. Her military service stretched across three branches, from enlisted to commissioned officer, and she served for approximately 18 years.

Her abilities in addressing the issues that veterans face have earned her the invitation to be heard at offices and round tables of numerous local, state, and national legislators. Trista convinced her own Minnesota House Representative to join the military to get a sense of the culture and more gainfully represent veterans; he is now commissioned in the Minnesota Army National Guard.

She is working with legislators on dedicating a special license plate to commemorate the service of women veterans. She has also been working on behalf of a bill that will assist veterans with criminal convictions that allow them to continue to serve by receiving a certificate of presumptive rehabilitation if they were to receive an honorable discharge after their conviction in order to reduce the veteran unemployment rate in Minnesota.

She brought attention to usually unspoken women veteran's topics by encouraging the VA Medical Center to pay attention to the way they make access to women veterans' service by launching an eight week Sunday paper campaign. She serves as a consumer committee member at the VA Medical Center.

Trista has directly worked towards encouraging other Women Veterans to feel empowered to seek out their benefits as well as advocate on their own behalf through the Women Veterans Initiative and Working Group.