

SSLA to Host Women's Symposium Focused on Women Serving in Humanitarian Missions

From Chief of Naval Personnel - Diversity Directorate Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Sea Services Leadership Association (SSLA) will host the 23rd annual Women's Symposium at the Washington Hilton in Washington June 2-3.

Focusing on women serving in disaster-affected areas, the two-day seminar will feature noted speakers including Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead, Rear Adm. (ret) Marsha Evans, former president of the Red Cross; Dr. Susan Blumenthal, former deputy assistant Secretary of Health for Women's Health; and best-selling author and motivational speaker, Pegine Eschevarria.

"This experience was absolutely phenomenal, just to hear from these senior women who started at the bottom and aspired to a higher rank, and listening to how they dealt with discrimination and now they are a hero for every junior Sailor, Coast Guardsmen and Marine," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Dana Williams Cochran, assigned to Naval Hospital Jacksonville, who attended last year's SSLA symposium.

The theme this year, "Leading From the Front and Into the Future," will offer attendees opportunities to gain leadership skills while highlighting achievements women leaders are making globally on several campaign fronts.

Speaker panels will include female leaders who have recently deployed on several of the military's disaster relief missions, as well as those who have been at the forefront of combat operations. Many of these women served in campaigns that countered terrorism and brought peace, prosperity and economic development to conflict-affected zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

The symposium will also feature service-specific breakout sessions discussing issues that are unique to particular career designators, and will focus on such topics as balancing family with career, women's health issues, and the Navy's emerging policies on women.

Additionally, each service will have the opportunity to recognize women making substantial contributions with an award presentation, dedicated to honoring women who have succeeded in demanding positions.

Established in 1978, SSLA is the only nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated to providing professional development through networking, education and mentorship for women in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Last year, more than 800 people attended the symposium, making it the largest gathering of women in uniform, spotlighting the achievements of fellow women in the sea services.

Starting this year, attendees will now have the opportunity to use the social media website Twitter. A hashmark of #SSLA10 will be established in the coming weeks to discuss speakers of interest, or other highlights during the symposium.

"This is such an exciting time for women in the sea services and we are very fortunate that we have such wide interest in these events; it really allows women to come together, share best practices and build life-long relationships with one another," said SSLA

President Stephanie Miller.

Miller also said the symposium is not intended just for women.

"We also encourage our male colleagues to attend the conference," she said. "It really gives them a great perspective into the military policies affecting women who work for them, as well as allowing the men in uniform to network with some of the most accomplished women in the military today."

Those interested in attending can visit <http://www.sealeader.org/> to register.

For more news from Chief of Naval Personnel - Diversity Directorate, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnp-diversity/.