Female veterans are honored on the slopes

The Veterans Administration, in partnership with New England Healing Sports Association and Mount Sunapee, held the 7th annual Women Veterans Ski Appreciation Day for Women Veterans of all ages and abilities on March 1.

Women veterans who receive their health care across VA New England Healthcare Systems were invited to be appreciated on the slopes of Mount Sunapee.

Staff from NEHSA, Mount Sunapee, and VA medical centers were on hand to support special needs at the event, attended by 32 women veterans.

“Opportunity like this can be a life changer,” said Pauline Nadeau, chief master sergeant, U.S. Air Force. “I don’t think you can quantify how significant an experience like this is.”

Nadeau gets her care at Manchester VA and hopes to see many other women join in the fun next year.

Under sunny skies and on snow covered trails the ladies who have bravely served this country enjoyed camaraderie, shared laughs and gave one another a hand.

Lift attendants, ski patrol, guests and volunteers showed their appreciation by wearing camouflage ribbons.

For some, skiing was a first-time experience, others were well-versed and some enjoyed the day with the support of adaptive equipment and helping hands.

Veteran participants were paired with NEHSA veteran volunteers in some cases.

Vet Brenda Cabral, U.S. Air Force, escorted Nadeau with the support of Elizabeth Mossi, a physical therapist with Spinal Cord Injury Clinic, Boston Healthcare System.

“After having participated in this program for 12 years, I can tell you it makes a tremendous difference in the wellness of the veterans we care for,” said Maura Nee, nurse practitioner in the Spinal Cord Clinic, Boston VA Healthcare System. “What I have experienced is that veterans will make healthier choices just to make sure they will be able to participate from year to year. These experiences will also often lead to making better lifestyle choices.”