



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Homeless Veterans Outreach  
Operation WEBS Blog Post

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**Operation WEBS Founder Committed to Helping Homeless Women Veterans Through Tiny Homes**

Sandy Blair is a Veteran of the U.S. Air Force, where she proudly served her country for 12 years. Following her service, she found herself at risk of becoming homeless. That experience motivated Blair to dedicate her life to helping women Veterans struggling with the transition to civilian life.

Enter [Operation WEBS](#) — Women Empowered Build Strong. The idea for Operation WEBS was born several years ago, but it was not until 2018 that Blair officially founded the organization. The mission of Operation WEBS is to build tiny homes and create a farming village for women Veterans who are displaced or homeless.

Upon her own return to civilian life in 2005, Blair encountered challenges finding stable, long-term employment. She did not work for over a year and consequently lost her home. Blair's best friend allowed her and her two children to live with her in her Florida home. But Blair remembers feeling like a burden to her friend because of her need to rely on someone else for her family's well-being.

When her son graduated from high school, Blair decided to move her family to Santa Maria, California, to live with her sister. Her children persuaded her to follow her dream of becoming a realtor. She obtained her real estate license and used a portion of her sales commissions to launch Operation WEBS.

The thought of her sister Veterans purchasing homes and losing them because they couldn't find work sparked the idea of creating sustainable tiny homes for them. Tiny homes are affordable, which makes it easier for Veterans to adapt financially to unanticipated life changes, such as a job loss or job relocation. Tiny homes can also be hauled if the Veteran needs to escape a natural disaster, such as a wildfire or mudslide.

The idea of building tiny homes led Blair to a larger vision of buying property and creating a village for women Veterans where they could provide mutual support, learn to be self-sufficient, and regain their footing in the civilian world.



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“I want women to know that they are not alone,” says Blair. “I want the village to be a web, a network of different resources where we connect our sisters so that they don’t fall into that place of unfamiliar territory where they don’t know what to do without the military.”

In 2016, Blair and her sister, an Army Veteran of the second Gulf War, pooled their resources and purchased 17 acres of land. On April 6, 2019, construction began on their first tiny home with the help of generous volunteers from Vandenberg Air Force Base. The materials for the 320-square-foot tiny home, including the house frame, doors, and windows, were provided to Blair with the stipulation that she pay for them once Operation WEBS secures funding streams.

While waiting for approval from Santa Barbara County to build out the tiny home village, Blair wanted to make an immediate impact on the women Veterans in her community. So she transformed her sister’s four-bedroom home in Orcutt, California, into a stability home where female Veterans can stay until they get back on their feet. One by one, Veterans are moving in; just recently, Blair took in a Veteran who had been living in her car. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned at the stability home for June 13.

Blair credits a lot of the stability home’s success to support from the [New Beginnings Supportive Services for Veteran Families \(SSVF\) program](#) in Santa Barbara County. SSVF, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, provides case management and supportive services to help Veterans and their families who are either in danger of losing their housing or currently experiencing homelessness. Victor Virgen, program coordinator at SSVF, first contacted Blair when he learned of her stability home in Orcutt. He has since been her advocate in finding women Veterans to move into the home and in identifying additional resources Blair could provide to Veterans in the planned village.

Looking ahead, Blair is hosting fundraising events so she can continue to build homes for the village and make an impact on Veterans in her community. Upcoming events include the [Housing for Homeless Women Veterans 5K Run/Walk](#) at the Cambria Estate Winery in Santa Maria on June 15, the Second Annual Tiny House Gala on Sept. 7 at the Santa Maria Country Club, and a benefit concert on Sept. 28 at Presqu’ile Winery in Santa Maria.

“Though I do realize not every female Veteran will be interested in being a part of our village community, for those who do find us and are interested in building and rebuilding together, the welcome mat is lying at the threshold saying, ‘Welcome Home Women Veterans!’”

### More Information

- Visit VA’s Homeless Veterans [website](#) or send an email to [VA’s Homeless Veterans Outreach team](#).
- Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless can call or visit their [local VA medical center](#), where VA staff are ready to assist. Veterans and their families can also access VA services by calling **1-877-4AID-VET** (1-877-424-3838).