

Women veterans have much to offer

by Jack Shields

for the *Tundra Times*

Women, today is your turn. I would like to digress from reporting our progress with the Veterans Affairs projects and turn the spotlight on one of our own Alaskan veterans. If you don't already know her, please let me introduce Ann Franklin.

She is, however, better known to the members of the American Legion as the Western District commander, Department of Alaska. She was also the first women commander of Post No. 11, Fairbanks, and served two consecutive terms.

Franklin has recently been nominated as a candidate for membership to the Veterans Administration's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans. This committee was established in 1983 and has made significant recommendations relative to the VA's delivery of benefits and health care services to women veterans.

Those women veterans who become

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members of this committee bring with them a background of familiarity with the needs of women veterans with respect to health care, rehabilitation, compensation, outreach and other VA benefit programs. Franklin's background and experience certainly encompass those concerns, and as a 33-year resident of Alaska she has gained a keen insight into the problems specific to women veterans, and men, who live in the Interior and remote rural areas.

She believes that the lack of VA facilities and the isolation and remoteness of the area primarily af-

fect the WWII and Korean era women veterans, while employment problems and transportation create difficulties for the Vietnam veteran, and the absence of veterans' counseling services for women affects all women veterans.

Franklin was born in Tennessee, went to high school in Wyoming, enlisted in the Navy in 1951, and served four years of active duty during the Korean Conflict. She came to Alaska following her release from the Navy and joined the American Legion and worked her way into the position she holds today.

In her role as Western District commander she has committed herself to

visiting each Legion Post in her Division, which includes the width of Alaska, from Cordova north to Nome.

Franklin has the unique distinction of having *four* generations of her family *presently* belonging to American Legion Post No. 11 in some capacity. Her son and brother are members, her mother belongs to the Auxiliary, and her grandson is a Sons of the American Legion.

Congratulations to each and every one of this family of dedicated persons and a special congratulations to you, Ann, for your special nomination to an important national committee, and for your dedication to your fellow veterans, women and men alike.
