

Veterans

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Granite State Warriors Awards recipient Jo Moncher, center, poses with several workers from Nashua-based BAE Systems, which also received a Warriors award on Saturday. (Jason Schreiber/Union Leader Correspondent)

Granite State Warriors Awards given to BAE, Air Force veteran

By JASON SCHREIBER
Sunday News Correspondent

GREENLAND - Nashua-based BAE Systems and Concord Air Force veteran Jo Moncher, the first bureau chief for community-based military programs at the state Department of Health and Human Services, were recognized Saturday for their work to support the military and New Hampshire veterans.

Two Granite State Warriors Awards were presented by the New Hampshire chapter of the Military Officers Association of America during a ceremony at Portsmouth Country Club.

The awards are given annually to a New Hampshire resident or New Hampshire organization making a significant contribution to the U.S. military.

BAE Systems was honored for its laser-guided rocket known as the Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System. Moncher received an award for her work at the state level.

"The responsibility and honor of serving our military belongs to all of us," Moncher told the more than 100 members of the MOAA in attendance.

This is the fourth year the group has presented awards, which honor those making contributions to enhance the nation's war-fighting capabilities and improve the health, morale, welfare and recognition of military personnel and their families.

"What we haven't paid a lot of attention to and what we really want to bring focus on is that sacrifice of not only the soldier, sailor, airman and Marine, but their families. How do we help them? How do we outreach to them? Part of this award is to identify those people, places and industries that help veterans," said Chad Chadwick, president of the New Hampshire chapter.

Moncher's bureau chief position was created in 2008 and is the first of its kind in the country to help facilitate and develop partnerships between military and civilian health care providers.

In her role at DHHS, Moncher works with the Veterans Administration, vet centers, National Guard and other military and civilian provider agencies. She played a key role in establishing military and civilian partnership communities that focus on homelessness, suicide prevention and substance abuse, among other problems.

"In our state, we recognize that the responsibility in serving our military belongs to all of us. It cannot be a responsibility that is only attached to the VA, the vet center, the National Guard, and our veteran service organizations. The climate is changing. More and more individuals and organizations are recognizing the role that civilian health care agencies can play," she said.

Moncher stressed the need for all health care providers to better understand the military experience.

"We're on a mission to better educate out civilian community-based providers," said Moncher, who outlined several initiatives aimed at improving military culture education.

Congressman Frank Guinta, R-N.H., also stopped by to recognize the award recipients.

Meanwhile, BAE Systems is looking forward to continued success with the system it developed and produced that turns a standard unguided 2.75-inch rocket into a precision laser-guided munition. The rocket is designed to give the military a low-cost surgical strike capability.

"You can transform unguided inventories into precision-guided weapons, which is especially important these days where precision guidance, low collateral damage, low cost is of great importance," said David Harrold, product line director for precision guidance solutions.

The rockets have been used in combat by the Navy and Marine Corps since 2012, mainly on Marine helicopters.

"It's had tremendous success in the field. It's really been called a weapon of choice by the Marine Corps," Harrold said.

BAE has built more than 4,000 of the rockets and last year received an additional \$45 million contract for the system.

Harrold said BAE is now working with the Army to bring the precision-guided rocket to its fleets of combat helicopters, which is expected to happen this year. The Air Force is also interested.

"It really is a good investment. It's a third of the weight and a third of the cost of a lot of the other munitions that are being used today. That's really important because in today's fight an unprecedented number of precision munitions are being utilized and they're being utilized against the kinds of targets that may be more suitable for something like an (Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System)," he said.