



TOP LINKS

Subscribe

- Twitter
- AFPS Blogs
- Facebook
- Flickr
- RSS
- Podcasts
- Widgets
- E-Mail

Secretary of Defense

- Speeches
- Travels
- Messages
- Biography
- Other Top Leaders

Press

- Today in DoD
- News Releases
- Press Advisories
- Transcripts
- Audio Clips

Photos

- Imagery Archive
- Highlights
- Photo Essays
- Week in Photos

DoD Info

- Post 9/11 GI Bill Transferability
- Community Relations
- Stars & Stripes
- Recovery Act
- Site Map

News

American Forces Press Service

SHARE

NEWS ARTICLE

E-MAIL A COPY | PRINTER FRIENDLY | LATEST NEWS

First Lady Joins Navy Veteran on 'Extreme Makeover'

By Elaine Sanchez
American Forces Press Service

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C., July 22, 2011 – With First Lady Michelle Obama at her side and hundreds of volunteers and well-wishers cheering behind her, Navy veteran Barbara Marshall and her family faced a giant bus emblazoned with "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" parked right in front of their home here yesterday.



First Lady Michelle Obama surprises Navy veteran Barbara Marshall on the set of the ABC reality series "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" in Fayetteville, N.C., July 21, 2011. The first lady appeared on the show to promote her "Joining Forces" military support campaign and to pay tribute to Marshall, who has dedicated her time and resources to helping homeless female veterans. DOD photo by Elaine Sanchez (Click photo for screen-resolution image); high-resolution image available.

"Move that bus! Move that bus!" the crowd chanted with increasing fervor, momentarily forgetting the scorching heat.

The bus pulled off, and Marshall's jaw dropped as she caught her first glimpse of the new Jubilee House, built courtesy of the ABC reality show. Tears flowed as she took in the two-story, 5,000-square-foot house that would serve as a home not only for her family, but also for the countless homeless female veterans she's dedicated her life to helping.

The first lady and the show's star designer, Ty Pennington, leaned in close to catch Marshall's first impression of the new house, but her words were lost among the crowd's cheers.

A highlight of the experience, the first lady said later, was "watching the faces of the families as they saw their beautiful new home for the first time."

After 15 years of Navy service and a growing passion for helping fellow veterans, Marshall used her own resources to establish the Steps-N-Stages Jubilee House while still maintaining a separate residence for her own family. The center offers shelter, support and services such as mentoring and life coaching to homeless female veterans. At any given time, Marshall housed up to three veterans and their families in the small, 1,500-square-foot house.

Once "Extreme Makeover" producers caught wind of Marshall's dedication, they knew it was time she had the additional space and resources she needed to carry out her personal mission.

"Barbara Marshall is my personal hero," said Diane Korman, an "Extreme Makeover" producer. "She saw there was a problem with homeless female veterans, and wanted to do something about it to help women get back on their feet."

Fresh off travels to promote her "Joining Forces" military support campaign, Obama said she felt compelled to appear on the reality show after hearing of Marshall's selfless service to others. Marshall is a powerful example of how veterans are continuing to serve even when they're no longer in uniform, she told American Forces Press Service yesterday.

"The fact that this woman has opened her home -- which she didn't have much -- to other women who are struggling, is just a powerful statement of the courage and the strength that our veterans show," she said.

This episode, the first lady said, is a perfect way to highlight a military family's efforts "and also give them something back, something more than they could have imagined, because they deserve it."

"Extreme Makeover" designer Sabrina Soto called Marshall an "angel from heaven" for her dedication to homeless veterans.

"It's not just about the women living here, it's about all the women veterans who will be helped in the future because of this build," she said. "The fact that we're going to give her double the space and more resources is amazing."

The new Jubilee House is a sprawling log-cabin style home with a front porch and second-story deck. Soto pointed out a few of the home's interior features, including a resource center with multiple computers and a dining hall. "It will help [veterans and their families] to be more comfortable in the space and to feel grounded, and I think that's what a lot of these ladies are missing," she said.

TOP FEATURES



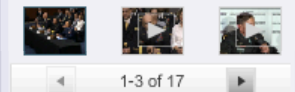
THE PENTAGON CHANNEL



0:00

Top News

Confirmation hearings were held today on Capitol Hill for three of the military's top leaders.



1-3 of 17

WWW.PENTAGONCHANNEL.MIL

DEFENSE IMAGERY

PHOTO ESSAYS



Soldiers Conduct Search Mission in Khost Province

ARCHIVE

- Week In Photos
- Military Photographers

The other heroes of this build, Korman noted, are the volunteers. More than 3,000 military and civilian volunteers from the local community pitched in around the clock to build the house in a week. After the Marshall family – and several female veterans and their families she supported – were whisked away for a dream vacation at Disney World, volunteers braved the relentless heat, which topped out at over 100 degrees, to sweep, shovel, move rocks and carry out countless other tasks as instructed.

A day earlier, volunteer Cheryl Monette was out front shoveling, covered in dirt and sweat. She had worked two or three shifts a day since the build started and stayed on until the end.

"It's a wonderful positive to help the military," she said. "My husband just retired after 26 years, so for me to be able to give back as a military spouse is awesome."

Equally soaked fellow volunteer Sharon Davis said she'd done everything from passing out water to driving "gators" to the dumpsters. "It's amazing just to know what little part we play," she said. "There's nothing better than to give to someone who needs it."

It's always a race to the finish, said Chip Smith, president and owner of Blue Ridge Cabins, the builder of the home. But despite the hard work, Smith added, he knew his company had to get involved as soon as he heard Marshall's story.

"She came back and identified a need, used her own money, didn't ask for anything from anybody, and started making a difference in the lives of a lot of homeless female veterans," he said. "Just to see someone take that initiative is inspirational for all of us. We knew we had to do something to help."

Seemingly overnight, the house transformed from a dirt and gravel-filled expanse crawling with hundreds of volunteers to a spotless red-shingled home, complete with glossy white rocking chairs swaying on the sprawling front porch and brightly colored flowers sprouting across the lawn.

Many of the volunteers who had earlier been working on the home turned out for the "reveal," their blue "Extreme Makeover" shirts standing out in the crowd. Marshall's neighbors crowded onto shaded porches to see their friend gain a new home and to catch a glimpse of the first lady.

Marshall's next-door neighbor, Caroline Chambers, could have stayed at a hotel, courtesy of the show, but opted to stay in her home and watch the action. A VIP tent was parked on her front lawn and her grass was trampled into the dirt, but she didn't mind any of it, she said.

"I didn't want to miss it," she said. Earlier in the week, Chambers tried to gauge what her neighbor's reaction would be upon seeing the house. "She may faint," she said. "I almost did when I saw the house."

Another well-wisher, Valeria Hasan, also turned out to watch construction. The house is a "wonderful blessing," she said, for the family and for homeless veterans.

"You wouldn't believe there are really homeless vets," she said. "They served in the war, protected us, and ended up homeless. You never know what situation you're going to end up in."

Families like the Marshalls exist all over the country, the first lady noted, and "it's our responsibility to step up and make sure they get the support they need."

Not everyone can build a home in a week, she said, but everyone can do something.

"Home Edition stepped up," she said, "by taking care of these families and doing it in a huge, magnificent way."

The episode featuring the Marshall family is slated to air on ABC on Oct. 21.

Related Articles:

[First Lady, Soldiers Welcome Home Makeover](#)



First Lady Michelle Obama greets Navy veteran Barbara Marshall on the set of the ABC reality series "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" in Fayetteville, N.C., July 21, 2011. Obama appeared on the show to thank Marshall for her work to support homeless female veterans. DOD photo by Elaine Sanchez

[Download screen-resolution](#)

[Download high-resolution](#)



Designer Ty Pennington asks Barbara Marshall if she's ready to enter her new, 5,000-square-foot home July 21, 2011. The ABC reality series "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" selected Marshall to receive a new, custom-built home after hearing of her efforts to help homeless female veterans. DOD photo by Elaine Sanchez

[Download screen-resolution](#)

[Download high-resolution](#)



Barbara Marshall and her family received a new, 5,000-square-foot home July 21, 2011, courtesy of the ABC reality series "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." The house in Fayetteville, N.C., will enable Marshall to continue her mission of housing and supporting homeless female veterans. DOD photo by Elaine Sanchez

[Download screen-resolution](#)

[Download high-resolution](#)