



**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE**  
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

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1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Voices of Veterans: Lieutenant Laura Koerner Shares Her Story of Service with the U.S. Navy**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Kimberly Hubbard**  
**(512) 936-9582**  
**[media@glo.texas.gov](mailto:media@glo.texas.gov)**

AUSTIN — Today, Texas Land Commissioner and Veterans Land Board (VLB) Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham, M.D., is proud to introduce the next installment of the series highlighting the VLB's Voices of Veterans oral history program. This week, we highlight the service of Lieutenant Laura Koerner who served in the U.S. Navy.

At only 17, and having never been to the ocean, Koerner attended the United States Naval Academy and was at the top of her class throughout her time in school. She received a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering and went on to earn a Master of Science in Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before joining a combat fleet.



# VOICES OF VETERANS

|                                       |                    |   |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| name<br><b>Koerner, Laura</b>         |                    |   |
| military branch<br><b>Navy</b>        | rank<br><b>LT.</b> | conflict<br><b>GWOT</b>   |
| date interviewed<br><b>06/19/2024</b> |                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> interview available on <a href="http://voicesofveterans.org">voicesofveterans.org</a> |

Laura Koerner, at the age of 17, attended the United States Naval Academy and received a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering. She served in the U.S. Navy as a Surface Warfare Nuclear Officer onboard the USS Mahan and the USS Enterprise. Mrs. Koerner also received a Master of Science in Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She left the Navy in 2003 and became an engineering consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton for fifteen years. She is now with USAA in project management. Mrs. Koerner continues serving Veterans and her community as Texas Veterans Commission Chairwoman, a Blue & Gold Officer with the U.S. Naval Academy admissions department, a Texas Veterans Cemetery Committee member, and councilwoman for the City of Fair Oaks Ranch.



When laws were changed to allow women to serve in combat roles in 1993, Koerner was one of the first women to serve on destroyers and aircraft carriers. She served as a Surface Warfare Nuclear Officer onboard the USS Mahan and the USS Enterprise.

Koerner spoke about how her fellow members of the U.S. Navy treated her with respect, which was not always true of sailors on foreign merchant ships who were unaccustomed to speaking to or even seeing women at sea. Though she could usually be found cloistered in the belly of the ship as an engineer, Koerner got all the character-

building the U.S. Navy has to offer. She remarked that having a large amount of responsibility at a young age prepared her to be a leader in any situation.



## VOICES OF VETERANS

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

When asked about her favorite part of military service, Koerner spoke about comradery, patriotism, and trust.

"I always felt like I was doing something of purpose and defending our country. There's no higher purpose I could think of...everyone was on board with that, and everyone

wanted to do their best... Having the structure that we had, you had just trust in everyone around you. Their lives are in your hands... everyone was part of that mission. Everyone had their one part... all of us had to do our part in there to make everything work."



## VOICES OF VETERANS

VLB CHAIRWOMAN, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

After leaving the service in 2003, Koerner married her husband, who was also in the U.S. Navy, and they have two daughters. She continues to give back to Veterans

and her community as the Chairwoman of the Texas Veterans Commission, a Blue & Gold Officer with the U.S. Naval Academy admissions department, a Texas Veterans Cemetery Committee member, and a councilwoman for the City of Fair Oaks Ranch.

To listen to Lt. Laura Koerner tell her story, click the button below.

[Lt. Laura Koerner's Story](#)

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Veterans can email [VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov](mailto:VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov) to tell their stories. Please note that the Veteran must be a resident of Texas at the time of their interview.

Voices of Veterans is a state agency's first Veteran oral history program. It records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The VLB records interviews with veterans over the phone or in person. Their interviews are then permanently archived in the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

Veterans' interviews are also available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public. These precious records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans' sacrifices.

To listen to the over 500 archived stories of Veterans documented through the GLO's Voices of Veterans oral history program, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans](#)