

# Meet Tammy Duckworth



## Iraq War Veteran

Tammy was living in DeKalb, IL pursuing a Ph.D at Northern Illinois University and working at Rotary International when her Peoria-based National Guard unit was mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom. On November 12, 2004, the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter that she was co-piloting was hit by a rocket propelled grenade,



costing Tammy both of her legs and partial use of her right arm. As a result of her injuries, Tammy received the Purple Heart.



While recovering at Walter Reed, where for awhile she was the highest ranking officer recovering from amputation, Tammy decided continuing her service on behalf of Veterans would be her life's work. She went on to serve as the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs in Springfield,

where she implemented a first-in-the-nation program screening returning troops for PTSD and brain injury, and established a 24-hour crisis line for Vets needing mental health counseling. In addition she created a tax credit for companies that hire Veterans. Meanwhile, she declined a military medical retirement and continued to drill with the Illinois Army National Guard, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

*"I got a second chance at life. I view my time now as a bonus, and that has allowed me speak up without fear and stand up for what I believe in — what we all believe in."*

*“Tammy’s life story of service could not be more inspiring. She has the proven qualities of leadership and the perseverance required to get our country back on track”*

- U.S. Senator Dick Durbin

*Tammy Duckworth was a member of the Army National Guard. Use of her military rank, job titles, and photographs in uniform does not imply endorsement by the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense.*

### **Department of Veterans Affairs**

In 2009, President Obama nominated Tammy to be an Assistant Secretary at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. There, she headed the department’s effort to fight Veteran homelessness and was a leader in initiatives for female Veterans. She also implemented innovative efforts such as creating the Office of Social Media and Online Communications and the Office for Tribal Government Relations.

### **U.S. Representative**

Tammy was elected to Congress in 2012 after beating an incumbent Republican in one of that year’s most hard-fought and expensive races. While her compelling personal story has garnered significant media attention, Tammy is known as a nuts-and-bolts legislator who works across the aisle to get things done for Illinois families, Veterans and working moms.

Leading by example, Tammy cut her own Congressional pay by \$10,000 and cut over \$100,000 from her office budget when Congress failed to pass a budget.

Within her first term, the language in Tammy’s Troop Talent Act legislation passed and helps Veterans get jobs by certifying the work they performed in the military. Tammy also led the fight to keep predatory lenders from preying on military families, inspiring five Republicans on the



House Armed Services Committee to join her in killing efforts to delay these protections. As a new mother who had her daughter through fertility treatments, Tammy spoke passionately on the House floor against GOP efforts to force women in DC to get their bosses' approval or face firing if they chose to have children through in vitro fertilization. Few members of Congress in the minority have had this much impact this quickly.



*Last November, Tammy and her husband Bryan, a U.S. Army Major, welcomed their first child, Abigail.*