

New Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army invested

April 26 2017 11:34 AM



Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

WASHINGTON, DC - The newest civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) was invested during a ceremony conducted on April 19, 2017 at the Pentagon. Ms. Erica Jeffries, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs was selected by acting Secretary of the Army, Robert M. Speer to represent Illinois (North). She is the first African American woman to be selected to be a CASA.

"I welcome the opportunity to serve as a volunteer to help communicate the Secretary of the Army message to the military community throughout Illinois, and in particular in the city of Chicago," Jeffries said. "It is my privilege to provide advice and local perspective on issues relating to our active duty Army soldiers, families, and the Army community writ large."

CASA are a vital part of the Army, promoting good relations between the Army and the public and advising the Secretary on regional issues.

"Erica already plays a significant role in serving our veterans in the state of Illinois," said Speer. "I am pleased that she is willing to provide her knowledge to our current Soldiers as well and play a central role as we look to her to help represent the Army."

Each state, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories have one or more CASA appointed to provide a vital link between the Army and the communities for which they serve. CASA are usually business or civic leaders who possess a keen interest in the welfare of the Army and their communities. For protocol, CASA rank is equivalent to that of a Lieutenant General.

Jeffries leads the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. An Army veteran, Jeffries leads a team of nearly 1300 professionals that serves the more than 720,000 veterans through 80 veteran service offices, 4 skilled care nursing homes for over 900 aging veterans, and numerous programs for women veterans, veteran entrepreneurs, Gold Star families and Hiring Heroes.

Jeffries holds a Bachelor of Science in International Relations and Systems Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point; a Master of Arts in National Security Studies from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University; and a Master of Business Administration from the Pamplin School of Business at Virginia Tech University.

CASA serve a two-year term without compensation. Terms may be extended to a total of 10 years of service. The Secretary may recognize a civilian aide as a CASA emeritus after 10 years of distinguished service.

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