

# Women's History Month 2001



Inspiring  
Stories of  
Vision and  
Courage



Directorate of Research  
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute  
740 O'Malley Road  
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida 32925-3399  
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Photographs on the front cover are courtesy of the National Women's Hall of Fame, at <http://www.greatwomen.org/grtwmn.htm>.

Clockwise starting in upper left:

Grace Murray Hopper (1906-1992) mathematics genius, computer pioneer, inventor, and teacher. She was the first woman to attain the rank of rear admiral in the U.S. Navy.

Harriet Tubman (c.1820-1913) abolitionist born a slave who eventually became a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad.

Clara Barton (1821-1912) founder the American Red Cross. Barton ministered to injured soldiers during the Civil War and became known as the "Angel of the Battlefield."

Antonia Novello (1944- ) first woman and first Hispanic to be named Surgeon General of the United States.

Mary A. Hallaren (1907- ) leader who championed permanent status for women in the military after World War II as director of the Women's Army Corps.

Jacqueline Cochran (1906-1980) first woman aviator to break the sound barrier. She founded the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS) during World War II.

Oveta Culp Hobby (1905-1995) shaped the development of two major government institutions as first Director of the Women's Army Corps and first Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Eileen Collins, USAF (1956- ) first American woman to pilot a spacecraft.

## **Preface**

Commander Scot S. Graham, U.S. Coast Guard, of the First Coast Guard District Boston, Massachusetts, served as a participant in the Topical Research Intern Program at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) during the month of August 2000. He conducted the necessary research to prepare this paper.

The Topical Research Intern Program selects servicemembers and Department of Defense or Transportation civilian employees for the opportunity to work on diversity/equal opportunity projects while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tour, the interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile research or review data pertaining to an issue of importance to leadership, supervisors, and equal opportunity (EO) or equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resource and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements by the DOD, DOT, or any of their agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and senior officials to aid them in their leadership and diversity management duties.

## **Women's History Month – March 2001**

Women's History Month grew from a grassroots educational initiative. The first was a local weeklong celebration in 1978 by an educational task force in Sonoma County, California. The following year, the success of that initiative was shared with the Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College and a groundswell of similar educational initiatives grew around the country. Consequently, in 1981 Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Representative Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) co-sponsored the first Joint Congressional Resolution to support a national observance of the week. In 1987, the National Women's History Project successfully petitioned the Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. For more information on Women's History Month refer to <http://www.nwhp.org/month.html#congress>.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military Services, or the Departments of Defense and Transportation.

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## **Foreword**

### **“It’s All About Leadership”**

The theme for Women's History Month 2001 is “Inspiring Stories of Vision and Courage.” This paper presents a tapestry of the human experience within the history of women serving America, with a particular focus on the military. It serves to celebrate inspiring examples of leadership and achievement that required great vision and courage. This information may serve to augment your professional development and leadership program. The true stories related herein serve as an inspiration to all.

The common heritage that transcends the facts herein is the perseverance defined by these leadership role models. These women blazed new frontiers and set new directions for our country and military. They were motivated with an undeniable sense of purpose. They distinguished themselves in accomplishments of the human mind, body, and spirit that required remarkable reservoirs of fortitude. They embodied the core values of our Armed Services and their legacy is a treasure to behold and share. Their stories serve to nurture the aspirations of others to pursue and fulfill future dreams in the interest of humankind.

Leadership is everyone's business and responsibility. (12:3-29) It is the cornerstone of readiness to succeed in any arena (private, public, or military). A key leadership process that enables us to meet our organizational readiness goals is diversity management. To ensure the highest probability for mission success, we must seize every opportunity to celebrate our diversity in the past, present, and future. Such celebration sows the seeds for a stronger diverse workforce for the future. This investment will realize readiness returns in our human resources and total force. The Department of Defense's Human Goals, signed by the highest military leaders state a goal, "...to make military service a model of equal opportunity for all regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin." This charter is sustained because of the military leaders' commitment to valuing diversity and fostering mutual respect and cooperation among all persons.

A leadership commitment to diversity is a commitment to all facets of human resources within the organization. Effective diversity management develops an environment that works for all employees, thus enhancing any organization's readiness. It allows organizational elements to develop and evolve steps for tapping the potential of all their human resources. (63:10) Managing diversity means inspiring employees not only everything the leader (and the public) has a right to expect, but everything they have potential to offer. (63:12)

To be successful in diversity management, leadership must have a full appreciation of the implications of organizational cultural roots. (63:13) “A tree behaves the way it does because of its roots.” (63:57) The cultural roots determine how things work in the organization, how managers do their jobs, and how employees are treated; in other words, all the behaviors that collectively characterize the organization. Sometimes the old roots will resist necessary new roots even though acceptance will benefit the overall tree (organization). (63:13-14) Consequently, leadership must work to influence the observable aspects of the organizational culture, including the stories, rites, rituals, and symbols that are shared by organizational members. (57:274-277) To grow a healthier, more beneficial organizational culture, leadership can do the following:

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- ◆ repeatedly articulate and reaffirm new roots,
- ◆ create supportive traditions and ceremonies,
- ◆ create and acknowledge a wide range of heroes and heroines,
- ◆ create supportive symbols,
- ◆ influence communications networks, policies, and story tellers,
- ◆ recruit new root “advocates” to nurture their development, and
- ◆ reward “change agents” that enable the organization to improve its readiness and take care of its resources. (63:56-57)

In essence, managing diversity depends upon creating an organizational culture of respect, and that starts with the leader. The word respect is derived from the Latin *respicere*, which means “to see.” Creating a culture of respect starts with a special kind of vision from within the leader. The leader begins by looking at his or her own passions and self-esteem in order to discover what makes him/her feel inspired and respected. When leaders are at peace with themselves, they become more fulfilled persons. This personal insight becomes the leader's building blocks for creating a culture of respect. The leader then extends these insights into the organization and creates management practices based on the principle of respect. (56:236)

This paper's goal is to inspire further reflection on the leadership lessons our legacy has to offer in pursuit of personal, professional, and military excellence. It provides just a sampling of the vast leadership lessons that can be drawn from the study of women's history. Ignorance of this history weakens our potential to attract and motivate new generations into our workforce. Air Force Colonel Jose Bolton, Sr., present Commandant of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), sums this up:

Knowledge, Equality, and Readiness....The truth is we are not only talking about concepts which remind us of our present objectives but also demand a climate of continuous process improvement and excellence essential for leading a diverse organization. In addition, they are powerful words with objectives that can only be realized through the involvement and interaction of people.

We believe these three words are forever linked to achieving EO/EEO excellence. They represent a chain of events, which must be mastered and internalized if we are to remain mission capable. We need to understand how to lead and manipulate this process when promoting EO/EEO and not allow ourselves to be lulled into thinking that each step is a box to check and, once checked, never to be revisited.

The mastery of the concepts of knowledge, equality, and readiness and how they contribute to mission success is essential to manipulation of the process and moving individual and organizational thinking from yesterday's paradigms to those necessary for success tomorrow. DEOMI believes that leaders at all levels of the DOD must periodically update their knowledge base and renew their commitment to equality. Knowledge of themselves, their environment, and the organization will make it clear that equity is essential in creating the trust that is so important to readiness.

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But they can't stop there. They must take the opportunity to demonstrate this commitment through their daily deeds every day.

DEOMI believes knowledge, equality, and readiness are not just words, but rather elements of (leadership) an equation which will lead to mission accomplishment. And when we cut to the chase, defending the United States and its interests is our mission. (37)

## Introduction

This paper celebrates Women's History Month. It is also a celebration of leadership. It honors women through reflection on some of the individuals that have contributed to the proud legacy of American women. It focuses on inspiring cases of visionary leadership and courage. Through knowledge of these facts we hope to emulate and motivate rather than just applaud. (17:234)

This paper honors elected women from our nation's history who (1) pioneered a new direction or field; (2) had an extraordinary experience, requiring great courage, bravery, or sacrifice; (3) led an exemplary life to which others might aspire; (4) endured and overcame extreme conditions or discrimination; or (5) demonstrated consummate leadership.

President Clinton's remarks June 25, 1995, at the groundbreaking of the Women in Service of America Memorial provide us an outstanding segue into this paper's focus:

Women have been in our service, as has been said, since George Washington's troops fought for independence, clothing and feeding our troops and binding their wounds. They were in the struggle to preserve the Union as cooks and tailors, couriers and scouts, even as spies and saboteurs. Some were so determined to fight for what they believed that they masqueraded as men and took up arms.

Women were there during the two World Wars, and slowly, our military establishment that for decades had sought to limit women's roles brought them to serve as WACS and WAVES, SPARS and WASPS and Women Marines. In our Nation's shipyards and factories, women helped build democracy's arsenal. From the beaches of Normandy to the Pacific Islands, they endured bombs, torpedoes, disease, deprivation to support our fighting forces.

Despite this history of bravery and accomplishment, for very much too long women were treated as second class soldiers. They could give their lives for liberty, but they couldn't give orders to men. They could heal the wounded and hold the dying, but they could not dream of holding the highest ranks. They could take on the toughest assignments, but they could not take up arms. Still, they volunteered, fighting for freedom all around the world but also fighting for the right to serve to the fullest of their potential. And from conflict to conflict, from Korea to Vietnam to the Persian Gulf, slowly, women have overcome the barriers to their full service in America.

The past few decades have witnessed remarkable series of firsts: the first woman company commander, the first female service academy graduate, the first women skipper, the first female fighter pilot, the firsts that are here with us today. Twenty-five years ago this month, Anna Mae McCabe Hays became the first woman promoted to general. Hazel Johnson-Brown was the first minority woman to reach that rank. And 2 years ago, it my honor to nominate the Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, to become the first woman to head one of our service branches.

But just as important as these firsts are those who have followed them proving that they were not an accident or aberration, for women today are test pilots and drill sergeants, squadron commanders and admirals, academy instructors and service recruiters. (22)

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It is some of the stories behind these series of firsts (and accomplishments) that we wish to share.

## **Leadership and Organizational Challenge**

Readiness is our mission. Readiness provides the best defense of our nation's interests, and optimum care of our human resources. Leadership (personal, interpersonal, and organizational) is the critical path to achieve those goals. In essence, leadership is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility. (12:3-29) There is a reciprocal relationship between those who lead and those who follow, and the credibility of leadership is the catalyst. (17:1) (16:26) The leader enables the individual and the organization to succeed in this relationship. (16:12)

We want our leaders to be credible and to have a sense of direction (purpose). Leaders must be able to stand before us and confidently express an image of our shared desired future. Leaders mobilize (influence) others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. (16:29-30) Leaders become credible by challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling, and encouraging. (16:31)

This paper focuses on these attributes as demonstrated by some of the women serving America over the last 224 years: those of great purpose that were able to inspire followers' (group) emotions and energize collective action, and whose courage modeled the way.

Leadership is the art of creating a working climate that inspires others to achieve extraordinary goals and levels of performance.

General John Michael Loh, U.S. Air Force  
(56:29)

## **Visionary Leadership**

Leaders realize that people are inspired by something to believe in. (56:29) Good leadership knows how much of the future can be introduced into the present to accomplish that feat. Great leaders think beyond their boundaries. They are never satisfied with their current level of performance. (2:102) The visionary leader transcends the status quo and bridges the present and the future to make fundamental change. (21:18) (10:184) They have a vision of something that could (or should) be, and then work to make it reality. (2:103) Their vision is a realistic, *credible*, attractive future for the organization—a better future, more successful, or more desirable for the organization. Their vision is where tomorrow begins. It moves people to action, so the organization evolves and makes progress. It jump-starts the future by calling forth the skills, talents, and resources to make it happen. It grabs the attention of those both inside and outside the organization and focuses that attention on progressing to a desired outcome that makes sense and provides direction. (21:8,17)

## **Drill Sergeants of the Year “Lead by example”**

Jill Henderson was the first active duty servicewoman to win the Army's Drill Sergeant of the Year award. Her impeccable devotion to the military's core values is clear, and she lives

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them. “I try to lead by example, by being what I want privates to be. And I expect as much out of them. I lead from the heart. The more I take care of people, the more they take care of me.” (16:220)

Her words to her boot camp trainees: “A soldier does all the work. If somebody looks down at you, remember inside that you are the one who carries out the mission. If you stay in the Army, you will be a leader. Just never forget where you came from.” (16:220)

It’s not just her words that Henderson uses to convince and teach the privates she trains; it’s her behavior—the match between what she demands of her people and what she demands of herself. (16:220) (17:47)

Sergeant First Class Teresa Belles was the first reserve servicewoman to win the Reserve Army Drill Sergeant of the Year award. When she went to drill sergeant school at Fort Knox, she was the only woman among 93 students. She scored the highest on the Army Physical Fitness Test at the beginning of the course. She also scored the highest on the physical fitness test during the Drill Sergeant competition. Belles also epitomizes leadership by example: “When you’ve got those 18-, 19-year-old privates saying, I can’t do it, Drill Sergeant, you drop down and just start doing it with them.” (53)

## **Diane Carlson Evans**

### **Vietnam veteran's vision becomes reality**

During the Vietnam War, it is estimated that 265,000 women served their country all over the world in a variety of occupations in support of the war. (34) (8) Approximately 11,000 American military women were stationed in Vietnam during the war. Ninety percent of these women were nurses in the Army, Navy, and Air Force. (34) All received combat pay; many received combat decorations; some were wounded. Eight servicewomen died in Vietnam. (11:242) Navy women were stationed aboard the USS REPOSE and USS SANCTUARY hospital ships off the coast of Vietnam. Air Force women served both in country and on air evacuation missions. Thousands of other servicewomen served in Japan, Guam, the Philippines, Hawaii, and stateside hospitals caring for the wounded and dying who had been flown out of the war zone. An unknown number of civilian women served in Vietnam as news correspondents and workers for the Red Cross, the U.S.O., the American Friends Service Committee, Catholic Relief Services and other humanitarian organizations. Like some of their military counterparts, many of these women were wounded or killed in crossfire. Records indicate that at least 50 civilian women died in Vietnam. (34)

These quiet heroes were virtually unrecognized until 1984 when one lone former Army nurse, Diane Carlson Evans, initiated efforts to acknowledge their valiant service. (8) Evans, a veteran who served at Vung Tau and Pleiku, Vietnam in 1968 and 1969, founded the Vietnam Women's Memorial project. Her vision was for the country to recognize the courageous women who were there and those women who served behind the scenes as well. She was soon joined by many others to fight for a statue honoring women's service in support of the Vietnam War near the nation's Vietnam War Wall memorial in Washington, D.C. This statue would accompany the statue of the three male soldiers that already complemented the National Vietnam Memorial Wall. Despite great resistance, Evans' vision overcame in the end. (33)

The American public endorsed her vision in 1988 when Congress approved the memorial. This crowning act was achieved in November 1993 when the statue was formally dedicated,

honoring the thousands upon thousands of women that willingly volunteered in support or service with their male counterparts in Vietnam. Although a memorial to honor all military nurses who died in the service of their country had already been dedicated in 1983 in Arlington National Cemetery, the Women's Vietnam Memorial was the first in our nation's capital honoring women's patriotic service in a war as a whole. In his remarks at the ground breaking ceremony for the memorial, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, validated Evans' vision when he pointed out the difference and the importance of this special recognition for Vietnam women veterans:

I realize for the first time that for male soldiers the war came in intermittent flashes of terror, occasional death, moments of pain. But for the women who were there, for the women who helped before the battle and for nurses in particular, the terror, the death and the pain were unrelenting, a constant terrible weight that had to be stoically carried. (33)

Diane Evans championed the challenge of achieving this recognition. She knew the cause was just, even while facing the negative emotions of the Vietnam War memories in our country.

### **Dr. Bonnie Dunbar**

#### **“What does being part of the team mean?”**

Dr. Bonnie Dunbar is an American astronaut, but as a leader she inspires full appreciation of the importance of teamwork. She has flown on five space shuttle missions. She was the payload commander for space shuttle missions in 1992 and 1998. In the summer of 1995, she flew a shuttle that docked with a Russian spacecraft. (44) Above all, she believes the success of a space flight depends upon teamwork, within the crew and between the ground controllers and the crew.

As Payload Commander I have tried to convey to the non-career payload specialists the importance of being part of the crew. . . that we will share both successes and the failures of the flight. So, what does being part of the team mean? It doesn't always mean being the smartest or the fastest. It does mean recognizing that big-picture goal and the contribution that each individual brings to the whole. It may not mean being the life of the party, but it does mean being able to get along with people and to tread a fine line . . . knowing when to compromise and knowing when to stand firm. And, in an organization such as ours with competitive individuals used to being on top of the hill, it means knowing when to be a [leader] and when to be [led]. (12:351)

### **Brigadier General Wilma Vaught**

#### **A memorial to “. . . envision the future”**

Brigadier General Wilma Vaught, U.S. Air Force (Ret.) is a Vietnam veteran and one of the most decorated military women in U.S. history, including a Vietnam Service Medal with four service stars, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. In 1966-67, she became the first woman to deploy with a Strategic Air Command bombardment wing on an operational deployment. (6:121)

As a visionary, she led the national effort to memorialize nearly two million American women who volunteered in every U.S. military conflict since the American Revolution and the

women who served with organizations such as the American Red Cross and the U.S.O. Vaught headed the Board of Directors of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation and was the driving force in the building of the Memorial. The Memorial, opened in October 1997 at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery, culminated ten years of planning and work by Foundation President Vaught and her staff. (4:176) Her leadership provided American women who served their country the recognition they richly deserved. Concurrently, this work set a foundation for continual inspiration of future generations, which will not only benefit our military human workforce but the also the strength of our nation. The Memorial enables all Americans to learn and expand their perspectives on the powerful impact of diversity. Vaught said the project,

. . . realized a unique memorial where all the women who have served our nation are individually and collectively honored, and . . . relives the past, experiences the present and envisions the future of America's Servicewomen. (38)

This collective heritage is brought to life through computers, exhibits, film, and the Memorial Register, which guarantees each registered woman's individual story a permanent place in America's history. The Register is an interactive computer database that allows Memorial visitors access to military histories, photographs, and memorable military experiences of registered servicewomen. (5:2) (38) To visit the Women in Military Service for America Memorial online, refer to <http://www.womensmemorial.org/>.

## **Clara Barton, 1821-1912**

### **Humanitarian visionary**

Clara Barton taught school and worked as a clerk in the U.S. Patent Office. With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, at the age of 40, Barton embarked on her life's work and vision. During the Civil War she began to assemble and distribute supplies to Union soldiers. Knowing that nurses were urgently needed at the battlefield, she went into the field. At the famous battles of Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, Fairfax Court House, Fredricksburg, Antietam, and the Wilderness, she assisted the surgeons in stitching up wounds and in bloody amputations. Clara Barton gained national acclaim as “the angel of the battlefield.” After the war she coordinated a national effort to locate soldiers who were missing in action. (24) (4:16) Also at that time, she was responsible for establishing the first National Cemetery at Arlington, where she personally marked twelve thousand graves. (11:7)

Barton threw herself into relief work in Europe and was impressed with the International Red Cross. Although not permitted to work with the International Red Cross because she was a woman, she volunteered as an independent relief worker in Strasbourg, France, during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). She was restricted to only providing aid to civilians because the German government would not permit her to assist its soldiers. (24) (39)

On May 21, 1881, many dignitaries (including Frederick Douglass) joined Barton at her own modest residence in Washington, D.C. to develop the American Association of the Red Cross, which later became the American Red Cross. Created to serve America in peace and in war, during times of disaster and national calamity, Barton's organization took its service beyond that of the International Red Cross Movement by adding disaster relief to battlefield assistance. She served as the organization's volunteer president until 1904. Today, the organization's actions, guided by its dedication to humanity and a desire to promote mutual understanding, friendship,

cooperation, and lasting peace amongst all peoples, follow these fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. (39)

Barton also lobbied tirelessly for the United States ratification of the Geneva Convention, also known as the Treaty of Geneva. On March 1, 1882, President Chester A. Arthur signed the treaty. The Senate ratified it on March 16, 1882. The United States was the 32nd nation to sign the document, agreeing to protect the wounded during wartime. (24) (39)

## **Oveta Culp Hobby, 1905-1995**

### **“A debt to democracy, a date with destiny”**

Throughout her professional career, Oveta Culp Hobby held many leadership positions, shaped major institutions and influenced large numbers of people. At age 21, Hobby became an expert in the intricacies of parliamentary law, serving as the first woman parliamentarian for the Texas House of Representatives. She served from 1925 to 1931, and then again from 1939 to 1941. She composed a widely read textbook on parliamentary law, *Mr. Chairman*, in 1937. She also rose through the ranks to become manager of the *Houston Post*, one of the nation's major newspapers. She was a director of a radio and television station, and served as a director of a national bank. In 1941, Hobby accepted a \$1-a-year position as Director of the Women's Interest Section of the War Department. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall instructed her to organize a military unit for women. In 1942 Congress authorized the Women's Auxiliary Army Corp (WAACs), later shortened to the Women's Army Corps, (WACs). On the next day, Hobby was sworn in as the first director of the WAACs, a position equivalent in rank to an Army colonel. (6:61) Her leadership and organizational skills were challenged by recruiting, organizing, and training women in a military environment often as hostile as helpful. For months to come, newspapers and magazines carried sarcastic stories about America's new petticoat Army. Despite the myriad detractors and catcalls, Hobby persevered. She set the tone when she addressed the WAAC officer candidate students in July 1942. “You have taken off silk and put on khaki. And all for essentially the same reasons -- you have a debt and a date. A debt to democracy, a date with destiny.” (1:20) (11:29)

She and the WAACs met every test. In 1943, she prompted Army leadership to address internal slander and derogatory treatment of the WACs. Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall was moved to write a letter to all Army commanders regarding their responsibilities for the attitudes of the men in their commands and telling them they, “. . . are charged with seeing that the dignity and importance of the work which women are performing are recognized and the policy of the War Department is supported by strong affirmative action.” (11:52-53)

When she retired in 1945, she had commanded 100,000 women at more that 200 posts and in every theater of wartime operations. She became the first woman to receive the Distinguished Service Medal. (24)

After the war, Hobby returned to the *Post*, serving as co-editor. From 1952-1955 she fulfilled further pioneering roles in government. In 1953, she was appointed by President Eisenhower to be the director of the Federal Security Administration. Later that year, she became the first person to hold the cabinet position of Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in a U.S. presidential administration, and was the only woman to serve in the Cabinet of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. She was only the second woman to hold a cabinet position by that time in history. (24) Under her leadership the Clinical Center for

National Institutes of Health was founded. Farmers, domestic workers, and the self-employed became eligible for social security; veterans' benefits were extended; and the new polio vaccine was widely produced and distributed. (6:63) In 1955, Hobby returned to the *Houston Post* as president and editor and shortly became chairperson of the board. She was named Director of the Corporation of Public Broadcasting in 1976. Two years later the Association of the U.S. Army honored her with its highest award -- the George Catlett Marshall Medal for public service. (6:64)

## **Grace Hopper, 1906-1992**

### **“Different is by no means wrong”**

Mathematics genius, computer pioneer, inventor, teacher—Grace Hopper's accomplishments encompass a range of achievements that have helped transform society. The woman who became known as “Amazing Grace” and “The Grandmother of the Computer Age” was born before Henry Ford launched his first Model T automobile and before women had the right to vote. (24)

Hopper credits her father and family as her inspiration. As she grew as a child in the dawn of the 1900's, her father was very supportive of her and her sister and told them not to be restricted by societal roles for women. He felt strongly that women should be given the same educational opportunities as men. (6:64) She graduated from Vassar College in 1928 as Phi Beta Kappa, and received a fellowship to Yale. There she earned a master's degree in math and physics in 1930 and a Ph.D. in math in 1934, the first woman to receive such a degree from prestigious Yale. In 1943, despite being discouraged by others, at age 34, Hopper joined the Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES) during World War II. (6:65)

Her formidable skills in mathematics helped propel her into the brand new world of computing machines, and she loved the opportunities to innovate. Her immediate impact was while she was a WAVE in World War II when she became the first programmer of the only large-scale digital computer in the world, the Navy's Mark I. She worked on all the earliest government computers, and soon began to create computer languages—mathematical equations computers could understand. In 1955, recognizing the need for more user-friendly language to enable more people to work with computers, she pioneered COBOL, a computer compiler language that promoted easier access and could be used in business. A leader and pioneer in the technology that has transformed automated information flow forever, Hopper was also the first woman to attain the rank of rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. (24)

Her vision was that people should not fear what is new, nor should they be afraid to take chances. She abhorred the concept that status quo must remain, simply because things have always been done a certain way. She pointed out that resistance to change is the biggest obstacle to progress. In fact, she had a clock on her wall that ran counterclockwise, which told time perfectly—an example of how different is by no means wrong. (6:67)

## **Dr. Antonia Novello**

### **Conquering pain to reach the pinnacle of health leadership**

The first woman and the first Hispanic to become the Surgeon General of the United States (1990-1993), Antonia Novello brought to her work a strong empathy for people without power in society and used her position to alleviate suffering, especially for women and children. (24)

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Born in Farjardo, Puerto Rico, Novello was afflicted with a chronic colon illness that caused her to spend much of her childhood in bed and hospitals. Corrective surgery finally relieved her of pain and also set her on a course to the pinnacle of leadership in the interests of national health. Upon recovering from her chronic childhood illness, Novello became determined to have a career in medicine where she could help other ailing children. (40) Trained as a pediatric nephrologist and in public health, in 1986 she became a clinical professor of pediatrics at Georgetown University Hospital (after working in private practice and later in the U.S. Public Health Service). In 1987, she was named coordinator for AIDS research at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and then Deputy Director. (24) In the fall of 1989, President George Bush nominated Novello to be the nation's Surgeon General, a position in which she would be not only the first woman, but also the first Hispanic. (40)

As Surgeon General, Dr. Novello was among the first to recognize the need to focus on women with AIDS and on neonatal transmission of HIV. She found new opportunities for Hispanic/Latino Americans to participate in health issues by convening national and regional meetings to discuss community health needs. She raised national awareness in the medical profession about the domestic violence epidemic in America. In her current position as the United Nation's Children Fund's (UNICEF) special representative for health and nutrition, she works to elevate public consciousness about underage drinking and alcohol abuse. (24) (40)

## **Colonel Mary Hallaren**

### **“Women will be the framework of any expansion”**

In war and peace, Colonel Mary Hallaren, U.S. Army (Ret.), proved herself a leader who remained a generation ahead of her time on matters pertaining to the military. Described as one of the giants among military women, Hallaren enlisted in 1942 in the newly organized WAACs. One year later, she commanded the first battalion of women (WACs) to serve in the European Theater of Operations, the largest contingent of women serving overseas throughout World War II. She was in charge of 9,000 WACs serving in England, France, Germany, Austria, and Belgium. (24) (42) (11:106)

By war's end, Hallaren stood in the highest ranks of WAC leadership, serving as Director from 1947-1953. Many of her military colleagues, male and female, favored the peacetime demobilization of women. However, Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower believed women were necessary to meet post-war personnel needs. Hallaren became the primary proponent and dynamic advocate for permanent status for military women:

It would be tragic if, in another emergency, a new generation had to start from scratch; had to duplicate effort; make the same mistakes twice. . . . It would be foolhardy to wait for another war to find out how and where women could best be used in the national defense. To write, “finis” to women's contributions . . . would be turning back time. (24) (11:113)

Despite strong opposition, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 was adopted, insuring for women of future generations new opportunities to serve and command on land, at sea, and in the air. (24)

At the first meeting of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS), September 1951, Colonel Hallaren explained the Services' needs for more women, and once again was a generation ahead of her time in her position:

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. . . every woman volunteer means one less [male] draftee. . . There's just one objective to keep in mind above all others . . . the services cannot sacrifice quality to fill a quota, for these women will be the framework of any future expansion. (11:151)

In 1965, Hallaren assumed direction of Women in Community Service, a new organization sponsored by a coalition of diverse women's organizations. Through its program, at-risk women were able to secure job training and economic opportunity. Because of Hallaren's vision and inspiration, women who might have failed economically and socially succeeded. (24)

In 1998, the Women's International Center presented Colonel Hallaren with the Living Legacy Patriot Award. (42)

## **Dr. Faye Glenn Abdellah**

### **Nursing visionary**

Dr. Faye Abdellah is a world-renowned nurse researcher and a national pioneer in issues of nursing research and long-term care policy, mental retardation, the developmentally disabled, home health services, aging, hospice, and AIDS. She was the nation's Chief Nurse Officer, and is the first nurse to hold the rank of two star rear admiral, and the title of Deputy Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service. She retired with the rank of rear admiral. She forever altered modern nursing theory and practice. She developed the first tested coronary care unit, which saved thousands of lives. (24) (43)

As Deputy Surgeon General, Dr. Abdullah was actively involved in the formation of national health policies related to AIDS, drug addiction, violence, smoking, and alcoholism. She developed the first federal training program for health services researchers, health services administrators and geriatric nurse practitioners. (43)

Dr. Abdullah has authored or co-authored more than 147 publications, some of which have been translated into six languages. One of her last publications, which she co-authored at age 75, *Preparing Nursing Research for the 21st Century: Evolution, Methodologies, Challenges* (1994), is an example of her forward thinking leadership. (43)

Dr. Abdullah is the recipient of eleven honorary degrees from universities that have recognized her pioneering work in nursing research: development of the first nurse scientist; as an international expert in health policies and international health outreach; and for invaluable contributions to the health of our nation. She is the recipient of 74 professional and academic honors. In 1994, the American Academy of Nursing honored Dr. Abdullah by presenting her with "The Living Legend Award." (43)

Rear Admiral Abdullah's military awards include: Surgeon General's Medallion and Medal; two Distinguished Service Medals; Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Distinguished Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal; the Secretary of Department of Health Education and Welfare Distinguished Service Award; and two Founders Medals from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. (43)

## **Colonel Eileen M. Collins**

### **"Because Dreams Do Come True"**

A veteran of three space shuttle flights, Collins has logged over 537 hours in space, and was the first woman to command a space shuttle mission. (45) (3) (7) Collins overcame extreme adversity on her journey to space. As a child, she was inspired by the exploits of early aviators

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such as Amelia Earhart and the women of the World War II Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs). Her family struggled to make ends meet in upstate New York, and she put herself through community college and paid for flying lessons by working fulltime in a variety of jobs. Collins learned to fly when she was only nineteen. "I didn't spend money on clothes...I'd grown up watching gliders fly off Harris Hill (in Elmira) and I'd always dreamed of flying." (24) (47)

She graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in mathematics and economics and pursued a masters in Operations Research from Stanford University in 1986. She also holds a Masters in Space Systems Management from Webster University. While at Syracuse she scraped together enough money to take flying lessons. Armed with her degrees, pilot's license, and glowing recommendations, Collins gained entrance into the Air Force's pilot training program (the first woman to go straight from college into Air Force pilot training). She became a flight instructor and then moved on to pilot the four-engine C-141. In 1986, she was assigned to the Air Force Academy as an instructor in mathematics and flight training. She was also a test pilot at Edwards Air Force Base, California, flying 26 different aircraft in a single year. She was selected by the National Atmospheric and Space Administration (NASA) in 1990 and became an astronaut in July 1991.

I want to do well because I know that I'm representing other women, other pilots, military pilots as well as civilian pilots who are hoping to come here to NASA and be pilots themselves for the space shuttle. (24)

Collins became the first woman to pilot a space shuttle when she flew aboard a mission in February 1995 - the first flight of the new joint Russian-American space program. Her second shuttle flight in May 1997 was the sixth mission to rendezvous and dock with the Russian space station Mir. On her third shuttle mission in July 1999, at the age of forty-two, she became the first woman to be a space shuttle commander. Collins adroitly combined her role as space traveler with that of wife and mother. (45)

It was a dream of mine to have the opportunity to be part of such an important astronomy mission. It is my hope that all children will see this mission and be inspired to reach for their dreams, too. Because dreams do come true. (46)

For a timeline regarding women astronauts see <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/women/index.htm>.

## **Courageous Leadership**

One [person] with courage makes a majority.

President Andrew Jackson. (15: fw)

This paper has already focused on a sampling of women visionary leaders. Without courage, their vision would have resulted in unfulfilled dreams.

The word courage comes from the same stem as the French word *coeur*, meaning heart. Many consider courage to be the foundation and reality to all other virtues and personal values. Without courage *love* may become mere *dependency*. (10:254-255)

As a key attribute of leadership, courage has many faces. Being courageous is standing up for what you believe and questioning the status quo, even when you are confronted with dissenters. (56:303) President John F. Kennedy summed it up well in his novel, *Profiles in Courage*:

Courage is much more than bravery on a battlefield. It can mean acting according to your beliefs whatever the consequences. Courage requires no exceptional

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qualifications, no magic, no special combination of time, place and circumstance. In whatever arena one meets the challenge and opportunity of courage, whatever may be the sacrifice faced, each person must decide for themselves the course to follow. Many people never have the opportunity to show such courage. But all of us have the opportunity to recognize such courage in others. The events of past courage can define that ingredient—to teach, offer hope, and provide inspiration. (15:xix, xviii, 133)

It can also mean being vulnerable and compassionate. Leaders can either stimulate or stifle courage within their organizations. In some cases, people are attacked for speaking their minds. After experiencing this for a while they become resentful or passive and unwilling to take risks. But organizations need as many acts of courage as they can muster. Courageous people help an organization ask tough questions, sharpen its ideas, and renew itself (to become more effective in accomplishing its mission). (56:303)

Credibility must also go hand-in-hand with courage, as discussed earlier in the focus on visionary leadership. A person must temper personal views and passion, acknowledge the legitimacy of opposing positions, and be prudent and fair-minded, while still acting courageously and with conviction. (56:309)

## **Harriet Tubman 1820-1913**

### **Famous underground railroad conductor and Union soldier**

Harriet Ross (Tubman) was born into slavery in 1819 or 1820, in Dorchester County, Maryland. Given the names of her two parents, both held in slavery, she was of purely African ancestry. She was raised under harsh conditions, and subjected to whippings even as a small child. (41)

At the age of 25, she married John Tubman, a free African American. Five years later, fearing she would be sold South, she made her escape. (41) She fled North to freedom. There she joined the secret network of free Blacks and White sympathizers who helped runaway slaves—the “Underground Railroad.” She became an Underground Railroad conductor who risked her life to lead other people to freedom. In all, she is believed to have conducted approximately 300 persons to freedom in the North. (24) Tubman was closely associated with Abolitionist John Brown and was well acquainted with the other northern abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, Jermain Loguen, and Gerrit Smith. She worked closely with Brown, and reportedly missed his famous raid on Harper’s Ferry only because of illness. (41) Brown believed he could free the slaves, and he selected Harpers Ferry, West Virginia as his starting point. Determined to seize the 100,000 weapons at the local arsenal and to use the Blue Ridge Mountains for guerrilla warfare, abolitionist Brown launched his raid on October 16, 1859. His 21-man force seized the armory and several other strategic points. 36 hours later, with most of his men killed or wounded, Brown was captured in the Armory fire enginehouse (now known as John Brown’s Fort) when U.S. Marines, led by Colonel Robert E. Lee (who later went on to become the famous general of the Confederate Army), stormed the building. Brought to trial, Brown was found guilty of treason, of conspiring with slaves to rebel, and murder. He was hanged on December 2, 1859. John Brown’s short-lived raid failed, but his trial and execution focused the nation’s attention on the moral issue of slavery and headed the country toward civil war. (54)

Tubman was tabbed as the shadowy figure known as the conductor “Moses,” and became so feared that a huge reward was put on *“his”* head, for slaveowners did not at first believe a woman capable of such daring activities. Cool, resourceful, skilled in the use of disguise and diversions, she is said to have carried a pistol, telling the faint-hearted they must go on or die. (24)

After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Tubman served as a soldier, spy, and nurse. She worked among the slaves who fled their masters and flocked to Union lines. She organized many of them into spy and scout networks that operated behind Confederate lines from island bases off the coast of the Carolinas. (24)

After the close of the Civil War, and after denied payment for her wartime service, Tubman settled in Auburn, New York with a new husband, Nelson Davis, and was active in support of women's rights. In 1908, she built a home for the aged and indigent. She devoted herself to caring for orphaned and invalid Blacks, and worked to promote the establishment of freedmen's schools in the South. (41)

After her death in 1913, Harriet Tubman was buried in Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, New York, with military honors. She has since received many honors, including the naming of the Liberty Ship HARRIET TUBMAN christened in 1944 by Eleanor Roosevelt. In 1995, the Federal Government honored Harriet Tubman with a commemorative postage stamp bearing her name and likeness. (41)

## **Jacqueline Cochran, 1906-1980**

### **“I have no fear – I know you can do the job”**

Jacqueline Cochran's life was about risk and about triumph against all odds. She led herself from the lowest possible levels of poverty and hardship. She was an aviation pioneer and head of her own highly successful national cosmetics firm. In 1943, she became Director of the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS) in World War II. At the time of her death in 1980, Cochran held more speed, altitude, and distance records than any other pilot, female or male. (24) (1:24)

Orphaned early in life (legend has it that she picked her name out of a phonebook) and with almost no formal education, in 1932 Cochran learned to fly at age 22 (flying alone by the third day of her training) (61:109) (6:40), and it became a lifetime passion. Early on in aviation she tested speed and altitude. The data she collected were invaluable in developing pressurized craft. She tested a new fuel in 1939 that was later used during World War II. (6:43-44) The first woman to win the Bendix Transcontinental Air Race (1938), she established a woman's altitude record (1939) and broke speed records, as well. (6:40)

In July 1941, just after the start of World War II, Cochran developed a national proposal for a organization of a Woman's Pilot's Division of the Air Corps Ferrying Command. Actually, this was not the first written proposal of this type. In May 1940, Boston pilot Nancy Harkness Love submitted a proposal to recruit qualified women pilots for the new Air Corps Ferrying Command. Cochran and Love banded together. Soon the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron (WAFS), which had started flying Army plane ferrying missions in 1942, and the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) were unified to become the WASPS. She became Director of the WASPS, teaching 1,200 women to fly transports. She also became the first woman to pilot a bomber across the North Atlantic. (14:100)

In 1943, the first class of WASP women pilots received their wings (paid for by Cochran). She delivered the following message to them:

Now, we are on the verge of seeing this whole dream blossom into reality in a truly big way. The Women's Flying Program has already approached the proportions of our entire air program prior to the start of the war. What will be the ultimate result—good or bad—will be up to the girls themselves. You of the first classes will have the real responsibility. By your actions and results the future course will be set. You have my reputation in your hands. Also, you have my faith. I have no fear—I know you can do the job. After graduating, I will be following you with anxious and proud eyes, and your success will be my satisfaction. This work of mine—planning, sitting at a desk, and working well into the night as regular routine—is no great pleasure for one who loves to have her hand on the throttle; but, it has to be done if you are to succeed. My compensation can only come from your morale and accomplishments. I am proud of you. (61:109)

By their end of duty in December 1944, WASPs had flown over 60 million miles crisscrossing the U.S. and Canada, operating 77 different types of military aircraft—every kind of warplane manufactured in America at the time. (14:305) Although 38 women died in service, they were not honored as war veterans until November 23, 1977 when President Jimmy Carter authorized veterans status for the WASPs of World War II. (61:109) (14:316)

Cochran and the WASPs' story in itself is one of courage. They overcame countless instances of prejudice and discrimination during this period in our history. For them, the hazards and incomprehension were peripheral to their vision of doing something special, something beyond—to fly in the service of America. They were courageous pioneers, and Jacqueline Cochran led the path. (14:x)

Jacqueline Cochran was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in 1945 and was commissioned a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force Reserve. In 1953, piloting a Sabre jet, she broke the world's speed record. That same year, Cochran became the first woman to break the sound barrier and published her book, *The Stars at Noon*. A few years later she was flying at speed Mach 2. She became the Chair of the National Aeronautic Commission and was enshrined in the Aviation Hall of Fame in 1971, the first living woman so honored. (24) (6:44)

## **Kelly Mogk**

### **She made the title of her rank, aviation survival “man,” obsolete**

Kelly Mogk was the first female rescue swimmer in the Coast Guard and was the only woman, at that time, to graduate from the Navy Rescue Swimmer School in Pensacola. (36) On January 3, 1989 during her first rescue case as a Coast Guard rescue swimmer, Aviation Survivalman Third Class Mogk, played the key part in the rescue and life saving of a downed Air National Guard jet pilot who had ejected from an F-4 over the Pacific Ocean during a training exercise. She was awarded the Air Medal and congratulated in person by President George Bush. Admiral Paul Yost, Jr., Commandant of the Coast Guard, cited Mogk's courageous feat as one of the most deserving of a place in any account of the outstanding rescue achievements during the Coast Guard's 200-year history. (58:17-33)

This was the first actual mission of the first woman to qualify as a rescue swimmer in the Coast Guard or any other branch of the Armed Services. Her aircraft commander for the mission, Lieutenant Commander Peterson, was quoted at the time that in his 12 years of flying rescues missions, the conditions were worse than any he had seen for putting a rescue swimmer down to render assistance to an individual in distress. Even upon departure from Air Station Astoria, OR, it was understood that the rescue swimmer would most likely need to enter the water to assist the ejected pilot. The sea state was sixteen-foot waves with a six-foot, wind driven chop, and a temperature of fifty-six degrees. The pilot was severely hypothermic and near death with extensive, life threatening injuries from ejecting at a speed of 600 miles per hour. Because of his injuries and hypothermia, he could not communicate with his rescuer. To complicate matters, the pilot was ensnarled in the shrouds of his parachute. Mogk had to dive under repeatedly to free the shrouds from the disabled pilot. She put her own life at risk when she removed her gloves in order to expedite the removal of the shrouds, exposing herself to hypothermic affects of the water seeping into her wet suit. After she freed the pilot for hook recovery up to the helicopter, she was left alone in the rough, cold sea to wait for a backup helicopter to pick her up, so that the recovery helicopter could quickly get the recovered pilot to medical treatment facilities. Consequently, Mogk had to fight the quick acting effects of hypothermia until the backup helicopter picked her up. After recovery, she collapsed from the affects of hypothermia and physical injuries incurred in the rescue. Because of her courageous example, Mogk immensely enhanced the reputation of the Coast Guard rescue swimmer program. (58:17-33)

## **Deborah Samson**

### **A courageous “Minutewoman”**

In October 1778, Deborah Samson of Plymouth Massachusetts disguised herself as a young man and presented herself to the American Continental Army as a willing volunteer to fight for independence from the British. She enlisted as Robert Shirliffe and served in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment in the company of Captain Nathan Thayer. For three years she served in various duties, fought in various battles and was wounded twice (at Tappan Bay, Tarrytown and Yorktown, Virginia)—the first time by a sword cut on the side of the head—and four months later she was shot through the shoulder. (34) (11:5) Her gender went undetected until she was hospitalized with a fever.

The attending physician, Dr. Binney, of Philadelphia, discovered her sexual identity charade, but said nothing. Instead he had her taken to his own home where she would receive better care. Stories have it that when her health was restored the doctor met with her commanding officer and subsequently an order was issued for Robert Shirliffe to carry a letter to General Washington. When the order came for her to deliver a letter into the hands of the Commander-In-Chief, she knew that her deception was over. She presented herself at the headquarters of General Washington. Washington, to spare her embarrassment, said nothing. In silence Washington handed Deborah Samson a discharge from the Service, a note with some words of advice, and a sum of money sufficient to bear her expenses home. (34)

After the war Deborah Samson married Benjamin Gannett of Sharon and they had three children. During George Washington's presidency, she received a letter inviting Robert Shirliffe, or rather Mrs. Gannett, to visit Washington. During her stay at the Capital, a bill was

passed granting her a pension, in addition to certain lands, which she was to receive as an acknowledgment for her service to the country in a military capacity as a Revolutionary soldier. (34)

## **Cheryl Stearns**

### **A jump ahead of physical capability stereotypes**

One of the finest skydiver and parachutist athletes in the world, Cheryl Stearns was invited to join as the first woman member of the U.S. Army's elite Golden Knights skydiving team. In 1977, Stearns enlisted in the Army and served two three-year enlistment tours with the Golden Knights, emerging as one of the team's foremost performers. The Golden Knights swept national and international awards while she was on the team. While at Fort Bragg, she was a flight instructor and went on to receive her baccalaureate degree, Magna Cum Laude, from Embry-Riddle University, in Aeronautical Administration and Aeronautical Science. She was awarded three Meritorious Service medals and six Army commendation medals and left the Army in 1985. She continued to serve the National Guard and is a pilot for a commercial airline. (6:114)

Stearns holds more titles and world records than any other skydiver, man or woman. By 1991, she held 13 U.S. Women's Overall National Championships, 11 world titles, 30 world records, and multiple international military parachuting titles. (6:114)

Stearns erased physical capability stereotypes regarding women. Her accomplishments with the Golden Knights have become tangible evidence that women can capably fulfill military missions traditionally reserved for men. (6:114)

## **Mary Walker, M.D. (1832-1919)**

### **Only female Congressional Medal of Honor recipient**

Mary Edwards Walker, one of the nation's nearly two million women veterans, is the only one to be awarded the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor for battlefield valor in service rendered during the American Civil War. (48) (59:24) (9)

Controversy surrounded Mary Edwards Walker throughout her life. She was born on November 26, 1832 in the Town of Oswego, New York, into an abolitionist family. Her father was a freethinking participant in many of the reform movements that thrived in upstate New York during the mid 1800s. He believed strongly in education and equality for his five daughters. He also believed they were hampered by the tight-fitting women's clothing of the day. Mary became an early enthusiast for women's rights, and passionately espoused the issue of dress reform. Later in her life she donned full men's evening dress to lecture on women's rights. (48)

In 1855, at the age of 23, Mary, the only woman in her class, joined the tiny number of women doctors in the nation when she graduated from the Syracuse Medical College, the nation's first medical school (one which accepted women and men on an equal basis). She graduated after 18 months of medical study (at an expenditure of \$253.50). This was during a time when American society greatly resisted acceptance of women physicians. (59:24-25) (48)

In 1856 she married another physician, Albert Miller, wearing trousers and a man's coat and kept her own name. Together they set up a medical practice in upstate Rome, NY, but the public was not ready to accept a woman physician, and their practice floundered. They were divorced 13 years later.

When the Civil War broke out, she came to Washington in the fall of 1861 just after the first battle of Bull Run, and tried to join the Union Army. Without waiting for the outcome, she volunteered to care for wounded and sick soldiers in Washington. (59:27) Denied a commission as a medical officer, she continued to volunteer anyway, serving as an acting assistant surgeon—the first female surgeon in the Army. Later, she worked as a field surgeon near the Union front lines for almost two years (including Fredericksburg and in Chattanooga after the Battle of Chickamauga). (48)

In September 1863, Walker was finally appointed an assistant surgeon in the Army of the Cumberland, for which she made herself a slightly modified officer's uniform to wear in response to the demands of traveling with the soldiers and working in field hospitals. She was then appointed assistant surgeon of the 52nd Ohio Infantry. During this assignment it is generally accepted that she also served as a spy. She continually crossed Confederate lines to treat civilians. She was taken prisoner in 1864 by Confederate troops and imprisoned in Richmond for four months. (48) A Confederate Captain described the scene to his wife as Dr. Walker was marched to prison in Richmond:

. . . were all amused and disgusted . . . at the sight of a thing that nothing but the debased and depraved Yankee nation could produce . . . she was dressed in the full uniform of a Federal surgeon . . . not good looking and of course had tongue enough for a regimen of men . . . she would be more at home in a lunatic asylum. (59:28)

She was exchanged, woman for man, for a Confederate surgeon on August 12, 1864. (59:29) She was released back to the 52nd Ohio Infantry as a contract surgeon but spent the rest of the war practicing at a Louisville female prison and an orphan's asylum in Tennessee. She was paid \$432.36 for her wartime service. Afterward, she got a monthly pension of \$8.50 for a wartime injury that occurred while she was a prisoner of war. That pension was later raised to \$20 in 1899, but was still less than some widows' pensions. (59:29-30) (48)

On November 11, 1865, President Johnson signed a bill to present Dr. Mary Edwards Walker with the Congressional Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service, in order to recognize her contributions to the war effort without awarding her an Army commission. She was the only woman ever to receive the Medal of Honor, the country's highest military award. (48) Citation text follows:

WALKER, DR. MARY E.

Rank and organization: Contract Acting Assistant Surgeon (civilian), U. S. Army.

Places and dates: Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861; Patent Office Hospital, Washington, D.C., October 1861; Chattanooga, Tenn., following Battle of Chickamauga, September 1863; Prisoner of War, April 10, 1864 to August 12, 1864, Richmond, Va.; Battle of Atlanta, September 1864.

Entered service at Louisville, Ky. Born: 26 November 1832, Oswego County, N.Y.

Citation:

- ◆ Whereas it appears from official reports that Dr. Mary E. Walker, a graduate of medicine, “has rendered valuable service to the Government and her efforts have been earnest and untiring in a variety of ways,” and that she was assigned to duty and served as an assistant surgeon in charge of female prisoners at Louisville, Ky., upon the recommendation of Major-Generals Sherman and Thomas, and faithfully served as contract surgeon in the service of the United States, and has devoted

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herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health, and has also endured hardships as a prisoner of war four months in a Southern prison while acting as contract surgeon; and

- ◆ Whereas by reason of her not being a commissioned officer in the military service, a brevet or honorary rank cannot, under existing laws, be conferred upon her; and
- ◆ Whereas in the opinion of the President an honorable recognition of her services and sufferings should be made:
- ◆ It is ordered, That a testimonial thereof shall be hereby made and given to the said Dr. Mary E. Walker, and that the usual Medal of Honor for meritorious services be given her.
- ◆ Given under my hand in the city of Washington, D.C., this 11th day of November, 1865.

Andrew Johnson, President

By the President:

Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War (59:31)

After the war, Walker became a writer and lecturer, touring here and abroad on women's rights, dress reform, health, and temperance issues. She was elected president of the National Dress Reform Association in 1866. Walker prided herself by being arrested numerous times for wearing full male dress, including wing collar, bow tie, and top hat. She was also something of an inventor, coming up with the idea of using a return postcard for registered mail. She wrote extensively, including a combination biography and commentary called *Hit* and a second book, *Unmasked, or the Science of Immortality*. She died in 1919, just months before the 20th amendment giving women the right to vote was ratified. (48)

In 1917 her Medal of Honor, along with the medals of 910 others, was taken away when Congress revised the Medal of Honor standards to include only actual combat with an enemy. She refused to give back her Medal of Honor, wearing it every day until her death in 1919. A relative told the New York Times: "Dr. Mary lost the medal simply because she was a hundred years ahead of her time and no one could stomach it." (48)

On June 10, 1977, Army Secretary Alexander accepted the recommendation of an Army board and reinstated Walker's medal posthumously, citing her, . . . distinguished gallantry, self-sacrifice, patriotism, dedication and unflinching loyalty to her country, despite the apparent discrimination because of her sex. (59:32) (48)

The U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp honoring Dr. Mary Walker on June 10, 1982. The stamp commemorates the first woman to have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and the second woman to graduate from a medical school in the United States. (48) (59:24)

## **Fostering the cultural change to eliminate gender discrimination and sexual harassment**

### **Major General Jeanne Holm**

Major General Jeanne Holm U.S. Air Force (Ret.) is the first woman in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces to achieve the rank of major general. When she retired she was the highest-

ranking woman ever to serve in the Armed Forces. (6:132) She has been a driving force in achieving parity for military women and is the author of a definitive history of women in the military, *Women in the Military, An Unfinished Revolution*. (24) (7) Throughout her career, Holm steadfastly battled discriminatory policies against women. She insisted that the Services should find the best person for each job, whether female or male. According to Holm, this was viewed by many as an experiment in sociology and not as what it is—the best utilization of human resources that leading to a better defense of the U.S. interests. (6:132)

Holm testified at the July 29, 1992 House of Representatives Armed Services Committee hearings on how to deal with the problems of sexual harassment and how to achieve cultural change in the military. These hearings were spurred by the incidents revealed after the 1991 Tailhook convention. The 1991 Tailhook convention may have been the watershed event in the pattern of cultural change that was necessary to truly achieve complete leadership awareness on what it will take to curtail sexual harassment of women in the military. (64:18)

The Tailhook Association is a private booster club for a membership of active and retired Navy and Marine Corps aviators and defense contractors. It has held conventions in Las Vegas to examine professional issues and conduct seminars pertinent to carrier aviation. (19:21) Unfortunately, the atmosphere at the convention was known to be quite raucous and more like a college fraternity. In fact, raucous, fraternity-like behavior had become a standard at the convention. (64:19) Before the 1991 convention, the Tailhook Association had sent a pre-convention cautionary letter to attendees as a reminder of past unprofessional behavior at the annual conventions. (The pre-convention cautionary letters had started in 1986.) (19:18). Leadership and rank and file of the naval aviation community were familiar with this past reputation. At the conclusion of the 1991 conference, reports surfaced within the Navy that women had been harassed and received unwanted physical attention. Ultimately it was recorded that at least 26 women, 14 of whom were military officers, had been harassed or assaulted by male officers in attendance. Initial reports of alleged harassment and assault was met, at best, with a mixed response. (64:19)

### **Lieutenant Paula Coughlin**

While at the 1991 convention, Lieutenant Paula Coughlin, a naval aviator, and at the time an Admiral's aide, had immediately reported the harassment that she had experienced to her chain of command in general terms. The morning after her assault and harassment she informed her admiral at an early morning breakfast. She brought another lieutenant to the breakfast meeting who witnessed this report. (19:47) The admiral's first response was one of apparent indifference and he neglected to follow-up. (64:18-19) Instead of letting the matter go inadequately addressed, Lieutenant Coughlin later decided to go public with the facts about the sexual harassment and the general gender abuse in the Navy. Her courageous decision and perseverance led to congressional hearings, the resignation of the Secretary of Navy, and an in-depth Pentagon investigation. Lieutenant Coughlin's courage and unwillingness to tolerate this failure in the military culture have brought an increased awareness of the problem. Her actions have contributed to true change in the attitudes and behaviors of men toward their female colleagues in the military. (6:129)

The scale of sexual harassment and assaulting behavior seen at the Tailhook conventions was so large that it probably constituted a one-of-a-kind event, but the attitudes that permitted it to

occur were not isolated. Rather, they were so widespread in the Services that basic, cultural change would be necessary to remedy harassment. (64:3)

Findings of the July 29, 1992 congressional hearings pointed to the following elements for successful cultural change: (64:4)

- ◆ Total leadership commitment,
- ◆ Career-long training and education, and
- ◆ Clear demonstration through disciplinary action and career impact that certain behaviors will not be tolerated.

Also at the congressional hearings, General Holm and former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr. agreed in their separate statements that a key underlying factor in eliminating sexual harassment would be to remove the restriction on women in all parts of the Service, including combat. (64:4-6)

### **Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy**

In 1997, at age 49, Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy became the Army's first female three-star general and the highest-ranking woman ever in the Army, overseeing 45,000 soldiers worldwide. Yet position, rank, power, and respect did not insulate her from the cultural problem of sexual harassment. In 1999, she filed a sexual harassment complaint through her military chain of command against another Army general. (29) Kennedy filed the report of inappropriate physical contact by another general of similar rank based on an event that occurred in her office three years prior. It took great courage to bring this sort of publicity to herself at the pinnacle of her very illustrious military career. She felt she had to go on record, since the alleged harasser was given orders to head up the Army's deputy inspector general post, a position that would supervise investigations of sexual harassment and gender discrimination complaints. (28) (29) (30)

### **Women soldiers of the American Civil War: Ahead of our times**

It is generally accepted that the Civil War was a man's fight. Images of women during that conflict center on self-sacrificing nurses, romantic spies, or brave ladies maintaining the home front in the absence of their men. The men, of course, marched off to war, lived in germ-ridden camps, engaged in heinous battle, languished in appalling prison camps, and died horribly, yet heroically. This conventional picture of gender roles during the Civil War does not tell the entire story. Men were not the only ones to fight that war. Women also bore arms and charged into battle, some in positions of leadership. Like the men, there were women who lived in camps, suffered in prisons, and died for their respective causes. (25)

Both the Union and Confederate armies forbade the enlistment of women. Women soldiers of the Civil War therefore assumed masculine names, disguised themselves as men, and hid the fact they were female. Because they passed as men, it is impossible to know with any certainty how many women soldiers served in the Civil War. Estimates place as many as 250 women in the ranks of the Confederate army. (25)

Records from the Adjutant General Officer (AGO) show that Sarah Edmonds, a Canadian by birth, assumed the alias of Franklin Thompson and enlisted as a private in the Second Michigan Infantry in Detroit on May 25, 1861. Her duties while in the Union army included regimental

nurse and mail and dispatch carrier. Her regiment participated in the Peninsula campaign and the battles of First Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Antietam. On April 19, 1863, Edmonds deserted because she acquired malaria, and she feared that hospitalization would reveal her gender. In 1886 she received a government pension based upon her military service. A letter from the secretary of war, dated June 30 of that year, acknowledged her as: "A female soldier who . . . served as a private . . . rendering faithful service in the ranks." (25)

AGO records also reveal that on August 3, 1862, a 19-year-old Irish immigrant named Albert D. J. Cashier, enlisted in the Ninety-Fifth Illinois Infantry. Cashier served steadily until August 17, 1865, when the regiment was mustered out of the Federal army. Cashier participated in approximately 40 battles and skirmishes in those long, hard four years. After the war, Cashier worked as a laborer, eventually drew a pension, and finally went to live in the Quincy, Illinois, Soldiers' Home. In 1913 a surgeon at the home discovered that Albert D. J. Cashier was a woman. None of Cashier's former comrades-in-arms ever suspected that he was a she. Apparently, neither did the commandant at the Soldiers' Home. A deposition from a fellow soldier taken in 1915 revealed that her deception was quite complete. (25)

When the Civil War broke out, the Army had no ambulance corps, no field hospitals, no nursing corps, and few surgeons. In June 1861, the Secretary of War appointed Dorothea Lynde Dix as Superintendent of the female nurses of the Union Army. Dix recruited nurses, established an Army Nurse Corps, assigned nurses to military hospitals, and disbursed supplies. In August 1861, Congress authorized the employment of women nurses in military hospitals, paying them \$12 a month and a daily ration to serve for six months or the war's duration. The nurses were given an administrative rank equivalent to surgeon but no military rank. By the end of the war, Dix had placed 6,000 nurses in military hospitals and on the battlefields. (4:16) The record of Civil War nurses provides one of the finest examples of dedication, organizational ability, and simple courage to be found in American military history. Largely through their efforts, Army patient care took a quantum leap forward. (11:8)

For the most part, women Civil War soldiers were recognized after they had received serious wounds or died. Mary Galloway was wounded in the chest during the Battle of Antietam. Clara Barton discovered Galloway's true gender while treating her chest wound. She was sent home after recuperation. One anonymous woman wearing the uniform of a Confederate private was found dead on the Gettysburg battlefield on July 17, 1863, by a burial detail from the Union Corps. Based on the location of the body, it is likely the Southern woman died participating in Pickett's charge. In 1934, a gravesite found on the outskirts of Shiloh National Military Park revealed the bones of nine Union soldiers. Further investigation indicated that one of the skeletons, with a rifle shot by the remains, was female. (25)

Some soldiers were revealed as women after getting captured. Frances Hook is a good example. She and her brother, orphans, enlisted together early in the war. Even though her brother was killed in action at Pittsburgh Landing, Hook continued service, probably in an Illinois infantry regiment, under the alias Frank Miller. In early 1864, Confederates captured her near Florence, Alabama; she was shot in the thigh during a battle and left behind with other wounded, who were also captured. While imprisoned in Atlanta, her captors realized her gender. After her exchange and discharge, she was sent North. Frances Hook later married, and in 1908 her daughter wrote the AGO seeking confirmation of her mother's military service. AGO clerks searched pertinent records and located documentation that proved her participation in the war. (25)

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One of the most colorful and enterprising characters of the period was Loreta Velasques. Beautiful, well educated, and affluent, she had been born in Cuba, where her father was a diplomat. When her husband left for war, Loreta, over family objections, bought a Confederate uniform, glued on a moustache and chin beard, recruited a troop of soldiers, and set herself up as their commander under the name of Lieutenant Harry T. Buford. Before she was finally discovered, she had fought in a number of battles, including the First Battle of Bull Run, and had served a brief stint as a spy. After being wounded and revealed, Loreta enlisted as an infantryman but soon decided she would prefer being an officer on horseback and secured herself a commission in the cavalry. She led patrols into enemy territory and on many occasions demonstrated competence and courage, but after being badly wounded (again), was again revealed. (11:8)

Herein lies the importance of the women combatants of the Civil War: it is not their individual exploits but the fact that they fought. Quite simply, the women in the ranks, both Union and Confederate, refused to stay in their socially mandated place, even if it meant resorting to deception to achieve their goal of being soldiers. They faced not only the guns of the adversary but also the sexual prejudices of their society. (25)

The Civil War women soldiers merit recognition in modern American society because they were trailblazers. Women's service in the military is socially accepted today, yet modern women soldiers are still officially barred from direct combat. Since the Persian Gulf War, debate has raged over whether women are fit for combat, and the issue is still unresolved. The women soldiers of the Civil War were capable fighters, facing terrible field conditions. From a historical viewpoint, the women combatants of 1861 to 1865 were not just ahead of their time, they were ahead of our time. (25)

### **Nurses:**

#### **Throughout military history, they were the “invisible soldiers” (60:112)**

Women have served as nurses for and in the military of the United States since colonial days. During the nation's wars, American military nurses have endured the same conditions as the male soldiers with whom they served. Nurses, like soldiers, have been killed by enemy fire, have been captured and endured the hardships of prisons of war, and have received extensive decorations for their valor. Although desperately needed in all the country's military conflicts, lessons learned about their value and experience in the field of battle were usually taken for granted or not addressed at all. A contributing factor to this was the unselfishness of nurses' training and that they made little attempt to draw attention to their service. This statement is as true of nurses of the Civil War period and Vietnam era as it is of World War I and II, and the Persian Gulf. Still, by winning the struggle for integration and acceptance, female military nurses were in many ways the forerunners of today's women in the military. (60:73) When the past contributions of military nurses, the conditions in which they served, and their attitudes at the front and under fire are reviewed, one realizes that women have already handled every situation, and that the public can accept the circumstances in which its women are placed. Women military nurses have been in combat and can expect always to be in combat. (60:112) Similar to General Colin Powell's sentiments expressed at the dedication of the Women's Vietnam Memorial Statue in Washington (see Diane Evans above), the following poem describes the added burden of combat that our nurses have had to endure.

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### **Mother and Son**

Cradled in her gentle arms a tender youth, far from home, hears the whisper faintly in his ear. "I'm here now, you're not alone." Many times like this she held them close, as a mother would on a frightful night. Comforting her sons off to sleep, and nursing them till the morning light. His tears and blood still upon her breast, she notes the time upon his chart. And the bullet that took his life away, imbeds itself into her heart.  
(20)

The valor of military nurses is undeniable. Three military nurses have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (a combat medal second only to the Medal of Honor) and 23 the Distinguished Service Medal (the highest noncombat award). (4:18)

Hard on the heels of the WWI forces commanded by General John J. Pershing that landed in France in late June 1917, were contingents of Army nurses who arrived in time to care for the first battle casualties. These Army nurses, for the first time, had to treat soldiers badly wounded by new, more destructive types of weapons designed for killing in large numbers--machine guns, tanks, and poison gas--as well as conventional rifles, pistols, bayonets, and artillery. One especially horrible type of German shell released mustard gas over troops causing the most casualties. The effect of mustard gas did not become apparent for up to 12 hours, and it could be transferred by touch. It soon began to rot the body inside and out if inhaled. The skin blistered and the victim was racked with nausea and vomiting. The external and internal pain was excruciating beyond endurance, and Army nurses had to strap their patients to beds. Sometimes death took up to four or five weeks. (1:9)

Among the first 60 American nurses to go overseas for World War I was Helen Fairchild. She treated patients exposed to mustard gas. Fairchild fell gravely ill and died three days later. Her family records indicate that she had been heavily exposed to mustard gas while near the front. (1:9)

World War II events provide excellent examples to illustrate the legacy of courage of military nurses. As U.S. entry in World War II approached, by December 1941, the Army Nurse Corps had expanded to 7,000 nurses and the Navy Nurse Corps to 787. By July 1942, there were almost 12,475 Army nurses and nearly 1,800 Navy nurses on active duty. Almost a year after the U.S. had entered the war, nurses remained the only women mobilized. (60:99)

- In February 1943, several units were trapped behind German lines, including nurses who insisted on staying until the patients could get out. One of the Army nurses, 1st Lieutenant Mary Ann Sullivan, received the Legion of Merit for valor when they finally escaped from Kasserine Pass under heavy enemy fire. (60:101)
- Army nurses staffed the hospital ship USS Comfort, which, while supporting the wounded from Okinawa, was hit by a kamikaze plane; six nurses were killed. (60:102)
- About 60 Red Cross nurses (half of whom joined the Army after the U.S. entered the war) were en route to England when their ship was torpedoed; they spent 12 days drifting in lifeboats. (60:105)

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- Four nurses received the Purple Heart when the British ship carrying them to Italy in 1943 sank after a bombing attack. (60:105)
- In November 1943, an air evacuation plane carrying 13 flight nurses and medical crew crashed in Albania behind Nazi lines. Partisan guerrillas escorted the survivors on a two-month, 800-mile foot journey through the mountains and snow, where they suffered frostbite, dysentery, jaundice, and pneumonia. Three nurses who had been separated at the crash spent five months behind enemy lines. (60:105)
- During the intense beachhead battle at Anzio, Italy, the German bombing and strafing of the tented hospital area killed six Army Nurses and one female Red Cross volunteer and wounded 16 other nurses. The nurses who were killed received Purple Hearts posthumously; the wounded women were awarded the same medal. The first women to receive the Silver Star decoration for valor were 1st Lieutenant Mary Roberts, 2nd Lieutenant Elaine Roe, 2nd Lieutenant Virginia Rourke, and 2nd Lieutenant Ellen Ainsworth for evacuating 42 patients during the German bombing raid at Anzio. (1:38) (60:104) (34) So inspiring was the valor displayed by these women that an attitude developed among combat troops trapped on the beachhead: “If they can do it, so can I.” (1:38)

In all, more than 200 Army nurses lost their lives while serving their country during World War II, and 17 are buried overseas. (60:104) (34) Nurses received 1,619 medals, citations, and commendations during World War II, reflecting the courage and dedication of all who served. Sixteen medals were awarded posthumously to nurses who died as a result of enemy fire. Thirteen flight nurses died in aircraft crashes while on duty. Sixteen women received the Purple Heart, awarded to soldiers injured due to enemy action. The Bronze Star was awarded to 565 women for meritorious service overseas. Over 700 WACs received medals and citations at the end of the war. One of the women was Captain Lillian Kinkela-Keil, a member of the Air Force Nurse Corps and possibly the most decorated woman in the U.S. military. Captain Kinkela flew over 200 air evacuation missions during WWII as well as 25 Trans-Atlantic crossings. She went back to civilian flying with United Airlines after the war, but when the Korean conflict erupted she donned her uniform once more and flew several hundred more missions as a flight nurse in Korea. Captain Kinkela-Keil was the inspiration for the 1953 movie “Flight Nurses” and served as technical advisor to the film. (60:104) (34)

During World War II military nurses served everywhere that soldiers, sailors, and aviators did, in more than 50 nations. Their male counterparts were so grateful that hundreds signed a letter to the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper in Europe in October 1944, thanking the women for volunteering to be there.

To all Army nurses overseas: We men were not given the choice of working in the battlefield or the home front. We cannot take any credit for being here. We are here because we have to be. You are here because you felt you were needed. So, when an injured man opens his eyes to see one of you . . . concerned with his welfare, he can't but be overcome by the very thought that you are doing it because you want to . . . you endure whatever hardships you must to be where you can do us the most good. (60:105) (11:92)

The valor of nurses at Anzio in World War II was mirrored by American nurses 25 years later during the Viet Cong's 1968 TET Offensive during the Vietnam War. When the Vietcong offensive push came, the Army wanted to evacuate the nurses out of the area, but the women

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said no. Although legally noncombatants, an operating room nurse who served at Pleiku, Vietnam described what it was like during an enemy rocket attack:

We were responsible to protect all our patients. We had to go around dragging guys off the beds and getting them under the beds or bringing the mattresses up and covering them over. We were the ones who were protecting the men who were the patients. In the operating room, if the attack was bad, we would lower the operating tables as low as possible so we could operate on our knees, but you had to keep going and you did. (11:233)

## **American women Prisoners of War (POWs)**

### **World War II women Prisoners of War**

Since the Spanish-American War, the Philippines had been a quasi-colony of the U.S. Almost a hundred Army and Navy nurses were assigned there. By late December 1941, the Japanese Army was about to overrun the Philippines. Two Army nurses were taken prisoner. Thirty-four Army nurses were evacuated to the island of Corregidor, 30 miles to the southeast of Manila. Eleven remaining Navy nurses were taken prisoner in January 1942 and taken to Santo Tomas prison in Manila, and moved to Los Banos prison in 1943. (60:99) (13)

Fifty Army nurses and one Navy nurse were ordered to the Bataan Peninsula to establish two emergency hospitals to support the U.S. and Filipino troops fighting the advancing Japanese. By April 1942, when the Japanese were about to overrun that location, all 51 nurses were evacuated to Corregidor to join the 34 other nurses already at that position. Twenty-one of the 85 nurses on Corregidor were able to escape to Australia before the Japanese captured Corregidor. The other 64 became Japanese prisoners of war and were sent to the Santo Tomas prison in Manila. (A total of 77 nurses as prisoners of war were in two different prisons in the Philippines). (60:100) These women and their fellow civilian Filipino internees were subjected to deplorable conditions that led to many deaths among the civilian internees, due to malnutrition, disease, torture, and abuse by their captors. (27) (31)

Five other Navy nurses, training native nurses and corpsmen on Guam, also became prisoners of war when the Japanese took over the island in December 1941. They were sent to a prison camp in Japan, and released in June 1942 as exchange prisoners. U.S. forces liberated the 66 nurses at Santo Tomas prison in February 1945, after 32 to 37 months of internment. The other 11 Navy nurses were liberated from Los Banos also in February 1945 after 37 months of internment. In all, 82 Army and Navy nurses were prisoners of war in the Pacific in World War II. Each was presented with the Bronze Star. (60:99)

Colonel Ruby Bradley was one of the Army nurses liberated from a Japanese prison camp after being incarcerated for 37 months during World War II. She later went on to become a frontline Army nurse in the Korean War on the day 100,000 Chinese soldiers overran American troops in North Korea. She became America's most decorated military woman, earning 34 medals and citations for bravery, including two Bronze stars. (34)

Flight nurse Reba Whittle was wounded and became a German prisoner of war for five months when her C-47 crashed behind enemy lines in 1944. (60:105) (13) (34)

Florence Ebersole Smith Finch, a native of Ithaca, New York, was part of the Filipino underground during World War II. She was caught in October 1944 smuggling food, medicine, and other supplies to Americans captured by the Japanese. She was tortured and routed through

three prisons before Americans liberated the Philippines in 1945. Immediately following her release, she enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS). Finch was the first SPAR to receive the Pacific Campaign ribbon and one of the few women to be presented the U.S. Medal of Freedom. (23)

### **Persian Gulf War women Prisoners of War**

The 1991 Persian Gulf War provided clear evidence of the continuing military power of the U.S. It sent over 500,000 troops to that war, a contingent that included nearly 7% women, the largest group of servicewomen that the U.S. had ever sent to a military conflict. The first American female prisoner of the Gulf War was Army Specialist Melissa Rathbun-Nealy. She had been sent to the Gulf in October 1990 and stationed in Dhahran. (26) The Iraqis captured her on January 31, 1991 when her convoy was off course. The Iraqis held her for 33 days. She was released to the Red Cross on March 4, 1991. (26)

The second female prisoner of war in the Persian Gulf was Army Major Rhonda Cornum. An extremely multifaceted individual, Cornum holds a Ph.D. in biochemistry, was selected as an astronaut candidate, went to airborne school, and became a physician and flight surgeon. With a Ph.D. in nutrition and biochemistry, she entered the Army as a first lieutenant and was promoted to captain two months later. She attended the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda. Cornum obtained her degree there, became a flight surgeon, and learned to fly helicopters and airplanes. While head of Primary Care and Community Medicine at an Army Community Hospital, she volunteered to go to the Gulf War, leaving her husband and daughter behind. (6:45-53)

During the Gulf War, as part of a search and rescue team, Cornum went on a helicopter mission to rescue an F-16 pilot who had been shot down. Her Blackhawk helicopter was shot down during the mission. When she regained consciousness after the crash, the Iraqis captured her. She had two broken arms, one of which was separated, and a bullet embedded in her back shoulder. Five of the crew were dead. She and two of the crew survived. (6:45-53) (60:14)

While in this serious physical condition, she was moved from bunker to bunker, interrogated, and finally sent to prison. On the way, she was re-united with the other two surviving members of the mission. (60:14) While in a pickup truck on the way to prison, she was sexually molested by one of her captors. A male prisoner had to watch helplessly. Cornum commented on the ordeal:

You don't expect to be raped when you walk down the streets of your hometown, but it is an occupational hazard of going to war, and you make the decision whether or not you are going to take that risk when you join the military. (1:148)

On their 6th night of captivity they and the other American POWs (including the F-16 pilot that they had set out to rescue) were released to the Red Cross. (60:18) After her POW experience, Cornum had these comments:

. . . women who are motivated to be in the military have the same range of reasons as men. In terms of performance, there's also that same range. I think some women will be terrific, some will be brainless, and the vast majority will simply do their job and do it well. And I think the percentages of women in these categories will be approximately the same as for the men. The things that are really important are loyalty and integrity, moral courage, a sense of humor,

dedication, and commitment. I don't think those things are any better represented in either sex. I think there should be no positive and no negative discrimination based on gender—or, for that matter, on race or anything else. I think a person's potential and his or her demonstrated performance should be the only criteria used in the assignment of people or in their selection for future training. . . . prejudice is based on ignorance, and that the only effective way to fight prejudice is with experience. Given the opportunity and rational leadership, men and women work together and bond just fine, particularly during conflict and adversity. It's pretty simple: we must all judge others on what they do, not what they are. (60:20, 23)

### **Martha Raye**

#### **“Colonel Maggie, a great soldier”**

During the Vietnam War, U.S. Special Forces (popularly called the Green Berets) were frequently under attack at their forward-deployed isolated base camps. A frequent visitor to these dangerous camps was Hollywood entertainer and comedian, Martha Raye, upon whom the Green Berets had bestowed the honorary rank of colonel. She was called Colonel Maggie by thousands of admiring American soldiers in Vietnam. On one occasion of her numerous visits to the troops, she begged Army authorities to let her extend her tour through the Christmas season, explaining that she had no family at home. Raye said, “These gallant boys are my family.” (1:5)

Raye's long history of supporting the military began in 1942 during World War II when she asked to go to England, then to North Africa, to entertain troops before the U.S.O. had been organized. During the Korean War, Raye was unable to tour with the U.S.O. because of health complications from yellow fever she had contracted in North Africa during World War II. But when the Vietnam War began, she was back on the front lines supporting the troops. She spent as much as six months of the year in Vietnam for nine straight years. (55)

During the infamous TET Viet Cong offensive of 1968, Raye was visiting the Green Berets' camp in the Mekong Delta. Viet Cong mortar shells and rockets pounded the base, and several men were wounded. There were no nurses at this remote outpost, so Colonel Maggie, wearing her green beret, combat boots, and a white surgical smock over her camouflage fatigues, helped tend the wounded troops. She assisted the Green Beret surgeon who operated on the casualties in a makeshift operating room as the exploding Viet Cong shells and rockets surrounded them. (1:5)

The U.S. commander in Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, said of Raye, “A great soldier!” Raye was awarded the 1993 Presidential Medal of Freedom for her lifetime of dedication to America. When she died in 1995, just short of age 79, she was given a special exception to be buried in the military cemetery at Fort Bragg, NC, a request she had made two years earlier. (1:5) (55)

### **Tsuyako Kitashima**

#### **Stepping forward to tell the Japanese-Americans' internment story**

After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and America entered World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt declared the West Coast a military area and the U.S. government uprooted 120,000 Japanese-Americans for internment for national security reasons. At first, most families were placed in temporary holding camps, some having to use horse stalls as homes. Families

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were fragmented and separated from each other, dispersed among 10 internment camps scattered throughout the West, Southwest, and Arkansas. Some families were separated for up to three years. Very few of the Japanese-Americans protested this injustice at the time. (51)

Over 35 years later, when President Jimmy Carter appointed a commission on relocation and internment to investigate the Japanese-American internment camp experience, ex-internees were still very reluctant to step forward and testify. However, one usually sedate, retired civil servant, Tsuyako Kitashima spoke out. She had been an internee at Camp Topaz in Utah. She led an effort to encourage former internees to testify at the presidential hearings. She was able to mobilize 170 former internees to testify. Ever since, Kitashima has been telling the stories about the internment camps and led a group of internees to lobby politicians for redress and reparation. (51)

Eventually, Kitashima became the spokesperson for the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, and a legendary redress activist and organizer. She spearheaded many letter-writing campaigns, petition drives, and fund-raising efforts to make redress a reality, and lectured regularly on the internment experience before educational and community forums. (52)

Kitashima's courage and hard work paid off when Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (subsequently the Entitlement Bill of 1989), apologizing for the mistakes of the internment decision. The Act awarded reparations to surviving internees. (51)

### **American women war journalists tell the story from the front**

World War II offered courageous women the professional opportunities to tell the story of war from the front lines. Dozens of women fought for – and won – the right to cover the biggest story of the century. By war's end, at least 127 American women had secured official military accreditation as war correspondents, if not actual front-line assignments. (49) It is also a legacy of determined women who demonstrated that they were more than a match for the gender discrimination among officers and editors. They showed they could handle physical hardship as well as their male competitors, and could do a war correspondent's job as well or better. These correspondents did not receive special treatment from the military, and these women often had to operate on their own. (50)

The women journalists, photographers, and broadcasters of World War II followed two centuries of trailblazers. During the 1700s, Mary Katherine Goddard, Anne Royall, and other women ran family printing and newspaper businesses along the East Coast. By the late 1800s, the growth of higher education for women had spawned a new market--and jobs--for writers of women's news. At the turn of the 20th century, the woman's suffrage movement opened opportunities for female reporters to cut their teeth on national politics under the guise of women's news. However, female reporters often worked without permanent office space, salaries, or access to the social clubs and backrooms where men conducted business. In response, women began their own professional associations, such as the Women's National Press Club, founded on September 27, 1919, by a group of Washington newswomen. The organization eventually merged with the National Press Club after it admitted women in 1971. (49)

When the Great Depression threatened the tenuous foothold of women on newspaper staffs, Eleanor Roosevelt instituted a weekly women-only press conference to force news organizations to employ at least one female reporter. During World War II, many of the newswomen in the First Lady's circle served as war correspondents. (49)

Those who did get to the front followed a path begun a century earlier by pioneers such as Margaret Fuller (the *New York Herald Tribune's* European correspondent in the 1840s), Jane Swisshelm (Civil War), Anna Benjamin (Spanish-American War), and Dorothy Thompson (overseas correspondent in the 1930s). One of the most important predecessors was Peggy Hull, who on September 17, 1918, won accreditation from the War Department to become the first official American female war correspondent and went on to serve as a correspondent during World War II. (49)

Virginia Irwin scored one of the major scoops of World War II as a correspondent for the *St. Louis Dispatch*. She was one of the first three Americans, and the first woman journalist, to enter Berlin while it was still under siege by the Russian army and to send back dispatches written as the battle roared around her. An article appeared in the *Missouri Historical Review* that chronicled Irwin's wartime accomplishments. The most dramatic of Irwin's stories was written in Berlin on April 27, 1945—four days before Adolf Hitler's suicide in his bunker and two weeks before the American military allowed any war correspondents into the German capital, which had fallen to the Russians. She and another American reporter, Andrew Tully, had managed to convince an American sergeant to drive their U.S. Army jeep to Berlin, taking a route behind the advancing Russian lines and then north to the German capital, persuading a Russian commander to allow them to push forward to Berlin. They were the first Americans to reach Berlin during the war. (32)

Another great example is Martha Gellhom. As an early anti-facist, she knew the sad, ruined towns of Spain that had been devastated by Franco's army. She sneaked aboard a hospital ship, hid in the lavatory, and became the first woman ashore after the Allies invasion at Normandy on D-Day and at war's end walked through the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps. (50)

The Library of Congress sponsored a travelling exhibit titled, "Women Come to the Front" in 1997. Outstanding examples of some the work of these women war correspondents can be viewed at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0002.html>.

## **The Keepers:**

### **A legacy of courage is a beacon of inspiration**

Women have been courageously serving mariners in distress longer than there has been a federal government or the precursor of the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Lifesaving Service. In 1776, when John Thomas joined the Continental Army to fight in the Revolutionary War, his wife Hannah took over his job as lighthouse keeper of Gurnet Point Light, near Plymouth, Mass. In 1789, the new Congress appropriated funds for lighthouse maintenance and operations, and some of the first federal employees were lighthouse keepers. The majority of these "keepers" were the wives and daughters of the initial keepers, or Lighthouse Board employees, who died on the job. Researchers have found the names of 138 women who were employed as lighthouse keepers between 1828 and 1947. For instance, in 1883 Katherine Walker assumed the keeper duties of Robbins Reef Light, off Staten Island, NY, after her husband's death. For the next 33 years she saved some 50 people from drowning. Keeper duty was arduous, selfless duty. Keepers were paid very little. They rarely were able to depart the lighthouses, and were required to fill the kerosene lamp within the light tower lens several times each night. When ships were in distress, the crew would typically deliberately ground their ships in the vicinity of the lighthouses, and the keepers would conduct rescue operations to recover the crews. Keeper

duties set the foundation of the U.S. Coast Guard's present day core missions: lifesaving, aids to navigation, maritime safety, and security. (62:1-2)

One of the most celebrated of the women keepers was Idawalley (Ida) Zorada Lewis who served for 54 years as the keeper of the Lime Rock Light on a small island in Newport, RI. After her father (Captain Hosea Lewis-the official keeper) died in 1857, she assumed responsibility for tending the light at the age of 15, along with her mother. She received quite a bit of notoriety (for that time in history) for her lifesaving feats. In 1869, she was on the cover of *Harper's Weekly*, and her rescue feats were the focus of many literary tributes. The Life Saving Benevolent Association of New York honored her. The General Assembly of Rhode Island proclaimed an "Ida Lewis Day." President Ulysses Grant, General William Sherman (famous Civil War general), and George Dewey (future Admiral and hero of Manila Bay) visited her at the lighthouse. In 1879, the government officially acknowledged her as the keeper of Lime Rock. She was bestowed the title of the "bravest woman in America" by the Society of the American Cross of Honor. She was awarded membership in the American Legion of Honor, medals from the New York and Massachusetts humane societies, and a lifetime pension of \$30 dollars a month from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. During her 54 years of selfless service she was officially credited with saving 18 people. Her last rescue occurred when she was 64. She died October 24, 1911 at the age of 69 after collapsing five days earlier in the line of duty just after extinguishing the light's lamp in the morning. The Lime Rock lighthouse was renamed Ida Lewis Lighthouse. (58:142-152) (35) Today the U.S. Coast Guard honors these courageous women by naming a number of its new, advanced, multi-mission, mixed gender crewed, 175 foot buoy tenders after female lighthouse keepers. The first of the "Keeper" class of coastal buoy tenders was commissioned in 1996 as Coast Guard Cutter IDA LEWIS (WLM-551), homeported in Newport, RI. The other similarly named Coast Guard Keeper class 175' buoy tenders are:

- ◆ ABBIE BURGESS (WLM 553), Rockland, ME.
- ◆ BARBARA MABRITY (WLM 559), Mobile, AL.
- ◆ KATHERINE WALKER (WLM 552), Bayonne, NJ.
- ◆ MARIA BRAY (WLM 562), Atlantic Beach, FL.

## Summary

The goal of this paper was to inspire reflection on the leadership lessons. It provides just a sampling of lessons that can be drawn from our diverse history.

The leader's job requirements of passion, commitment, and caring far outweigh those of experience. (18:3) It is an option for action that is available to every individual involved or affected by the situation at hand. (18:6) This paper presents an option for the pursuit of knowledge, to truly tap the richness of our diverse history, and strengthen the future foundation for our organization and ourselves.

Under the right circumstances, each of us has the power and ability to lead. Of course, each of us has a great deal to learn about effective leading and leadership, but we need not wait until we have given a title or position before we take action. The first step is self-knowledge, the second is self-improvement, and the third is recognizing your passion and then seizing and creating opportunities to take action. It takes vision, courage, (credibility) and a will to make something happen--a desire to make a difference. (18:5)

When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus, she was only one person, taking individual action. She certainly did not have a title or prominent position, but she decided to do the right thing. Today, we are still feeling the beneficial cultural impact of her vision and courage. She had no intention of shocking the world, or of leading a civil rights movement, but she felt so strongly about the issue that she had to act. She was a leader and a powerful source of change. (18:7)

Each of the women discussed in this paper offer us similar lessons in courage, determination, and leadership. Let us respect, encourage, and emulate that kind of leadership as we celebrate Women's History Month 2001.

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