SHE SERVED MAGAZINE

Celebrating Women Veterans



SHE SERVED ISSUE 12:

MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL EDITION

20 WOMEN VETERANS TELL THEIR STORIES

MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL



DON'T WAIT ANOTHER DAY TO CALL AND ASK FOR HELP.

VA Resources for Women

Women Veterans Call Center:
855-VA-WOMEN

Veteran Crisis Hotline:
988 (press 1)

Caregiver Support Line:
855-260-3274

VA Benefits Hotline:
1-800-827-1000

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Online: Explore the Military Women's Memorial (**womensmemorial.org**) and scan the QR code to register a woman Veteran.



INTRODUCING THE SHE SERVED TEAM

The Heart Behind the Mission: Meet the Dedicated Volunteers Behind She Served

A dedicated group of volunteers working behind the scenes to bring each story to life, support every participant, and grow the She Served mission with heart, creativity, and purpose. Do you want to be a part of something special? We're always looking for more incredible volunteers to join the team and help us grow the movement. Contact us at info@sheservedinitiative.org



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Our recent photoshoot at the **Military Women's Memorial** (MWM) was nothing short of unforgettable. We were honored to be hosted at this extraordinary place to recognize a group of women Veterans, volunteers, employees, and ambassadors, each with an inspiring story of service and strength.

Before the camera ever came out, we were given the privilege of touring the Memorial and immersing ourselves in the powerful history of women in service. A special thank you goes to Marilla Cushman, Advisor to the President of the Memorial, who guided us through the experience with such passion and depth of knowledge. One of the highlights for Julie and me was discovering our own names in the Military Women's Memorial register, a deeply moving reminder of the legacy we are all connected to.

Our own Kimberly Mortson, She Served's graphic designer, also accompanied us on this meaningful trip, joined by her mother and mother-in-law. During the visit, Kimberly's mother registered a close family friend, while her mother-in-law's mother was also registered—each woman honored for her military service. In a truly touching gesture, Marilla took the time to personally enter both names into the Memorial's registry, ensuring their service is honored and preserved.

The women featured in this special edition are remarkable not only for their military service, but also for the continued ways they serve today through their work with the MWM. We are truly in awe of their dedication, stories, and ongoing impact.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Marilla Cushman and to President Phyllis Wilson for hosting the She Served Initiative and making this meaningful experience possible. **Thank you!**

Martina Schmidt









THREE SENTINELS. THREE MILLION STORIES.

Sister Blocks to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

MWM

A treasured Memorial artifact, the sister block to Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, was cut the same time as that of the Tomb and set aside should the Tomb someday need repair. Decades later, a visit by the Military Women's Memorial architects prompted the quarry to donate the Colorado Yule marble block to the Memorial in honor of military women.

Polished and cut into ***three identical blocks***, they stand in the Memorial's Hall of Honor like ***silent sentinels*** in tribute to the ***three million women*** who have served.

WRITTEN BY MARILLA CUSHMAN

Andrea

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Andrea Catlin Williamson served in the United States Army Reserve from 1984 to 2004, building a distinguished career in military leadership, personnel readiness, and humanitarian support. Inspired by her father, Major Alfred Reginald Catlin, a Vietnam Veteran, she entered military service determined to continue a family legacy rooted in duty, sacrifice, and commitment to country. She was equally drawn to the military's culture of trust, teamwork, and shared mission.

As an Adjutant General Officer, Andrea managed administrative and personnel systems supporting readiness and accountability for up to one thousand service members. She later served as a Civil Affairs Company Commander, leading operations tied to humanitarian missions and civil stability during critical military responses. Her service included stateside support during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the Global War on Terrorism.

One of her most meaningful accomplishments was helping establish a Postal Unit with the 157th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, developing procedures and accountability systems that ensured deployed service members remained connected with their families. Andrea also served as Battalion S1 for 850 Soldiers, overseeing personnel actions, readiness reporting, promotions, evaluations, awards, and deployments while advising command leadership on force readiness. She also served in the United States Virgin Islands as Island Officer, strengthening disaster readiness and evacuation planning following Hurricane Hugo.

Later, in Civil Affairs leadership, Andrea supported United States Special Operations Forces and contributed to mission success alongside the 82nd Airborne Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her awards include the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, and National Defense Service Medal.

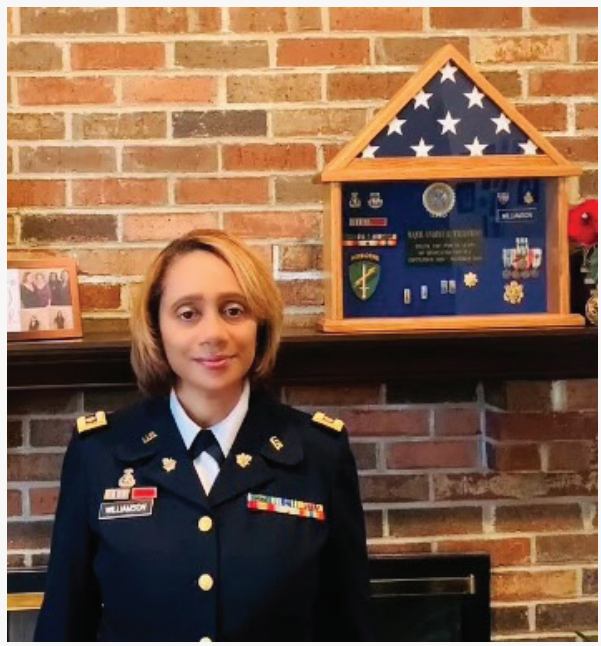
After retiring from military and Federal service, Andrea completed thirty-four years in government. She now serves as the Maryland Ambassador for the Military Women's Memorial, helping women preserve their military stories for future generations. Andrea established the Pearl Investor III investment club and is proud of the twenty year special recognition of dedication to the Better Investing Principles.

Andrea is especially proud of her daughters, Arial, a mental health professional, and Alicia, a ground and flight test engineer.

For Andrea, it is important that the public understand women Veterans are strong, proven leaders with unmatched skills, resilience, discipline, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

In advising women Veterans adjusting to civilian life, Andrea encourages them to build strong networks, to remember that their voice still matters, and to trust their leadership, strength, and resilience already developed through service.







WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"There is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

~ Amanda Gorman



WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

~ Maya Angelou

Angela

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Angela Waller served in the United States Army Reserve for more than twenty four years, building a military career that began in laboratory medicine and expanded into leadership across blood operations, medical logistics and soldier development. Early assignments included work as a medical laboratory technician and blood donor center operations noncommissioned officer in charge. Angela later served in blood support operations across multiple commands, where responsibilities included platoon leadership, laboratory operations, and demobilization support.

In 2004, Angela was selected as a U.S. Army Reserve career counselor, a role that became one of the defining chapters of her service. During seven years in that position, Angela twice earned recognition as U.S. Army Reserve Career Counselor of the Year. Angela later served as an officer accessions career counselor.

Angela also supported Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom while serving in blood support and emergency surgical missions. Military recognition included the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Joint Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and National Defense Service Medal. One of the most important lessons Angela carried from military service is the realization that personal strength and endurance often exceed what seems possible in difficult moments.

Following retirement, Angela focused on wellness through yoga, writing and volunteer service, all of which became important tools in reducing stress and anxiety. Angela is now a published writer, certified holistic health and lifestyle coach, advanced registered yoga teacher. She is the founder of Amaria Wellness, (amariawellness.com) which offers prenatal yoga, trauma-informed yoga, Reiki, yoga nidra, aromatherapy, and children's yoga.

Angela volunteers with Warrior Canine Connection, Wounded Warrior Project, Operations hero connect and Agape Green Acres and the United Service Organizations, where her distinguished community service earned the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. She is also a Military Women's Memorial ambassador for the state of Maryland.

Angela wants the public to recognize that women Veterans have always existed, serving courageously in critical roles from the Revolutionary War forward.

To fellow women Veterans, Angela encourages looking inward first, healing fully, practicing gratitude, and trusting that growth begins with self-awareness.





Annie BY SHERYL BINETTI

When **Annie Scott** first considered joining the United States Air Force, being told training would require cutting her hair led her to choose the United States Marine Corps instead. Assigned as a unit diary clerk, she quickly became known for precision, accountability and reliability while handling pay, audits, onboarding and out-processing, steadily advancing from lance corporal to gunnery sergeant. Annie would go on to serve in the Marine Corps from 1994 to 2014, building a 20-year career in military administration and leadership.

Throughout her career, Annie served in leadership roles and later expanded her expertise as a manpower analyst, a specialty that allowed worldwide deployment in support of personnel systems and operational readiness. She became a subject matter expert in multiple Marine Corps administrative systems and was often the person others sought for technical knowledge, research and problem-solving.

Annie deployed in support of overseas operations, including service in Pohang, South Korea, during Ultra Focus Lens. In 2005, she deployed with Manpower Information Systems Support Office 11 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, installing software and tracking personnel serving downrange. Later, in Afghanistan, she served as administrative chief and senior enlisted advisor at Bagram Air Base, processing incoming individuals and visiting wounded service members arriving through base operations. A later deployment placed Annie in dual roles as both administrative chief and administrative officer for Logistics Combat Element 2, work that earned a Meritorious Service Medal. Additional recognition included the Navy Commendation Medal, three Navy Achievement Medals, Iraq and Afghanistan campaign medals, the Global War on Terrorism medal, a NATO Medal and a Presidential Unit Citation.

Today, Annie works as a management program analyst and administrative officer with the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General. She also volunteers through the Military Women's Memorial, the Travis Manion Foundation and Masonic community efforts.

As a mother of one daughter whose own federal career supports the U.S. Army, Annie values family deeply, including an extended Samoan family formed during years spent in Okinawa, Japan.

Annie wants the public to understand that women Veterans may be a smaller part of the military, but they remain a force to be reckoned with. To fellow women Veterans, she emphasizes building a strong village of trusted friends and mentors who can help navigate challenges after service.







WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Leadership is a two-way street, loyalty up and loyalty down."
~ Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, United States Navy Reserve

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Never say you 'just' or 'only' served xx years."
~ Carol Rhan



Carol

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Carol Rhan served in the United States Air Force from 1974 to 1996, beginning her career during the final years of the Vietnam era. Although she had first considered the U.S. Marine Corps, the death of her older sister's fiancé in Vietnam led her to choose the Air Force. A high score in the military entrance exam opened the door to Air Force language training, where she was selected to become a Russian linguist. As a Voice Processing Specialist, Carol monitored Soviet Air Force communications in Turkey and later West Berlin during the Cold War. In West Berlin, she continued monitoring Soviet aircraft activity, promoted to Sergeant, and was recognized by the Air Force Inspector General as an Outstanding Performer.

After six years, Carol cross-trained into the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), beginning a sixteen-year career as a Special Agent. She investigated criminal, fraud, intelligence, and espionage matters, later specializing as a Counterespionage Case Officer after Turkish language training. Her assignments included counterterrorism work in Turkey and participation in START nuclear reduction inspections at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

Carol also taught at the AFOSI Academy advising future agents. Significantly, she served as the first enlisted female night detail leader assigned to protect the Israeli Air Chief of Staff during an international military conference. Returning to active duty after Reserve service, she replaced a Captain as Director of the Criminal Investigations Division, overseeing felony investigations across the Southwestern United States. In 1993, Carol became Resident Agent at Falcon Air Force Base, one of the first enlisted women. She received four Air Force Meritorious Service Medals, five Air Force Commendation Medals, two Air Force Achievement Medals, the Army of Occupation Medal, and the Small Arms Marksmanship Ribbon.

After military service, Carol served with Girl Scouts of the USA overseas operations in Europe and later became a United Methodist minister. She now serves as a District of Columbia Ambassador for the Military Women's Memorial.

Carol has been married 42 years to her husband, a retired U.S. Marine Corps First Sergeant. They met while stationed in Ankara, Turkey.
For Carol, it is important that the public understand women Veterans are the cream of the crop and continue doing what only a small fraction of Americans are willing to.

In advising fellow women Veterans, Carol encourages them to address workplace problems directly, handle what they can professionally, and seek leadership support when necessary.





Bernetta

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Bernetta Lane served in the United States Air Force from 1987 to 2004 and in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps from 2004 to 2024, building a career centered on public service, health leadership, and national readiness. Inspired by a desire to help others and continue a family tradition of military service established by both her father and grandfather in the United States Army, Bernetta entered uniformed service determined to make a meaningful impact. Across nearly three decades, assignments included leadership roles as a clinician, educator, executive officer, liaison, program manager, administrator, privacy officer, and health scientist.



While serving with the Food and Drug Administration, Bernetta advanced the mission of protecting and promoting the nation's health through regulatory science and public health leadership. As a regulatory affairs expert, Bernetta worked with interdisciplinary teams reviewing hematologic malignancy and oncology drug applications, helping evaluate safety and effectiveness before approval. Few assignments proved more rewarding than seeing treatments reach patients, knowing each approved therapy could extend their lives and improve time with loved ones. Additional federal missions included service during Presidential Inaugurations, deployments supporting four hurricane responses and the bird flu epidemic.



On September 11, 2001, Bernetta was a first responder during the attack on the Pentagon. She provided lifesaving care, implemented crisis intervention management programs and helped expand services at the for injured personnel and rescue workers. Over the course of her career, she received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Presidential Unit Citation Award, National Defense Service Medal, COVID-19 Pandemic Campaign Medal, and commendations from the Governor and Senate of Georgia.

Today, Bernetta serves as a professor of Public Health Informatics and Technology at Bowie State University. Bernetta also serves as a Maryland ambassador for the Military Women's Memorial, supports Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., serves as president on a community board in National Harbor and supports children's literacy programs. Among Bernetta's favorite pastimes are traveling, yoga, skiing, reading, and bicycling the Woodrow Wilson Bridge trail, where sunrise and sunset offer panoramic views stretching between Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland.

Bernetta wants the public to know women Veterans embody servant leadership and consistently demonstrate excellence, integrity, and service before self.

To fellow women Veterans, Bernetta encourages maintaining a positive attitude, never forget health is wealth, and don't denying oneself opportunity.



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."
~ President John F. Kennedy

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"There are times when we must challenge tradition to build something better."
~ Inspired by Dr. Cornell West



Cathleen

BY JULIE MILLER

Cathleen Pearl joined the United States Navy in 1992, seeking a change from college and a chance to push beyond her comfort zone. The Gulf War was underway and the military seemed like a possible fit. Then a recruiter offered air traffic control training, she accepted.

Cathleen trained at Naval Training Center Orlando during a period of institutional reckoning following the Tailhook scandal. She was assigned to Company I006, the sixth company in an experimental program that integrated men and women in basic training. Cathleen became the first woman to lead a mixed-gender company through graduation, a role that underscored her belief that overcoming everyday biases strengthens teams.

As an air traffic controller at Naval Air Station New Orleans, Cathleen directed diverse operations ranging from Coast Guard search-and-rescue to armed F-15s on immediate alert. Off duty, she volunteered as a certified fitness trainer, leading programs to help shipmates meet physical standards. After completing active duty service in 1997, she returned to school to earn an undergraduate degree in anthropology and continued serving in the Air National Guard until 2003.

With the Air National Guard's 121st Air Control Squadron and the 157th Air Operations Group, Cathleen worked in aerospace control and warning and command-and-control air operations. She deployed on security cooperation missions in the Indo-Pacific and, following the September 11 attacks, supported Operation NOBLE EAGLE in the Continental NORAD Region commander's operations center, helping improve radar and communications defenses.

Cathleen later earned a master's degree in museum studies from New York University with a focus on oral history. Her museum and public-history work has included roles at the National 9/11 Memorial Museum, the 9/11 Tribute Center, the National Guard Memorial Museum, and the National Defense University Foundation, where she advanced Women, Peace and Security initiatives.

Today, Cathleen serves as chief impact officer at the Military Women's Memorial, helping preserve and share the stories of some three million women who have served in and with the U.S. military. She is a mother of three, with two in college and one in high school.

For women Veterans transitioning to civilian life, Cathleen says, "Big life changes are messy. Go easy on yourself." She recommends sharing stories on your own time and in your own way. "Don't diminish what you've accomplished," she says, "and remember you've got the skills, determination, and resilience to carry you forward." The Military Women's Memorial is cheering you on!





Chris

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Chris Rodriguez's journey into military service was shaped by early influences: In part John Wayne movies, a father who served during World War II and two uncles in the Navy. "It just sort of called to me," she said, describing the pull that led her to enlist.

She served in the Army National Guard and the United States Army Reserve from 1991 to 2022. Chris built a career in all-source intelligence, a field focused on gathering and analyzing information from multiple sources to support military decision-making. She began as an enlisted intelligence analyst before achieving one of her proudest accomplishments: transitioning to a warrant officer role, a move that reflected both her technical expertise and leadership.

Throughout her career, Chris dedicated herself to mentoring others. She encouraged fellow soldiers to consider warrant officer paths and advised many others on the benefits of continued service or joining the military. Supporting others in their growth became one of the most meaningful aspects of her time in uniform.

Her deployments included a humanitarian mission to Panama, where she supported aviation operations while teams built roads, schools and provided medical care. Though intelligence was her primary field, she trained in flight operations before deploying, where she tracked pilot flight hours. Later, she deployed from 2006 to 2007 to Kosovo for a peacekeeping mission, serving as the senior noncommissioned officer of a tactical command post overseeing more than a dozen junior enlisted soldiers. She received an Army Achievement Medal for each deployment.

Chris describes her military service as "a worthy adventure," one that taught her resilience, teamwork and the importance of taking chances. She formed lasting friendships and discovered her own strength along the way.

Today, Chris works as a government archivist, leading efforts to digitize records to meet National Archives and Records Administration requirements while preserving history for future generations. She also works part time with the Military Women's Memorial, encouraging women Veterans to register to ensure their stories are recognized.

Chris remains passionate about supporting her local Veterans of Foreign Wars post and advocating for women Veterans. Her message is clear: women serve because they believe in their country, their families and the opportunities available to them. Her advice to other women Veterans is simple: "You can watch the world go by, or you can take a chance and jump in and see where the road takes you."





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"You can watch the world go by, or you can take a chance and jump in and see where the road takes you."





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Fight for things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."
~ Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Deidre

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Deidre Darden served in the United States Army Reserve from August 1985 to December 2009 as an Army nurse. She began in a field hospital as a medical-surgical nurse assigned to environments similar to the mobile military hospitals often depicted in wartime. Drawn by the opportunity to serve while maintaining civilian life, Deirdre valued the chance to travel, serve one weekend each month, and contribute meaningfully through military medicine. Early assignments included providing nursing care in hospitals, clinics, and field environments where adaptability and readiness were essential.



After ten years in field hospital service, Deidre interviewed for and earned selection as an obstetrics instructor in the Army Licensed Practical Nurse program. In that role, she trained and mentored soldiers in practical nursing skills, clinical operations, and field medicine, helping prepare future military medical personnel for both patient care and operational demands. Her military service also included duty as a Family Readiness Liaison in support of the Iraq War, serving as an important connection between military families and deployed units.

During her years of service, Deidre earned both the Army Commendation Medal and two Army Achievement Medals. One of the most enduring lessons Deidre carried forward from military life is the value of beginning with the end in mind through backward planning, understanding the mission, building tasks toward the goal, and evaluating outcomes through honest after-action review.

As a mother of two sons, Deidre remains especially grateful for the support they gave during the many weekends military duty kept her away from home. She also values the lifelong friendships formed during service and continues building new ones through volunteer work at the Military Women's Memorial, where military women continue to connect across generations.

Now happily retired after 24 years of service, Deidre remains active as a charter member and past president of the National Association of Black Military Women Brooklyn Chapter, while also participating in women Veteran support groups, the American Legion, and mentoring fellow Veterans. Reading, knitting, crocheting, crafting, event planning, and learning new skills such as Cricut design continue to fuel her creativity.

For the public, Deidre wants greater recognition that women Veterans serve in roles once closed to them and continue accomplishing missions alongside male counterparts with equal commitment and capability.

To fellow Women Veterans, Deidre encourages reaching beyond one support network, reminding women that many organizations exist to help and that transition should never be faced alone.

Elizabeth

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Drawn by a desire for independence and the opportunity to see the world, **Elizabeth Helm-Frazier** began her journey in the United States Army on Aug. 5, 1981. Over the course of a 25-year career, she built a legacy rooted in growth, resilience and service, retiring on Sep. 30, 2006.

Elizabeth initially entered the Army as a personnel specialist, a role focused on managing administrative actions and supporting soldiers' career records. In July 1988, she reclassified as an Army career counselor, guiding service members through reenlistment decisions and long-term career planning. Her assignments took her across the United States and overseas, including two tours each in South Korea and Germany. She witnessed history firsthand, serving in both Hanau, West Germany, and later in Kaiserslautern after Germany's reunification.

One of Elizabeth's proudest moments came when she chose to reenlist, solidifying her commitment to military service. That decision was affirmed by her mother, whose words of encouragement remain meaningful today. Reflecting on her career, Elizabeth said enlisting was "one of the best decisions I ever made." Her service reinforced a powerful belief: given the opportunity, she could accomplish any task set before her.

Family has always been central to Elizabeth's story. She is the oldest of five and grew up in Ridgecrest in Largo, Florida. Military service runs deep in her family: Her late brother, Corporal Johnie W. Helm Jr., served with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, while her brother Ernest P. Helm served as a medic with the 7th Infantry Division at Fort Ord, California.

Today, Elizabeth continues her commitment to service as a federal government employee, with retirement planned for Dec. 2026. Beyond her career, she has dedicated significant time to volunteer work, most notably supporting the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Project, where she got to know 10 of its Veterans.

The 6888th Postal Battalion, was the first and only all-Black and all-female unit to deploy to the European Theater of Operations during World War II. Through her efforts, Elizabeth helped raise funds to build a monument at Fort Leavenworth to recognize the 6888th's service in WWII. Elizabeth is very proud to have met 10 of the 6888 and to have served as a producer for the documentary, "No Mail, Low Morale," which tells the 6888th Postal Directory Battalion story.

Elizabeth is also passionate about cancer awareness, having completed 42 walks supporting the search for a cure. Her love of travel has taken her to all 50 states and four continents, with a goal to reach all seven.

Her message to others is simple yet powerful: "Stay in the race." She hopes the public remembers that women Veterans served, too, and encourages others transitioning to civilian life to seek support, claim their benefits and preserve their stories.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Stay in the race!"



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"You are stronger than you know, braver than you feel, and more capable than you can imagine."



Jane

BY JULIE MILLER

Jane Newman joined the United States Army in 1968 after five years as a civilian nurse, answering what she called a clear, urgent need for medical personnel amid the Vietnam War.

"I knew where I needed to be," Jane said of her decision to request Vietnam service. Instead, she was assigned to the 106th General Hospital, Kishini Barracks, in Yokohama, Japan, where she cared for severely burned patients at the Far East Burn Center and sometimes received transfers within 24 hours of injury.

Jane was commissioned as a first lieutenant and began her military nursing career as a medical-surgical nurse. As her responsibilities grew, she moved into supervision and administration, serving as head nurse, supervisor and chief of the Education and Training specialty, and later as assistant chief nurse and then chief nurse of the 130th Station Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany. She completed Army leadership and administration courses and earned a master's degree in nursing administration through Army programs.

Her duties combined direct patient care and personnel management: training and evaluating staff, coordinating enlisted and officer teams, expanding clinic and hospital services, and ensuring standards of care across changing missions. Newman says one of her proudest accomplishments was helping coordinate the expansion of hospital capacity in Heidelberg during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, when nearly 100 National Guard members were mobilized to support increased readiness.

Her service record includes deployment to a field hospital after the 1976 Guatemala earthquake, where her unit treated nearly 700 patients, including new mothers, and received the Humanitarian Service Medal. Other awards include the Army Commendation Medal, three Meritorious Service Medals and the Legion of Merit.

Jane retired Sept. 30, 1994, after 24 years of active duty. She credits the Army with reinforcing values of diversity, equity and inclusion, and with providing education and advancement opportunities that strengthened teamwork and morale.

Now retired and living in the Washington area, Jane pursues ikebana and Asian arts and served as president of local Ikebana International Chapter 1. She also volunteers as an Army "Arlington Lady," attending funerals at Arlington National Cemetery so no service member is laid to rest alone. She and her husband, a retired artillery officer, have been married for 53 years and have two children, John and Dana, and three grandchildren.





Echoes of Courage.



WRITTEN BY MARILLA CUSHMAN | PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE MILITARY WOMEN 'S MEMORIAL

It was in 1983, nearly 45 years ago, that World War II women veterans approached former Ohio Congresswoman Mary Rose Oaker about national recognition for their service. The newly dedicated Vietnam Veterans Memorial had generated a lot of interest in publicly recognizing veterans for their service so the World War II women stepped forward and asked Congresswoman Oaker, "What about us?"

Little did any of them know that their inquiry would eventually change the face of monumental Washington when on October 18, 1997, the Women In Military Service For America Memorial was officially dedicated. Some 40,000 women veterans, their family members and friends and a worldwide television audience witnessed this extraordinary event. Then called by some the event of the century for women, this stunning structure at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery became and remains today America's only national memorial to honor the some three million women who have served in the nation's defense.

The Memorial's mission is to tell the story of women's service. Its 33,000 sq. ft. education center houses an exhibit gallery which chronicles the history of women's service, beginning with the American Revolution; a multi-purpose room for a variety of events; a gift shop with scores of items related to military women's service, including books by and about military women; a Hall of Honor, and several other unique features. The Memorials' signature feature is an arc of glass tablets which form the Memorial's skylight. Included on the tablets are quotations by about military women, and when the sun passes over, reflect down onto the marble walls of the exhibit gallery below.

The heart of the Memorial is the Register, the area at the very center of the Memorial that electronically houses nearly 337,000 names, pictures and memorable experiences of the nation's military women who have served throughout the ages -- past and present. It's a remarkable and frequently emotional experience for visitors to scroll through more than two and a half centuries of American history.

While the Military Women's Memorial tells the stories and honors those women who served in the nation's defense, its really for all women as it enriches the larger story of women's history – and in that respect, our military history as well as that of the nation. If one looks at the history of American women, particularly in the 20th century, it's the trailblazing actions of military women that pried the door open for others to follow.

Women's military service in World War I tipped the balance for winning women the vote. The nearly 400,000 women who stepped forward in World War II came home with GI benefits that gave them educational opportunities to help them move into the work force as professional women, paving the way for American women, military and civilian. And military women have championed some of the nation's landmark cases on gender discrimination.

An ever-continuing, major effort by the Military Women's Memorial Foundation, the non-profit that built and now operates and maintains the Memorial, is to identify and register all eligible women. **Today, only about 10 percent of the some three million women who have served or are serving today have their stories of service preserved for all time in the Memorial's one-of-a-kind database called the Register.**

Reflections of Service.



You can learn more about the Military Women's Memorial, how to access the archives and oral history collection, schedule a tour or get information on how to register an eligible servicewoman, past or present, by visiting **womensmemorial.org**, by calling 800.222.2294 or 703.533.1155. The Memorial is open Monday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Photographs courtesy of the Military Women's Memorial







Kandi

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Kandi Mitchell served in the United States Air Force from 1998 to 2006 as an air traffic controller, directing aircraft movement at multiple fighter bases where operations often reached 100,000 flights each year. Seeking a path that offered challenge, purpose, and exposure to diverse people and experiences, Kandi entered military service ready to do things once thought beyond reach. Early in her career, she completed initial certifications in record time, later training and mentoring younger controllers while earning recognition as Air Traffic Controller of the Year.

In 2005, Kandi deployed to Iraq for five months in support of the Iraq War. During that deployment, she supported air operations tied to the first democratic elections held in Iraq in more than fifty years, helping coordinate transport of election materials and equipment for the city of Kirkuk. That experience reinforced a lasting belief that diversity is strength and that every service member's story strengthens the shared mission.

Today, Kandi works as a Geospatial Information Systems analyst, developing mapping systems for a water utility in Northern Virginia. Through infrastructure documentation and spatial analysis, Kandi helps utility teams visualize underground systems and improve operational decision-making.

As part of a multigenerational military family, Kandi shares service ties with her husband, who served as an F-15 and F-22 avionics technician. Her older son now serves as a Staff Sergeant in the Virginia Air National Guard working as an F-22 technician, while her younger son is a first-year cadet at Virginia Military Institute studying criminal justice.

Beyond work, Kandi serves as an ambassador for the Military Women's Memorial, representing the memorial during recognition ceremonies and outreach events. She also serves as outreach director for the Northern Virginia Astronomy Club, coordinating volunteers and observing sites for public programs. Astrophotography, hiking, horseback riding, and furniture restoration remain favorite ways to recharge.

For the public, Kandi wants recognition that women Veterans have long broken barriers, often working harder to prove equal value while serving with resilience and courage.

To fellow women Veterans, Kandi encourages them to blaze their own trail and trust the path ahead.







WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"Tell me, what is it
you plan to do with
your one wild and
precious life?"
~ Mary Oliver

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Let the generations know that women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom. That our resolve was just as great as the brave men who stand among us. And with victory, our hearts were just as full and beat just as fast – that the tears fell just as hard for those we left behind."
~ Anne Sosh Brehm, 1LT U.S. Army Nurse Corps, WWII



Kathleen

BY JULIE MILLER

Kathleen Rice joined the United States Army Reserve in April 1976, expecting a summer job that would let her finish college. Two decades later, she retired as a warrant officer who experienced the modernization of personnel systems and support readiness across the 79th Army Reserve Command.

Kathleen, who trained initially as a clerk typist, said the Reserve opportunity "turned into so much more." Assigned to personnel records duties as a specialist and later a supervisor, she maintained soldiers' official files and helped transition paper records into SIDPERS, the Army's early automated personnel system. Her duties grew as her civilian career shifted into information technology.

In January 1982, Kathleen became the first female warrant officer in her brigade when she received a warrant appointment as a data processing technician. She developed an automated registration and reporting system used by the 2072nd U.S. Army Reserve School during its Command and General Staff College sessions from 1984 to 1985, work that earned her the Army Commendation Medal. At the 79th ARCOM, she managed word-processing systems, software security and user training as personal computers entered the force. She also created programs to analyze Unit Status Report data, enabling commanders to produce readiness briefs. This contribution was recognized with an Army Achievement Medal.

During Operation Desert Storm, Rice supported mobilization and redeployment from the Reserve center, compiling command communications and publications as subordinate units returned from deployment.

For Kathleen, "the most enduring lesson from her service is understanding that every role matters. "I have always felt honored to serve, to contribute in my own way to protecting our country and preserving the freedoms we enjoy," she said.

A single mother with two children (her daughter adopted from China), Kathleen later enjoyed watching her family grow; her son and daughter are both married, and she is a grandmother. She retired from a full-time information-technology career in the pharmaceutical and financial sectors and has worked as a contractor for embedded computing systems. She now serves part time as a substitute teacher's aide.

Kathleen remains active in Veterans' and community causes, volunteering for the Military Women's Memorial as a Pennsylvania ambassador, supporting Beds for Kids, healing retreats for Veterans, and mentoring through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Her advice to other women Veterans: Seek support and don't navigate transitions alone. Women have served with courage and commitment across generations and deserve recognition for their service.





Phyllis

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Phyllis Wilson served in the United States Army from 1981 to 2018 as a Military Intelligence professional, as a voice intercept operator and later advancing to intelligence analysis and senior warrant officer. Motivated by a desire to see parts of the world previously known only through books and television, Phyllis entered service during the height of the Cold War and trained as a German linguist before serving in Germany, where East German military communications were monitored inside secure facilities requiring top secret clearance. Stationed near the Fulda Gap, Phyllis gathered intelligence used to assess potential threats during one of Europe's most tense military periods.

After returning to Reserve status, Phyllis raised a family and used the GI Bill to complete college while building a civilian nursing career. After eight years of service, she earned selection as a Warrant Officer, becoming a technical intelligence expert just as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait led to mobilization for the Gulf War. Assigned to Fort Bragg, intelligence operations continued through Desert Shield and Desert Storm before active duty extended until 1993. During that period, Phyllis completed Airborne School at age 32 and became a paratrooper, a milestone still counted among her proudest achievements.

Following the September 11 attacks, Phyllis served extensively with Special Operations organizations, earning the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and Iraq Campaign Medal. Phyllis later became the fifth Command Chief Warrant Officer of the U.S. Army Reserve, a role that deepened understanding of national policy while allowing mentorship of thousands of service members and families.

Today, Phyllis serves as the third president of the Military Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, helping preserve and elevate the legacy of military women. She also remains active in organizations including the Daughters of the American Revolution and the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

As a mother of two sons and six stepchildren, Phyllis celebrates a family that includes several combat Veterans, nurses, caregivers, and community builders.

For the public, Phyllis hopes greater recognition is given to the fact that women Veterans continue serving long after uniformed duty ends, carrying that same mission-focused spirit into communities nationwide and remaining fiercely proud of work once questioned by others.

To fellow women Veterans, Phyllis advises finding someone who understands the road traveled, because sometimes quiet companionship beside another Veteran is exactly what healing requires.







WORDS TO LIVE BY:
““Let the generations
know that women
in uniform also
guaranteed their
freedom.”
~ Anne Sosh Brehm

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Be kind. Be grateful. Make a positive difference."



Marilla

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Marilla Cushman's 25-year United States Army career reflects leadership, service and impact during a transformative period for the military. A United States Army Veteran who served from 1972 to 1997, her journey began unexpectedly.

"Joining the Army wasn't on my radar until I met a very convincing recruiter," Marilla said. That introduction led to the Army's College Junior program, a four-week orientation for women considering officer roles. "I knew I wanted to make a difference," she said. She continued into the Student Officer program, and later was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

Marilla served in administrative and public affairs roles, helping communicate the Army's mission to soldiers and the public. She managed the Army's "Be All You Can Be" advertising campaign, a defining recruiting effort. "It was a highlight of my career, and it still moves me when I hear it today," she said. She also served as executive director for the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, influencing policy across the force.

"Speaking for America's Army and the men and women who served was serious," she said. Her final assignment was deputy public affairs officer for the chairman and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Marilla completed two tours in Germany, supporting Return of Forces to Germany(REFORGER) exercises, base closures and the removal of chemical munitions while facing the Soviet Union. She also witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall. Her service earned her the Defense Superior Service Medal for exceptional performance in a significant joint role.

"I really loved being in the Army," she said. "I was part of something bigger than myself and helped shape history during a pivotal time." Marilla grew up in Caribou, Maine, raised by a resilient mother she describes as her "north star."

Marilla is a stepmother to five children and is now a grandmother of six. After retiring, she joined the Military Women's Memorial in March 1997 as Director of Public Relations and Development. She served in that role until June 2021 and now works as senior advisor to the president, providing guidance on all Foundation operations while also serving as event planner, writer, speaker, tour guide, exhibit planner, and sometimes even caterer and janitor.

"I believe all citizens have an equal responsibility to support and defend their country," Marilla said. "Women today serve at every level and are doing extraordinary things." Her advice to fellow Veterans: "Step back. Breathe. Find your passion."





Lucille

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Lucille Eddy served in the United States Navy from 1979 to 1999 as a Radioman, connecting operations across sea, shore, and air during critical moments. Inspired as a sixth grader after reading Nurses in Blue, Lucille knew early that military service would shape her future. While she originally imagined becoming a nurse, the cost of college led her to enlist while still in her senior year of high school, proudly joining what she calls "the greatest Navy in the world."

Lucille specialized in military communication systems that kept commands connected and missions moving. Her duties often placed her in base message centers, where she distributed incoming electronic traffic. One of her earliest major assignments came while stationed in Italy, when a devastating 7.6 earthquake disrupted normal communication channels and forced rapid adjustments in how messages were received, prioritized, and transmitted. She later served aboard a fleet oiler in the Mediterranean Sea, coordinating communications with ships from all nations. A significant assignment was supporting NASA space shuttle launches.

During Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, Lucille served on the communications team coordinating a joint task force. That level of interservice coordination reinforced one of her greatest lessons from military life: the power of teamwork and knowing someone always has your back. She came to value that leadership also means asking for help when needed, even from people you may not know personally. That sense of trust continues to shape her life today.

Now a massage therapist, Lucille specializes in therapeutic care, with much of her practice devoted to clients navigating cancer diagnoses and recovery. She also volunteers at the Military Women's Memorial, welcoming visitors, supporting Honor Flight groups, and assisting with events, while also serving on her condominium board. At home, she shares life with her dog, Admiral Earl D. Hardy, whom she jokingly describes as the one truly in charge.

Lucille believes the public should recognize that women have always served—through war and peace—and deserve equal acknowledgment. She reminds others that women in military insignia are often Veterans themselves.

For women Veterans adjusting to civilian life, Lucille encourages building connections, reminding them that shared service creates lasting bonds across generations. "We might not have served at the same time or in the same branch," she says, "but we are forged in the same fire."







WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"Is it true? Is it kind? Does it need to be said?"
~ Louise Penny's Chief Inspector Gamache

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"It is better to ask forgiveness than permission."
~ Rear Admiral Grace Hopper, United States Navy Reserve



Sandra

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Sandra Lawrence served in the United States Navy from 1980 to 2005 as a commissioned officer in information systems. She began her military career after earning degrees in education and health education. Though she had no prior computer experience, the Navy commissioned her as a computer systems analyst during a period when more women were being brought into shore-based roles. That unexpected assignment became the foundation of a career built around computer security, command networks, and command and control systems.

Throughout her Navy career, Sandra led computer operations for Naval Space Command, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, and Fifth Fleet. Three days before Iraq invaded Kuwait, Sandra assumed responsibility for U.S. Naval Forces Europe's command and control system, ensuring personnel across the United Kingdom and Italy could access operational plans and teleconferencing systems during a rapidly changing crisis. Later, Sandra became the first Combat Systems Officer aboard USS Nimitz from 1997 to 1999, establishing a new department of 11 officers and 200 sailors during her first deployment at sea. Her department maintained radar, satellite systems, shipboard communications, computer networks, television systems, self-defense equipment, electronic warfare systems, and hundreds of workstations supporting daily operations.

Sandra also supported Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Southern Watch, and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

After retiring from the Navy, Sandra worked as a contractor supporting the federal government until 2012 before fully retiring. Since 2013, Sandra has volunteered at the Military Women's Memorial, leading tours, supporting Honor Flights, and helping develop the exhibit "A Sea Change: Women on Combatant Ships," recognizing the anniversary of women serving aboard combatant ships and aircraft.

Sandra remains active with the American Association of University Women, where leadership roles have included branch, state, and national service, including four years as Virginia co-state president. Sandra also serves in advocacy efforts supporting Together Women Rise.

As the only daughter of parents who were deeply proud of her service, Sandra especially cherishes her father's support as a World War II Coast Guard Veteran.

Sandra wants the public to remember that women Veterans are ordinary women who accomplished extraordinary things, often in roles that were essential even when recognition lagged behind contribution. To fellow women Veterans, Sandra encourages staying engaged through public library programs, sports, civic life, and even elected office, where military leadership remains a powerful asset.





Suzanne

BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

Growing up in a military family, service was always part of **Suzanne McLaughlin's** story, even when she once insisted it wouldn't be. Both of her parents served in the United States Air Force, and while there was no single defining moment that led her to military service, a desire to see the world ultimately shaped her path.

Suzanne joined the U.S. Air Force on July 4, 1997, beginning a career that would span nearly 25 years before her retirement on Feb. 28, 2022.

During her service, she held critical leadership roles as both a munitions officer and an aircraft maintenance officer. In these positions, Suzanne was responsible for overseeing the storage, maintenance, assembly and transport of conventional and nuclear weapons. She also led teams responsible for inspecting, repairing and maintaining aircraft and essential ground equipment, ensuring missions could be executed safely and effectively.

Suzanne's career included support of major military operations, including Operation Allied Force, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Odyssey Dawn.

Reflecting on her time in uniform, she emphasizes that there is no single defining takeaway. Instead, she carries with her the collection of experiences, both challenging and rewarding, that shaped who she is today.

In her post-military career, she remains closely tied to national defense. As a senior international treaty and agreements policy analyst with Analytics Services (ANSER), she supports the Department of the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration (AF/A10).

In addition to her parents' Air Force careers, Suzanne's grandfather served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, training as a pilot before the war ended. Today, she continues her connection to service and history through volunteer work with the Military Women's Memorial and as a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, hiking, photography and spending time with her two dogs. She also stays active through skiing, scuba diving and pickleball.

Her message to the public is simple but important: Women serve, too, and their contributions deserve recognition.

For women transitioning out of the military, her advice is grounded in personal experience: The military is a career, not an identity. Be proud of your service, but take the time to discover who you are beyond the uniform.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Travel and see
the world!"



Tami

BY SHERYL BINETTI

Tami Glenz served in the United States Air Force from 1981to 2006, building a distinguished twenty-five-year career that began in aircraft avionics and culminated in senior enlisted leadership at the highest levels of Air Mobility Command. What began as a temporary path after high school, became a lifetime of service marked by technical excellence, resilience, and global operational leadership.

Tami entered the Air Force as an avionics technician, repairing radar, communications, and navigation systems on fighter aircraft and in maintenance shops. During her first fifteen years, she worked in demanding maintenance environments where women were still proving their place daily. She recalls those years as both challenging and deeply rewarding, requiring persistence, and confidence while forging strong bonds within tightly knit units.

Duty assignments carried Tami across the United States and overseas to Ramstein Air Base, where she managed the Air Mobility Command aircraft ramp during the September 11 attacks. During this unfolding global crisis, she helped lead aircraft operations while families and service members faced profound uncertainty. She describes that day as permanently etched in memory.

After a pivotal career chapter at Edwards Air Force Base, Tami's culminating enlisted assignment came as a Chief Master Sergeant at Scott Air Force Base, where she served as logistics manager for the fleet of Lockheed C-5 Galaxy aircraft, the Air Force's largest cargo platform and a cornerstone of global mobility operations.

Tami's service spanned the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and multiple major military operations. In 1990, she deployed with the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing to Bahrain in support of the Gulf War, later contributing to Operation Deny Flight, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Iraq War.

Following military retirement, Tami continued another fifteen years in federal service, supporting logistics and program management at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Pentagon before retiring in 2024.

Today, Tami remains committed to service through volunteer work with the Military Women's Memorial, mentorship, and advocacy for women Veterans. She is a proud mother of three adult children, all of whom are serving in the U.S. Air Force, and a grandmother of three. Tami reminds the public that women Veterans cannot be defined by one story or one path, yet all deserve enduring respect and recognition for their service.

For women Veterans navigating civilian life, allowing time for adjustment, trusting their abilities, and believing in their potential are lessons Tami considers essential.





Tracy

BY GABBY COMPTON

Tracy Malone served in the United States Navy from 1978 to 2004 as a Nurse Corps Officer. First providing nursing care at major medical treatment facilities, her career took an unexpected path when she was selected to serve as the Navy nurse assigned to the White House Medical Unit. She coordinated medical support for President Ronald Reagan and Vice President George Bush, traveling everywhere they visited, across the country and internationally. While serving in this role, she developed an interest in military health policy, which shaped the rest of her career.

Tracy is grateful for the opportunity to go on to serve as the Aide to the Surgeon General of the Navy. She was the first woman and first Nurse Corps Officer to hold this assignment opening the opportunity for other women to serve in this role.

Tracy served during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Serving at the Pentagon during the September 11 attacks was one of the most challenging assignments. Subsequently, she served as the Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, coordinating policy development for the entire military health system.

Tracy's family has supported her throughout both her Navy and civilian careers. Her husband also served in the Navy, and their children have thrived being part of the military community.

Upon retiring from the Navy, Tracy served in private sector roles supporting military health care, including as the President of the United Health Foundation. One of her proudest moments in this role was providing philanthropic support to build the Camp Pendleton Fisher House, which provides military families a place to stay while a service member receives medical care.

Tracy is passionate about volunteering in her community. Now fully retired, she is a volunteer tour guide at the Military Women's Memorial. During the pandemic, she volunteered with the Virginia Reserve Medical Corps, supporting vaccine clinics throughout Northern Virginia. She supports high school students through the Arlington Community Foundation.

Tracy wants people to know that women have always, and will always, find a way to serve, despite barriers put before them. She encourages women Veterans adjusting to civilian life to be courageous, take chances, and seek out mentors who will help you succeed.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"To be successful,
we must have courage,
determination, and
passion for what we do."
~ Brigadier General
Wilma L. Vaught



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" ~ Philippians 4:13



Wanda

BY JULIE MILLER

Wanda (Sistah) Petty's journey to the United States Army began long before she ever wore the uniform. Inspired by her older brother's service during the Vietnam era, she recalls how "seeing him in uniform stirred a pride I couldn't explain." She served from 1987 to 2008.
Sistah built a distinguished career as an Administrative Supervisor, taking on roles that required precision, leadership and adaptability. Her assignments included working as a reassignment clerk and promotions specialist in Germany, serving as a drug and alcohol noncommissioned officer (NCO) at Fort Carson, Colorado, and acting as operations sergeant at the Atlanta Military Entrance Processing Station. She also served as a recruiter in Fairfax, Virginia, and supported special operations for the Defense Intelligence Agency at Fort Meade.

During her career, Sistah supported critical missions, including Operation Desert Storm and operations in Kuwait and Afghanistan. Her work consistently strengthened the units she served, reflecting her commitment to excellence and mission success.

For Sistah, the Army was transformative. "The Army taught me that I am capable of anything I set my mind to," she said. That lesson continues to shape her life and work today. She describes her military service as the single greatest decision she ever made, one that instilled unshakable confidence and deep pride in her country.

Today, Sistah continues her service in a different capacity. She is an ordained minister, author, speaker and entrepreneur, and the founder of SHE VET Inc. Through her work, she empowers women veterans and faith-driven entrepreneurs to build purpose-aligned businesses and step into leadership with confidence. Her mission centers on helping others recognize their value and walk fully in their purpose.

Her commitment to service extends into the community. She serves on boards supporting creative arts and ministry initiatives and mentors women veterans through programs designed to foster growth, visibility and careers.

Sistah is also a proud wife, mother of two and grandmother of two. She describes her family as her legacy and finds deep joy in pouring wisdom into the next generation.

Sistah believes women veterans are intellectual, spontaneous, flexible, wise, gifted, and tenacious all at once. Women veterans don't just get the job done, we redefine what getting it done looks like.

Her advice for to fellow women Veterans is you were built for difficult challenges. Civilian life is just the next assignment. Suit up and show up, the world needs what only you can bring.





Champions. Heroes. All of the Above.

From the front desk to the far corners of the country, the people of the Military Women's Memorial keep the doors open, the stories alive and the legacy growing — all on a mission to make sure no servicewoman is ever forgotten.

WRITTEN BY MARILLA CUSHMAN | PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE MILITARY WOMEN 'S MEMORIAL



Keeping the doors open seven days a week; welcoming more than 250,000 visitors annually; hosting hundreds of events; raising funds to operate and maintain a major national memorial; managing a world-class collection of rare artifacts and a research library; informing the public and the servicewomen it represents; growing the Register, the world's largest database of servicewomen's stories of service; developing exhibits; managing the business side of the organization and so much more – all are accomplished by the Military Women's Memorial's dedicated staff, volunteers and nationwide corps of ambassadors.

Led since 2019 by retired **Army Chief Warrant Officer 5 Phyllis Wilson** – an unstoppable powerhouse for the Memorial herself – she describes this cadre of teammates as the "champions, the heroes, that make it all happen."

On average, some 20 full and part-time individuals are employed at the Memorial and the nonprofit Foundation, which was founded in 1985 to raise the funds, build and operate the multi-million-dollar memorial. Staff members proudly include a number of women veterans who bring first-hand knowledge of the military across a spectrum of experiences, jobs and eras, as well as the professional skills of military spouses who've embraced the Memorial's mission. Notably, a handful of the staff have been with the organization for more than 30 years.

Showing Up Every Day

The Memorial's volunteers are an amazing group of committed individuals. Primarily past and present servicewomen, their time in service ranges from the Vietnam era to today's active duty women. They are nurses, pilots, intelligence specialists, personnel and administration experts, mechanics, combat veterans and more. Representing a wide variety of experiences, each gives Memorial visitors a unique perspective of the extraordinary service of the nation's military women. Every day they are found greeting visitors, giving tours, setting up and taking down chairs and tables for events, supporting honor flights – whatever it takes to give visitors a positive Memorial experience and a more thorough understanding of women's military service.

Currently totaling 120 dedicated women veterans who live across the country, Military Women's Memorial ambassadors are the heart of the Memorial's outreach efforts, connecting with women veterans, active duty servicewomen, and "We Also Served" women nationwide. Through events, base visits, Living Legend Proclamations, tabling at community events, military reunions, conferences, and commemorations in their geographic area, they inspire women to share their stories in the Memorial's Register and ensure their service is remembered and celebrated. As a direct result of their hard work, 104,108 individuals nationwide in 2025 learned about the Memorial; 1,779 women were registered; and 3,301 volunteer hours were gifted to the Memorial, a $114,842 value.

As a result of these combined efforts, 12,666 women in 2025 took their rightful and visible place in history for all time by having their service registered with the Military Women's Memorial, significantly strengthening the national record and ensuring their service will be remembered for generations to come. Each new registration represents more than a name — it is a story preserved, a legacy honored, and a powerful reminder that women have always been essential to our nation's defense. **That's the mission of the Military Women's Memorial – to tell the story of women's service to the nation.**

Learn more or plan a visit: **https://womensmemorial.org/**




MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL


WORLD WAR II VETERAN
WOMEN'S MARINES


MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL
AT THE GATEWAY TO ARLINGTON
WE ARE THE
Military Women'
We honor the commitment, contrib
experiences of every woman who s
served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Th
Memorial is the only historical repo
to documenting all military women'
We educate and inspire through innovative exhibitions, world-class collections, and engaging programs and events for all generations.
No matter where you served, how long you served, what job you held, or your military rank, your service is an important thread in the cloth of our nation!
Take your rightful place in history. Register your service for FREE with the Military Women's Memorial.
EDUCATE
HONOR
Women are veterans, too!
OHIO
MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL
Honoring America's Military Women
Claim your place in histo
Today!
-REGIS
emorial.org


My Why
VAUGH
CENTE

2.7 million stories are missing. Is yours one of them?

Every woman featured in this magazine has one thing in common beyond their service — **they're registered.** Their names, their photographs, their experiences are preserved permanently at the Military Women's Memorial. But for every one of them, there are thousands more whose stories are still missing. An estimated 2.7 million women who served have no record.

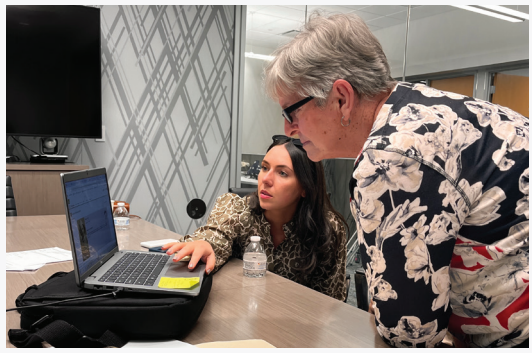
Your service deserves to be remembered. The Military Women's Memorial Register isn't just a tribute to those who came before. It's a living record of every woman serving today, yesterday and tomorrow. Whether you're freshly enlisted or decades into your career, your story belongs here. And if you know a servicewoman — a friend, a sister, a daughter, a colleague — you can register her too at no cost.

Register for FREE: https://womensmemorial.org/make-herstory/



Create a FREE account | Register yourself or another woman | Enter your service information | Upload a photo in uniform | Your story is preserved for good!

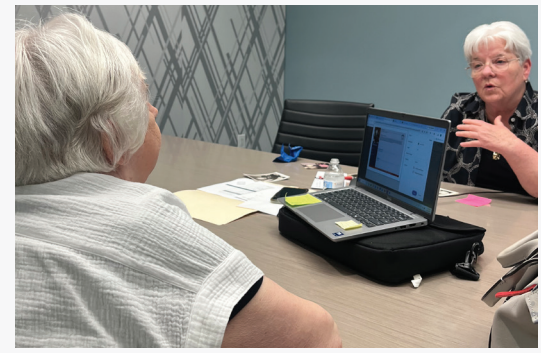
REGISTER A FAMILY MEMBER



*Grace Mortson (left) and her grandmother Cathy Mortson complete the registration of Cathy's mother, Navy WAVE **Marietta (Beach) Daniels**, in memoriam — proof that honoring a servicewoman's story is something worth doing.*



REGISTER A FRIEND



*(Above right) Marilla Cushman, Senior Advisor to the President of the Military Women's Memorial, assists Carol Woloskie in registering her friend, CTOCM **Florence Louise McCashin**, United States Navy Reserve, Retired.*



BEHIND THE SCENES: Military Women's Memorial



The She Served Initiative was deeply honored to photograph a group of incredible women Veterans inside the Hall of Honor at the Military Women's Memorial. Being in that space was both humbling and inspiring. The women in this session truly reflect the spirit of the Memorial, not only through their military service, but through how they continue to give back as volunteers, ambassadors, and advocates for preserving the legacy of women who serve.

Having the Sister Blocks in the background made the experience especially meaningful, we were constantly reminded of the scale, strength, and shared bond of women's military service. It added a quiet but powerful depth to every moment we captured. We are so grateful to the Military Women's Memorial for welcoming us into this space and allowing us to share in telling these stories in such a meaningful setting.





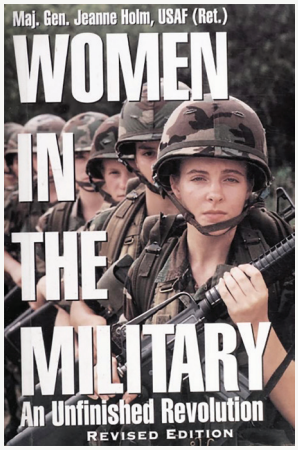




Recommended reading

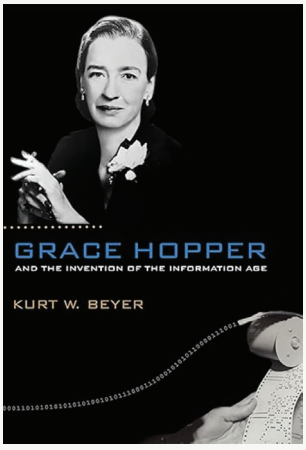
1

Women in the Military by Major General Jeanne Holm



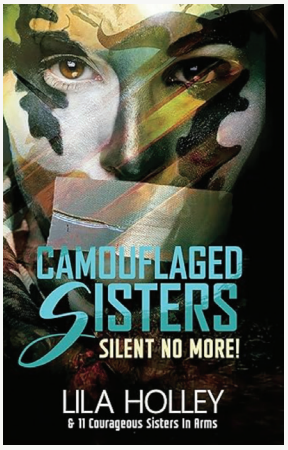
2

Grace Hopper and the Invention of the Information Age by Kurt W. Beyer



3

Camouflaged Sister Silent No More! By Lila Holley



The She Served Initiative celebrates the voices and experiences of women in the military, not only through their service stories, but also through the books that have shaped and inspired them. A favorite tradition within She Served is asking participants to share meaningful book recommendations, offering insight into history, leadership, resilience, and personal struggle.

RECOMMENDED BY MARILLA CUSHMAN (FEATURED ON PAGES 36-37) *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution by retired Air Force Major General Jeanne Holm*. This book traces the long history of women in military service, beginning with those who disguised themselves as men during the Revolutionary and Civil War eras just to serve. Holm highlights the persistent institutional barriers within a tradition-bound military culture, as well as the ongoing fight for recognition, equality, and status—making clear that the journey toward full inclusion is still unfinished.

SANDRA LAWRENCE (FEATURED ON PAGES 40-41) recommends *Grace Hopper and the Invention of the Information Age by Kurt W. Beyer.* This biography dives deep into the life of Grace Hopper, a pioneering computer scientist whose contributions helped shape modern computing. Moving beyond the simplified "Amazing Grace" narrative, the book reveals her critical role in developing the first compiler and her influence on COBOL, underscoring her lasting impact on the digital world.

WANDA "SISTAH SOLDIER" PETTY (FEATURED ON PAGES 48-49) highlights *Camouflaged Sisters by Lila Holley: Silent No More, a powerful and deeply personal collection of stories from twelve women veterans.* These women share experiences not from combat zones, but from the hidden battles within their own lives—addressing issues such as sexual trauma, domestic violence, depression, and PTSD. The book sheds light on the often-overlooked emotional and psychological challenges faced by women in the military, emphasizing the strength required to confront them.

Together, these recommendations reflect the spirit of the She Served initiative—honoring both the historical contributions and the deeply personal journeys of women who have served.

Host a *She Served* Veteran photo shoot

INTERESTED IN HOSTING A SHE SERVED EVENT?
Bring a powerful, one-of-a-kind experience to your community by honoring women Veterans through storytelling and portraiture. A She Served photoshoot is more than a session—it's a meaningful tribute that captures service, strength and legacy. If you're looking to host something memorable, impactful and deeply personal, this is a special opportunity to make it happen.

GET STARTED
Visit: **https://sheservedinitiative.org/**

PHOTOSHOOT EXPERIENCE
Exclusively for women Veterans, each participant receives a 30-minute professional photoshoot and is encouraged to bring personal props or mementos that reflect their story.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS A HOST
Participating Veterans will complete a brief intake form, share a short biography of their military and post-military life and provide a clear photo in uniform (official service photo preferred). With advance scheduling, about 10 Veterans can be accommodated per day during the photography session.

EXPENSES
There is no cost for Veterans or hosts to participate. Hosts are asked to assist with travel and hospitality, including lodging, airfare and/or mileage reimbursement and meals.

LEARN MORE AND CONNECT
Visit **https://sheservedinitiative.org/hosting/** for full details and to become a host.







VISIT OUR WEBSITE!
Explore the She Served image galleries, purchase current and past issues of the magazine and shop exclusive merchandise — including apparel, travel mugs and water bottles.

Discover more at:
https://sheservedinitiative.org

SCAN TO DONATE

*Did you know **women** are the **fastest-growing** segment of the military and Veteran populations? That's just one of the reasons we bring you ...* ***She Served.***

*Every individual featured in this magazine is **unique**, yet they share **similar** experiences from active duty service to what happened in the days, months and years after She Served.*

*We hope the Veterans we featured in this issue of this magazine **inspired you** with examples of their leadership, resourcefulness, knowledge and sacrifice.*

Your generosity enables us to continue the She Served Initiative. Donations help us continue to tell the **amazing stories of our women Veterans.** Additionally, it furthers our mission to raise awareness that women served in the United States Military **and** are Veterans too.

You can make a donation on the website, **https://sheservedinitiative.org/donate** or scan the QR code.

She Served is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization registered in the State of Georgia.