

Women's History Month

Speakers Toolkit

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Office of the Chief of Public Affairs

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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM) : FACT SHEET

Women's History Month (WHM) is a worldwide observance that highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. It is celebrated during March in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, corresponding with International Women's Day on March 8.

This Year's WHM Theme

Women's Education – Women's Empowerment

Purpose of the Army's WHM Celebration

To demonstrate the Army's commitment to diversity and to highlight the many opportunities the Army offers women.

Background

- Women have served in the U.S. Army since 1775.
- Men and women train together in basic training units.
- Female Soldiers serve in a variety of officer and enlisted specialties.
- 70% of the positions in the Army are open to women.
- Women serve in about 97% of all Army occupations.

Fiscal Year 2011 Army Statistics

<u>Component</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number of Women</u>	<u>Total Strength</u>
Active duty	14.0%	76,015	561,437
Army National Guard	15.0%	52,707	361,561
Army Reserve	23.0%	47,396	204,803
General Officers*	6.86%	29	423

Key Messages

- Female Soldiers play a vital role in today's Army.
- Leadership opportunities for women abound in the Army.
- Women serve in a variety of missions and in many capacities.
- Female Soldiers' patriotism, fighting spirit and ability reaches across cultures and strengthens our Nation's presence around the world.
- Our Nation remains free today as a result of the bravery, excellence and selfless service of both male and female Soldiers.

Army Senior Leader Message

Across many years and cultures, women have fought to be empowered and treated equal to their male counterparts. Education has long been considered the great equalizer in society, giving every person -- regardless of race, gender or creed -- the knowledge and skills necessary to make the most opportunity.

**Includes USAR/ARNG Mobilized GOs*

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM) : HELPFUL TALKING POINTS

Women's History Month a time to celebrate the contributions and honor the sacrifices and accomplishments of women who not only shaped the Army but our nation as well.

Throughout our history, women have fought to be educated, empowered, and treated equal to their male counterparts.

After the American Revolution, basic educational opportunities for men and women were created as a safeguard for democracy.

That commitment to education laid the foundation for women to make indelible contributions in every field, including national security and defense.

The Army offers unique opportunities for women to excel that include unique education and training and leadership opportunities.

Women are critical to our success overseas, serving as truck drivers, doctors, photographers, pilots, marksmen, parachutists, lawyers, computer technicians, military police, intelligence specialists, drill sergeants, veterinarians, linguists, chaplains, squad leaders, commanders, four-star generals and much more.

Female Engagement Teams act as ambassadors allowing Soldiers to build personal relationships that are a cornerstone of the Afghan culture and a key to the success of counterinsurgency strategy.

Today, more than 175,000 women in serve in an Army uniform; we value these women as well as the diversity and strength they bring to our force.

Our nation owes its strength to its Army, and the Army owes its strength to the diversity of its Soldiers and its civilian workforce.

The Army embraces the diverse strengths each Soldier and civilian bring to our force.

Each Soldier and civilian play a critical role in strengthening the nation and our Army.

The nation and its Army have benefitted tremendously from the distinguished service and selfless sacrifice of women.

Throughout our Army's 238-year history, women have served this nation valiantly and with distinction, both in times of peace and war.

Our Army remains immensely proud of the accomplishments and the sacrifices of these brave women as they continue to courageously serve as Soldiers, civilians and family members.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM): NOTABLE WOMEN & EVENTS IN ARMY HISTORY

REVOLUTIONARY WAR

During the American Revolutionary War, women served the U.S. Army in traditional roles as nurses, seamstresses and cooks for troops in camp. Some found employment with officers' families or as mess cooks. Women employed as laundresses, cooks, or nurses were subject to the Army's rules of conduct. Though not in uniform, these women shared Soldiers' hardships including inadequate housing and little compensation. A few courageous women served in combat either alongside their husbands or disguised as men.

1778 - Mary Ludwig Hays "Molly Pitcher" McCauley carried water to men on the battlefield in Monmouth, N.J., and replaced her husband, William Hays, when he collapsed at his cannon.

1779 - Margaret Corbin became first woman given a pension for military service. During the attack on Fort Mifflin in 1776, she handled ammunition for her husband's canon. When he was fatally wounded, she took his place at the cannon until she also was wounded.

Ann Simpson Davis was handpicked by Gen. George Washington to carry messages to his generals while the army was in eastern Pennsylvania.

CIVIL WAR

As regiments faced the reality of war, some women rallied Soldiers to fight, bearing the regimental colors on the march, served as nurses and doctors or even participated in battle.

1864 - Clara Barton was appointed by Union General Benjamin Butler as the "lady in charge" of the hospitals at the front of the Army of the James. She established the American Red Cross in 1881.

1865 - Dr. Mary Walker became the only woman to have received the Medal of Honor.

1866 - Cathay Williams disguises herself as a man to serve as a Buffalo Soldier.

SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

1898 – The Surgeon General requested and promptly received congressional authority to appoint women nurses under contract to support the war effort.

1901 - After 1,500 women served as Army Nurses in the Spanish American War, the Army Nurse Corps was established; Dita H. Kinney, a former contract nurse, was officially appointed the first Superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM): NOTABLE WOMEN & EVENTS IN ARMY HISTORY

WORLD WAR I

More than 35,000 American women served in the military during World War I. More than half of the women who served in the United States armed forces in World War I – roughly 21,000 in all – belonged to the Army Nurse Corps, and performed heroic service in camp and station hospitals at home and abroad. The Army Signal Corps recruited and trained at least 230 telephone operators – the “Hello Girls” - for duty overseas.

1917 - Six base (general) hospitals with more than 400 nurses sailed for France for service in the British Expeditionary Forces.

1918 - The Army School of Nursing was authorized by the Secretary of War as an alternative to utilizing nurses' aides in Army hospitals. Annie W. Goodrich was appointed under contract as Chief Inspector Nurse for the Army; she became the first dean of the Army School of Nursing.

WORLD WAR II

Although the idea of women in the Army other than the Army Nurse Corps was not completely abandoned following World War I, it was not until the threat of world war loomed again that renewed interest was given to this issue.

1941 - Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers proposed legislation for Women's Army Corps

1942 - Roosevelt established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) in 1942; Oveta Culp Hobby was named the first director.

1942 - Nancy Harkness Love, with the support of the U.S. Air Transport Command, organized 25 women pilots into the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron. Jacqueline Cochran established the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD). The WAAC and WFTD merged into the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) in 1943.

1942 – Mary McLeod Bethune and Eleanor Roosevelt, both African-Americans, were admitted into the first class of officer candidates,

1943 – Women's Army Corps (WAC) established as part of the U.S. Army.

1945 – The 6888th Central Postal Battalion, under the command of Maj. Charity Adams, deployed to England and then France and was responsible for redirecting mail to millions of allies on the European continent.

1945 – By the end of the war 140,000 WACs and 56,000 Army nurses served the nation.

1948 – Pres. Truman signs the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, enabling a presence in the military.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM): NOTABLE WOMEN & EVENTS IN ARMY HISTORY

KOREAN WAR

On June 27, 1950, President Harry S. Truman ordered U.S. air and naval forces into the Republic of Korea. With the outbreak of the Korean Conflict, the WAC strength authorization increased. WAC officers were involuntarily recalled to active duty, and those who had been the first to enlist when the Women's Armed Services Integration Act passed in 1948, were caught in involuntary extensions.

1950 - The Korean Women's Army Corps was around a group of policewomen trained by a former WAC, Alice A. Parrish.

1950 - The Army initiated action to establish a permanent training center and home for the WAC at Fort McClellan, Ala.

1956 - The new WAC training center opened in early 1956, and included a headquarters with supporting personnel, a basic training battalion and a Women's Army Corps School; Lt. Col. Eleanore C. Sullivan was the first commander.

VIETNAM

Women served in Vietnam in many support staff assignments, in hospitals, crewed on medical evacuation flights, with MASH units, hospital ships, headquarters offices and numerous other clerical, medical, intelligence and personnel positions. There were women officers and enlisted women, and the women suffered the same hardships as the men and often were in the line of fire from rockets and mortars.

1962 – Maj. Anne Marie Doering, the first WAC officer, is assigned to Vietnam.

1967 – Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson removed promotion restrictions on women officers in the Armed Forces. Thereafter, it was possible for more than one woman in each service to hold the rank of colonel and for women to achieve general officer rank.

1968 - Sgt. Maj. Yzetta L. Nelson became the first WAC promoted to command sergeant major.

1970 - The first WAC officer to be promoted to brigadier general was Col. Elizabeth P. Hoisington.

1971 - Col. Mildred Inez Caroon Bailey was promoted to brigadier general concurrently with being appointed as WAC director.

1972 - Enlisted women entered Drill Sergeants Courses at Fort Jackson, S.C.; all military occupational specialties (MOSs) opened to WAC officers and enlisted women except those that might require combat training or duty.

1975 – The ninth and last Director of the Women's Army Corps, Col. Mary E. Clarke, was promoted to brigadier general.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM): NOTABLE WOMEN & EVENTS IN ARMY HISTORY

POST VIETNAM

The advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 made a large difference in the numbers of women coming into the Army. As a result of recruitment and greater opportunities, the total number of WACs in the Army increased from 12,260 in 1972 to 52,900 in 1978. The move to the All-Volunteer Force led the Army to begin recruiting women aggressively for the Reserve components, and by the end of September 1978, the Army Reserve had approximately 25,000 WACs and the Army National Guard had over 13,000.

1975 - President Ford signed a law that permitted women to be admitted to all service academies beginning in 1976; the Secretary of Defense directed elimination of involuntary discharge of military women because of pregnancy and parenthood; the Army instituted mixed-gender Basic Combat Training.

1977 - The first gender-integrated class of Military Police One-Station-Unit-Training began at Fort McClellan.

1978 – The WAC is disestablished as a separate Corps; women are now in the Army, serving directly in unites next to their male counterparts.

1983 – More than 100 women participated in *Operation Urgent Fury* in Grenada.

1989 – More than 600 women participated in *Operation Just Cause* in Panama; Capt. Linda Bray led 30 Soldiers of the 988th Military Police company into combat to seize an enemy objective near Panama City.

1990 – More than 24,000 women serve in *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*.

TODAY

2005 - Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester, Kentucky Army National Guard becomes the first woman to earn the Silver Star for direct combat action since WWII.

2007 - Spc. Monica Brown is awarded the Silver Star.

2008 - Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody became the first female four-star general in military history and also became the first female to lead a major Army command (Army Materiel Command).

2010 – The Army establishes Female Engagement Teams to assist Special Operations Command units in their dealings with female locals while operating in Afghan villages.

2011 - Lt. Gen. Patricia D. Horoho became the first female and first nurse to become surgeon general of the Army.

2012 – The Army announces its intent to open six occupational specialties, combat battalion staff assignments and more than 13,000 positions to women.

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

CATHAY WILLIAMS – BUFFALO SOLDIER

Freed from slavery during the Civil War, Cathay Williams was swept up by the Union XIII Corps in Jefferson City, Missouri during the Civil War and pressed into service as a cook and laundress. She ended up in the household of General Philip Sheridan before heading out West in 1866 to disguise herself as a man and join the Thirty-eighth United States Colored Troops Infantry. To fit in as a member of the Buffalo Soldiers, Cathay cut her hair, wore baggy clothing, changed her name to William Cathay, and served courageously with this distinguished group of African-American Infantrymen. At the time, medical examinations were not required so Cathay was able to conceal her identity for two years until she contracted smallpox, was discovered by a post physician, and was promptly given a discharge from the Army. Williams' discharge paperwork from the Army is on record with the National Archives in Washington, D.C.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

THE ARBOGAST SISTERS

Raised in Ohio, sisters Pearl and Lora Arbogast served as Army nurses during World War I. Pearl, the youngest in her family, was a career nurse who completed her training at the Protestant Hospital Training School for Nurses in Columbus. With the onset of the war, Pearl became certified as a Red Cross Nurse then later joined the Army Nurse Corps. Lora, on the other hand, was a teacher by trade. She left education in 1918 and was appointed as a Student Nurse in the Medical Department earning \$15.00 a month. Lora received her medical training at the Army School of Nursing at Walter Reed General Hospital. The Arbogast sisters nursed wounded soldiers as well as victims of the 1918 influenza pandemic. After the war, both left the Army Nurse Corps but continued nursing the rest of their lives.

Lora Arbogast



Pearl Arbogast – On Left



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE

As the only African-American woman in the Roosevelt Administration during World War II, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune played a critical role in bringing black women into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). Prior to the war, Bethune had established herself as an innovative educator, a civil and human rights leader, and a proponent of women's rights. She founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1935 and served as an advisor to five U. S. presidents. Working closely with Eleanor Roosevelt, Bethune insisted that African-American women be admitted to the first class of WAAC officer candidates. Playing an active role in recruiting qualified candidates, Dr. Bethune's dream became a reality when the first class of 440 officer candidates entered the army training center at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, in July of 1942. Forty members of that first class were African-American women.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

CAPTAIN CHARLOTTE MCGRAW

Captain Charlotte McGraw was the only official Women's Army Corps (WAC) photographer during WWII. After joining in 1942, McGraw's civilian skills as a photographer were put to use when she was assigned to take recruiting and publicity photos of the WAC Training Center in Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Recognizing the professionalism of her technique, the Army designated McGraw as the official WAC photographer. Sent abroad to North Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific, Captain McGraw produced a vast body of work that captured the experiences of Army women overseas during World War II. Her images were published by the Army, as well as the nation's leading newspapers and magazines. As an archival collection, they document a pivotal time of change in the history of the US Army.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

6888TH CENTRAL POSTAL BATTALION

The 6888th Central Postal Battalion was the only unit of African-American WACs to deploy overseas during World War II. Under the command on Major Charity Adams, who later became a Lieutenant Colonel, the group arrived in Europe in February of 1945. These 800 women were stationed first in Birmingham, England and then eventually moved on to Paris, France. The battalion was responsible for the redirection of mail to over seven million U.S. personnel in the European Theater of Operations. When mail could not be delivered to the address on the face of the envelope, it was sent to the Postal Directory to be redirected. The 6888th kept an updated information card on each person in the theater. These WACs worked three eight-hour shifts seven days a week to clear out the tremendous backlog of Christmas mail. Each shift averaged 65,000 pieces of mail. The Six Triple Eight earned themselves a great amount of respect for their hard work and dedication.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

MAJOR CHARITY ADAMS

Major Charity Adams served as the Battalion Commander of the only African-American Women's Army Corps unit to be deployed overseas during World War II. Entering the WAC with the first Officer Candidate class in July of 1942, Adams rose in the ranks and quickly proved she was qualified for greater responsibility. Commanding the 6888th Central Postal Battalion (nicknamed the six triple eight), Adams and her 800 troops were first stationed in Birmingham, England. Shortly after, they moved on to Rouen, France and finally Paris. The 6888th was responsible for redirecting the mail for over seven million allies in the European Theater of Operations. They worked three eight-hour shifts a day, averaging 65,000 pieces of mail per shift. Although faced with the hardships and inequalities of segregation in the United States Army, Major Adams and her battalion not only accomplished their mission but earned the respect of their fellow soldiers.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

SARAH KEYES and DOVEY JOHNSON ROUNDTREE

Sarah Keys and Dovey Johnson Roundtree are not well known historical figures, but their stories stand as proud moments in time for the United States Army and the Women's Army Corps. In 1952, Private Keys was a young WAC headed home on leave to North Carolina aboard a Carolina Coach bus. When the bus reached the state line at Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, the bus driver told Keys to move to the back of the bus and vacate her seat for a white Marine. A Supreme Court ruling in 1946 forbid states from subjecting interstate travelers to discriminatory seating practices but private carriers, able to circumvent federal and state laws, continued this degrading practice. Private Keys refused the order and was quickly jailed and found guilty of disorderly conduct. Private Keys' case, with the backing of the NAACP, was referred a former WAC and accomplished Washington D. C. lawyer named Dovey Johnson Roundtree.

During World War II, Roundtree was one of 40 black women in the first class of 440 female officer candidates. She served in the Women's Army Corps throughout the war and then used her GI Bill to fund her graduate education Howard University School of Law. With a painful past filled with injustices, Roundtree felt a connection to Keys through both military service and because of racial discrimination. Their partnership and hard fought legal battle took them all the way to the Supreme Court and resulted in a ruling by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in November, 1955, stating that it was *in-fact* illegal to assign seats based on race or color on interstate buses. The ruling went as far as to outlaw segregation in bus and train stations and had an enormous impact on Civil Rights battles yet to come. Rosa Park's defiance in Montgomery Alabama came three years after Private Keys refusal to move, and less that one month after the Keys' ICC ruling. Keys and Roundtree joined forces to helped end discriminatory laws in the United States and provide a proud legacy for the Women's Army Corps and the United States Army.



Sarah Louis Keys



Dovey Johnson Roundtree

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

SERGEANT MAJOR BETTY ADAMS

Sergeant Major Betty Adams enlisted in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in 1952 and was trained as a stenographer early in her career. As the situation in Vietnam intensified, Adams' excellence in training, administration and recruiting was recognized when she was selected as the first enlisted advisor to the South Vietnamese Women's Armed Forces Corps (WAFC). In 1965, First Sergeant Adams stepped off a plane in Saigon and went to work establishing a five week training program in Vietnam that closely paralleled the WAC program. She even learned to count cadence in Vietnamese. Adams went on to have a twenty-three year long, highly decorated career in the Women's Army Corps. When asked what motivated her to devote her life to military service, Adams replied, "I love to travel. And you get such a good education dealing with other people all the time."



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

SECOND LIEUTENANT MARCELLA HAYES

Marcella Hayes was the first African-American woman to graduate from Army Flight School in Fort Rucker, Alabama. Receiving her Army aviator wings in November of 1979, Second Lieutenant Hayes also became the first black female pilot in the United States Armed Forces. Hayes' interest in flying began when she was an ROTC cadet at the University of Wisconsin. Her helicopter flight training required she earn her paratrooper badge as well as pass the rigorous Flight Aptitude Selection Test and the flight physical. Hayes found the instruments phase of training to be the most challenging, but she received an outstanding grade on her final test, a check-ride. Hayes was the 55th woman to earn her pilots wings and she retired from the Army as a Transportation Corps Lieutenant Colonel.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

SERGEANT CHERYL STEARNS

Sergeant Cheryl Stearns was the first female member of the Army's elite parachute team, the Golden Knights. She began skydiving while she was in college and then joined the Army in 1977 in order to obtain the best training and coaching. She completed her basic training as a distinguished honor graduate in her military occupation specialty and then turned her attention to becoming a world champion parachutist. Sergeant Stearns eventually became one of the most decorated skydivers in the world and retired as a Master Sergeant in the Army Reserve in 2005.



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER FIVE CORAL JONES

Coral Jones made Army history in 2010 when she became the first African-American female to be promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Five in the active Army Adjutant General Corps. She accomplished another milestone when she became the first female Chief Warrant Officer of the Adjutant General Corps. Reflecting on her career that spans three decades, Chief Warrant Officer Five Jones fondly remembered the time she was a young detachment commander in fox holes with her Soldiers. "Being out with my Soldiers getting dirty is one of my most memorable moments," Jones said. She also acknowledges that her most challenging experiences occurred during Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, Alabama. While she sometimes had moments of doubt, in the end Jones decided, "I wanted it bad enough and I stuck with it. It was very worth it." The Army clearly agrees!



**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM):
BIOGRAPHIES OF ARMY WOMEN IN HISTORY**

SERGEANT SHERRI JO GALLAGHER

Sergeant Sherri Jo Gallagher became the first female to win the Army's Best Warrior Competition in 2010. Growing up in a family of competitive riflemen, Gallagher credits teamwork as the basis of her success. As a member of the U. S. Marksmanship Unit, Gallagher deployed to Afghanistan to help train Afghani female officers on their weapons. Speaking to a group of high school students at the Army Women's Museum at Fort Lee, Sergeant Gallagher told the students, "The Army is my team, and it's my family . . . they helped me get to where I am now, and I will help the team get to where they are going."



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH (WHM): WEBSITES

Women's History Month

<http://womenshistorymonth.gov/index.html>

The National Women's History Month Project

<http://www.nwhp.org/whm/history.php>

White House Women's History Month Proclamation

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/03/01/womens-history-month-proclamation>

Department of Defense – Women's History Month

http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2012/0212_womenshistory/

U.S. Army Women's Museum

<http://www.awm.lee.army.mil>

Women in the U.S. Army

<http://www.army.mil/women/>

Women's Service with the Revolutionary Army

http://www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume7/nov08/women_revarmy.cfm

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/museum/history/claraBarton.asp>

The Army Nurse Corps

<http://www.army.mil/women/nurses.html>

The Women's Army Corps

<http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/WAC/WAC.HTM>

Women's Army Corps Veterans Association

<http://www.armywomen.org/wacHistory.shtml>

Profiles of Army Women

<http://www.army.mil/women/profiles.html>

Female Engagement Teams

http://www.army.mil/article/47832/Female_engagement_team_finds_strength_behind_burkas/

Army to Open Six Jobs, Combat Battalion Staff Positions to Women

<http://www.army.mil/article/73515/>

Stand To! – Women's History Month: *Women's Education – Women's Empowerment*

<http://www.army.mil/standto/archive/issue.php?issue=2012-03-05>

Army Senior Leader Message

<http://usarmy.vo.llnwd.net/e2/c/downloads/237122.pdf>