

USAWM WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2015
RESOURCE LIST

Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives

In keeping with the 2015 National Theme of *Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives* the staff of the United States Army Women's Museum searched our vast archival collection and out of thousands of possibilities, selected fourteen great American women whose stories, when woven into the larger historical landscape, exemplify the breadth and width of women's service to America. Since 1775, men and women have stood shoulder to shoulder in defense of our nation and the individuals selected here represent courage and loyalty spanning two centuries. The women featured in these pages span generations from the camp followers of the American Revolution to modern day warriors. They represent pioneering women on the battlefield during the Civil War, nurses and telephone operators in World War I, and the first enlisted women in the Army who joined during World War II. Our featured soldiers helped institute racial desegregation in the Army, were the first to take on new ranks and challenges, and led the Army in this new century. We wish we could feature them all!

UNITED STATES ARMY

Women's History Month 2015 • *Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives*

WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH RESOURCES

U.S. ARMY WOMEN’S MUSEUM

Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Army Women’s Museum (USAWM) and Women’s History Month. Listed below are several resources that will ensure you have a thoughtful and factual observance.

This year’s theme is *Weaving the Stories of Women’s Lives*. Visit the National Women’s History Project’s website (<http://www.nwhp.org/>) for more information about the theme and their resources. In addition, the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute’s website (<http://www.deomi.org/>) contains a number of resources for this observance including presentations, fact sheets, and posters.

U.S. ARMY WOMEN’S MUSEUM WEBSITE: www.awm.lee.army.mil

The museum website contains a wealth of information. Under the Research Tab you can find samples of some of the holdings we have here at the USAWM – both by individual or topic. You can also find resources about common research topics, generalized information, and bibliographies here.

Archive:

Submitting a Research Request
Visiting the Archives

Research Topics:

Common Research Topics
General Information – Women in the Army
Books and Bibliographies

Collections:

Individual Collections
Collections by Topic Area

Research Links:

Listing of sites relative to the history of women in the Army

Also take the museum’s virtual tour which is loaded with extra archives and collections information in addition to a complete 360° tour of the museum galleries.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

“Like” the USAWM on Facebook. There you can find up to the minute details about the museum.

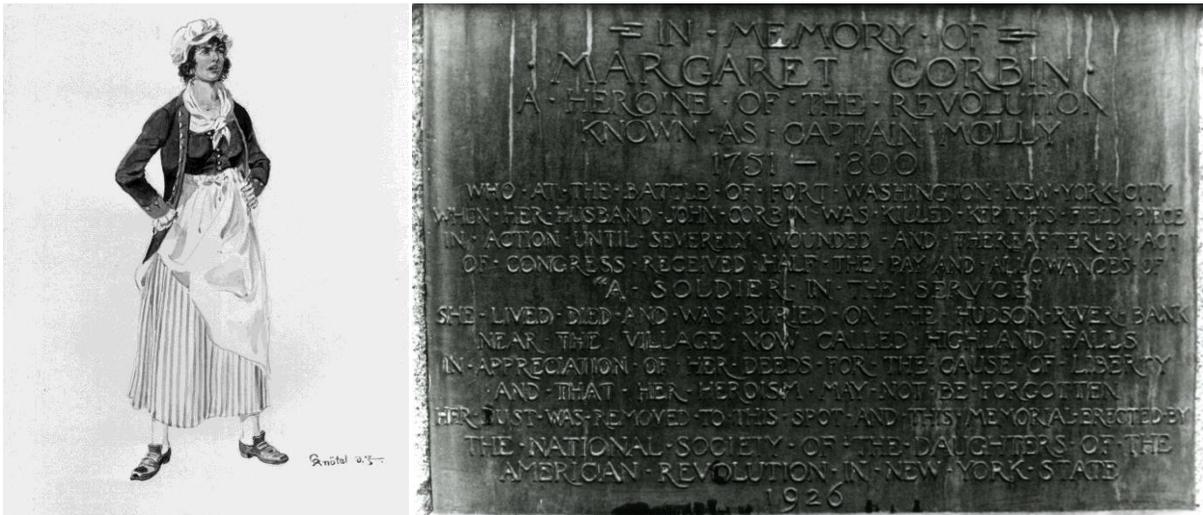
The Facebook timeline provides an overview of significant people and events concerning the contributions of women to the Army since the Revolutionary War. Click on the links under “Milestones” to learn more.

Also explore the photo albums the museum has posted. Each month our archivist posts an “Archive of the Month” which highlights interesting collections found in the USAWM collections. There are also photos of recent happenings at the museum.

MARGARET CORBIN

Camp Follower

Margaret Corbin was a Revolutionary War camp follower who followed her husband, John, off to war. She and other camp followers performed many roles for the Continental Army such as laundress and cooks, that later became jobs of the Quartermaster. Margaret found herself on the battlefield at Fort Washington in New York. When her husband was mortally wounded, Margaret took up his artillery post and carried on the fight. She was said to be such a good shot that other men on the field looked over to see who was firing at John's post. She was wounded in the battle and sustained major injuries to her arm and leg which required hospital stays for over ten years. Acknowledging that she suffered a disability in the attack, the Continental Congress later awarded Corbin a pension of half the monthly pay drawn by a soldier in the service. Margaret Corbin became the first woman pensioned by the government on July 6, 1779 for military service, making her our first servicewoman.



DR. MARY WALKER

Civil War Surgeon & Medal of Honor Recipient

Doctor Mary Walker was a contracted surgeon for the Union Army during the Civil War and the only woman in our nation's history to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. She was one of only a handful of female physicians at this time in American history. President Andrew Johnson awarded Walker the Medal for her services at the First Battle of Bull Run in Manassas, Virginia. "Patriotic zeal" and "action involving actual conflict with the enemy" were noted justifications for her award. Yet, 50 years later, President Woodrow Wilson signed a law decreeing that the Medal of Honor be awarded only for "action involving actual conflict with the enemy" and over 900 medals were stripped from veterans – including that of Dr. Mary Walker. She refused to return the medal and was in fact buried with her award. Years later, long after her death, Dr. Walker's medal was restored to her family.



CATHAY WILLIAMS

Buffalo Soldier

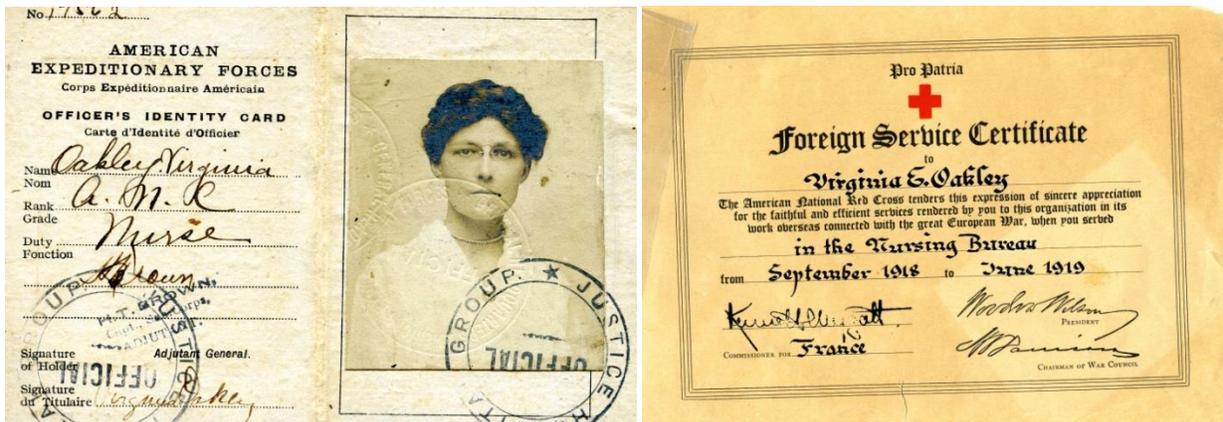
Freed from slavery during the Civil War, Cathay Williams was swept up by the Union XIII Corps in Jefferson City, Missouri, during the Civil War and pressed into service as a cook and laundress. She ended up in the household of General Philip Sheridan before heading out West in 1866 to disguise herself 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.



VIRGINIA EARLY OAKLEY

World War I Army Nurse Corps

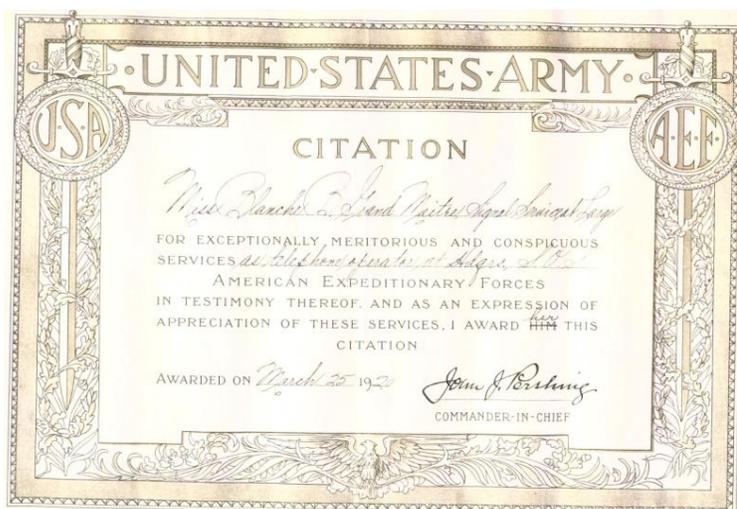
Virginia Early Oakley spent most of her early life in Richmond, Virginia, and completed her nursing training in 1910. She served as hospital superintendent for five years in Washington D.C. and Richmond before World War One began. She spent two years in the Army Nurse Corps during WWI, spending her time overseas at Army Base Hospital 45 in Toul, France from 1918-1919. Oakley is also known as the woman who designed a new Army nurse's cap that became part of the uniform for all Veterans Administration nurses from the late 1920s through WWII. Oakley had 36 years in the nursing profession, almost three-fourths of which were spent in the care of servicemen.



MARIE LOUISE RUFFE

World War I Telephone Operator

Marie Louise Ruffe was born in Salies-su-Salat, Haute-Garonne, France on January 4, 1892. In April 1912, Marie Louise and her sister Pauline left France for America to stay with their uncle in the San Francisco Bay area. Prior to the war Marie Louise was a milliner, meaning she made women's hats. Then in 1918 when the Army asked for bilingual telephone operators to work in France, Marie Louise volunteered with her sister, Pauline 'Pely'. Marie Louise was sent to France in the summer of 1918 possibly aboard the Red Star Line 'SS Lapland' or the Generale Transatlantique 'Le Havre'. Women in the Signal Corps were paid various salaries but we know that Marie Louise was being paid \$60 a month, quite a nice paycheck. She stayed in France until 1919, returning to San Francisco going back to work in fashion. It was not until May 1927 that Marie Louise became a naturalized U.S. citizen. Marie Louise passed away on June 14, 1975.



MAJOR CHARITY ADAMS EARLY

6888th Postal Battalion

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 "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.



FIRST SERGEANT IDEL ANDERSON

149th Headquarters Company

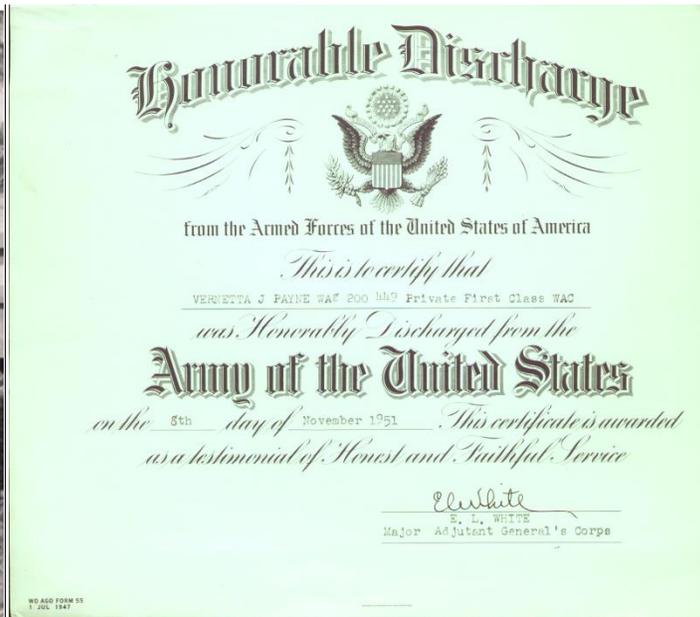
First Sergeant (1SG) Idel Anderson enlisted into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) on August 28, 1942 in San Francisco, California. The "auxiliary" status meant that women were not allowed to serve overseas. However, in December 1943 the 149th WAAC Post Headquarters Company was activated and by January WAACs were serving in North Africa completing duties within General Eisenhower's headquarters. 1SG Anderson was stationed with the 149th in both North Africa and later in Italy. Her first assignment in North Africa was as a "weapons' carrier driver", before the WAAC became the WAC. She was awarded a Bronze Star for her service overseas as a WAC from 1943 to 1945. Her citation reads "For meritorious service in connection with military operations in North Africa and Italy from 23 Aug 1943 to 23 Aug 1945. Assuming duties of a first sergeant during a period when the highest degree of initiative and responsibility were required to cope with all situations. Portrayed personal interest in every member of the unit and therefore had first-hand knowledge of the morale and efficiency of the organization, which in turn was of utmost value to the successful operation of the 666th WAC Headquarters Company."



PRIVATE FIRST CLASS VERNETTA PAYNE JONES

Racial Integration of the Women's Army Corps

Private First Class (PFC) Vernetta Payne was born August 21, 1929 in Oxford, North Carolina. She had moved to Washington D.C. and was working in sales at Langston Food Shop prior to her service in the WAC. PFC Payne's military service was short in length but it took place during an amazing time of change in the US Army. She enlisted in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) on 8 December 1949 in Washington D.C. At that time, the WAC had a 10% quota for black women, and as a result, every seventh increment arriving at the training center at Camp Lee, Virginia had an all-black unit. Jones became part of the last segregated "Company B" when she attended the WAC Training Program for Clerks from March through May of 1950. The first integrated class began training in April 1950. Jones went on to attend the Personnel Administration Course and the Adjutant General's School in Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. She ended her military career working in the Headquarters Company for the 6th Infantry Division at Fort Ord, California. She went on to a career with the federal government.



SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SYLVIA DOBSON

Female Drill Sergeants

The Army's expansion of the Women's Army Corps in the 1960s and 1970s meant there was a larger need for trained women assistant platoon sergeants and drill sergeants. Six WACs graduated as the Army's first women drill sergeants from Fort Jackson, South Carolina, sporting the hat and all, on April 7th 1972. Out of the six, four WACs ranked among the top ten – one was Sergeant First Class Sylvia Dobson. The WACs took separate physical fitness testing but attended all the same classes as the men. Dobson remained at Fort Jackson upon completion of the course as an instructor and TAC NCO (Tactical Non-commissioned Officer) to supervise future WAC students. Of her experience SFC Dobson stated "The Fort Jackson Academy taught us how to teach...we had never before studied the manual on drill and ceremonies in depth. But we did here". Six more WACs would follow in attending Drill Sergeant School and graduate in May 1972. WACs like SFC Dobson not only took their place beside their male counterparts but they helped pave the way for future female drill sergeants.



SERGEANT MAJOR BETTY ADAMS

Women's Army Corps in Vietnam

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."



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR YZETTA NELSON

Female Command Sergeant Majors

Command Sergeant Major Yzetta Nelson joined the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in 1944. Her first assignment was as a clerk-typist at an Army Air Corps base. From there, Nelson quickly moved up the ranks serving in Germany, Washington D.C., and Hawaii. In 1966, Nelson was promoted to Sergeant Major, the highest enlisted rank at the time of the WAC Training Battalion. SGM Nelson's hard work and dedication were recognized by the Army in March 1968 when she became the first women promoted to the new rank of Command Sergeant Major. CSM Nelson continued to serve in the WAC until her retirement in 1970 where she received the Army Commendation Medal for the fifth time.



Fort McClellan News
February 6, 1968
Port McClellan, Ala. 36708

**At McClellan—
Ramsey, Nelson First Command Sergeants Major**

Center Sergeant Major
Jurtie S. Ramsey and WAC
Training Battalion Sergeant
Major Yzetta L. Nelson
have been selected to
be among the Army's first
102 command sergeants-
major.

They were selected from
among 218 nominees for the
Command Sergeants Major
Program, which was authorized
last year by the
Chief of Staff of the Army.
The program is designed to
identify, select and manage
the careers of the
Army's finest sergeants-
major at the highest level
of command.

Individuals selected
are subject to worldwide
assignment by the Department
of the Army at any
time.

Sergeant Major Ramsey,
27-year veteran of Army
service, was assigned here
last May after a tour in
Vietnam where he served as
sergeant major of the 1st
Infantry Division and Command
Sergeant Major, 1st
Army, Vietnam.

Born in Hurricane, Va.,
he earned a special,
early graduation from high
school to enter the Army
in April 1941. Following
basic training, he volunteered
for parachute training,
was assigned to the
82nd Airborne Division in
England, and made the parachute
team at West Point.

Sergeant Major Nelson,
who is the first member of the
Women's Army Corps to
be selected for the Command
Sergeants Major Program,
joined the Army in
April 1944. Her career
includes three tours in
Germany, in 1946-48, 1955-
56 and 1959-61.

Prior to being assigned
to the WAC Training Battalion
in April 1966, she served
for five years as an
administrative communications
officer in the Office
of the Assistant
Chief of Staff for Intelligence
at Fort Belvoir, Ill.

Sergeant Major Nelson
served as a recruiter in
Memphis from 1955
to 1957. She has earned
the Army Commendation Medal
(see CGM9541-328A, p. 2)

National Children's
Dental Health Week
Mental Health Week, sponsored
Feb. 1-10 by the
American Dental Association,
is being observed
here by post personnel.
During the past two
weeks, 338 children from
the Ft. McClellan Elementary
School, Department of the
Army, participated in the
week-long dental health
program.

SGM Ramsey
SGM Nelson

BRIGADIER GENERAL MILDRED BAILEY

8th Director of the Women's Army Corps

Brigadier General Mildred Inez Bailey joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in the summer of 1942 and rose in the ranks to become one of only 9 Directors of the Women's Army Corps (WAC). Her career, which began when she was sent to Officer Candidate School at Fort Des Moines, Iowa as a member of the third class of WAACs, spanned over 30 years and captured the amazing opportunities afforded to women in the Army. Bailey spent World War II at Craig Air Force Base, Alabama. She remained in the WAC after the war and was assigned to Germany. She then spent the better part of the 1950s in Washington D.C. and by 1957 she reported to Fort McPherson, Georgia, where she served as the head of recruiting for the Southeastern United States for three years. By 1970 she was made Deputy Commander at the WAC Training Center and School at Fort McClellan, Alabama and on August 2, 1971 Bailey became the eighth Director of the Women's Army Corps and was promoted to Brigadier General. BG Bailey made a lasting impression in the Women's Army Corps with her flair for fashion. She hosted a fashion show entitled "Serving with Dignity and Pride" that traveled around the country helping to tell the history of women's contributions to the Army. She also designed the memorable "Bailey Hat". She retired from the army in July 1975.



COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR MILDRED KELLY

Female Command Sergeant Majors

Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Mildred Catherine Kelly was originally a high school teacher after receiving her Bachelors of Science in Chemistry and Mathematics from Knoxville College. She left her career as an educator and enlisted in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in 1950 because she wanted to do something different. She completed her basic and advanced individual training at Fort Lee, Virginia. The WAC had integrated racially for most training on post while the male soldiers and the society in the surrounding areas did not; calling the WAC Center and School "an island of integration in an otherwise sea of segregation" according to a local newspaper. Her first assignment was at Fort Knox, Kentucky, as a personnel clerk in the medical records section. She would later serve in St. Louis, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Japan, Fort McClellan, and Fort Hood before arriving in Alexandria to serve as a personnel supervisor for the enlisted personnel directorate at the U.S. Army Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN).

CSM Kelly had the distinction of becoming the first female African-American Sergeant Major in 1972 while serving at the Pentagon. Two years later became the first African American woman in the WAC appointed as a Command Sergeant Major while at Aberdeen Proving Grounds; she also became the first woman to achieve this rank at a major Army installation with a predominately male population. She said of her Army career, "It's been a long hard struggle but I've never regretted it... Keep in mind – that anything worth having is not easy to come by." CSM Kelly retired in 1976 and worked for the American Association of Dental Schools and served on various boards before her passing in January 2003.



18 THE PENTAGON NEWS Thursday, June 27, 1974

Aberdeen has female CSM

by Gary Lewis

Sergeant Major Mildred C. Kelly, formerly of the Personnel Administrative Branch of the U.S. Army Military Personnel Center, Alexandria, Va. (MILPERCEN), was promoted to the position of command sergeant major.

Kelly assumed her new role at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. Friday following the retirement of former Aberdeen Command Sergeant Major Arnold Wallace.

She enlisted in the WAC in 1950 after leaving her job as a high school teacher in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"I had a degree in chemistry and was teaching in high school," she said. "I didn't want to stay a teacher, although I never dreamed of staying in the service either."

Kelly took her Basic and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Ft. Lee, Va. and was transferred to Ft. Knox, Ky. as a personnel clerk in the medical records section.

In her third year in the Army, President Truman's administration extended enlistments. "After that," she said, "I became motivated to stay in, so I did."

From Ft. Knox, she was assigned to the Finance Center, then in St. Louis, Missouri and moved with the center to its present location, Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana.

Since then she has served in Japan, Ft. McClellan, Ala., Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., Ft. Hood, Texas and MILPERCEN.

Of her Army career, Kelly said, "It's been a long hard struggle but I've never regretted it. 'Keep in mind,' she added, "That anything worth having is not easy to come by."

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 BILLIE GRINDER

Modern Soldier

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Billie Grinder enlisted in the Tennessee National Guard in 2002 after graduating from Smyrna High School. Hailing from a military family, Billie's father, sister, husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law all served. CW2 Grinder and her husband were both helicopter pilots. A natural born leader, she quickly became the pilot-in-command. CW2 Grinder deployed with the 1st Squadron, 230th Cavalry Regiment to Iraq in June 2009. CW2 Grinder and another soldier in her unit, Captain Marcus Alford Sr., were severely wounded when their OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter crashed. Billie became the first female casualty of the Tennessee Air National Guard to die in Iraq. As part of CW2 Grinder's military honors, three helicopters flew overhead in formation during her funeral ceremony, including a Kiowa attack helicopter similar to the one she flew. CW2 Grinder is one of 125+ women to have died since September 11, 2001.



	U.S. Department of Defense Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release
On the Web: http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=13331 Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131/697-5132	Public contact: http://www.defense.gov/landing/comment.aspx or +1 (703) 428-0711 +1
IMMEDIATE RELEASE	No. 146-10 February 23, 2010
DOD Identifies Army Casualties	
The Department of Defense announced today the deaths of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. They died Feb. 21 in <u>Qayyarah</u> , Iraq, of wounds suffered when their OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter had a hard landing. The soldiers were assigned to the 1st Squadron, 230th Cavalry Regiment, <u>Louisville, Tenn.</u>	
Killed were:	
Capt. Marcus R. Alford, 28, of Knoxville, Tenn.	
Chief Warrant Officer Billie J. Grinder, 25, of Gallatin, Tenn.	
For more information, the media may contact the Tennessee National Guard public affairs office at 615-313-0662.	