**Female Firsts: Trailblazers in the U.S. Army**

Always the highlight of the Hall of Fame Luncheon is the introduction of the Hall of Fame Inductees. In keeping with the tradition of inducting Army women and groups of women that have blazed the trail for those behind them, the Foundation selected “Female Firsts: Women Who Broke Barriers.” This year the Foundation posthumously inducted Sergeant Major Carolyn James and Command Sergeant Major Yvette Nelson, the first female Sergeant Major and the first female Command Sergeant Major, respectively. Also honored was General (Ret) Ann Dunwoody, the first female four-star general. In addition to the individual honorees, the Foundation recognized the accomplishments and extraordinary service of the Women Who Served in the Korean War.

**Sergeant Major Carolyn James (1910-1991)** joined the Army in 1945. In 1952, she was one of the first WACs assigned to Korea during the war. During her tour in Korea, she was the secretary to Gen. James Van Fleet, commander of the 8th Army forces. They both served under the command of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. CSM James became the first in the WAC promoted to grade E-8. Therefore, she was the first WAC promoted to master sergeant (or first sergeant). In 1960, she was the first WAC promoted to sergeant major, E-9, while assigned to Headquaters, U.S. Army Air Defense Command, Colorado Springs. She died May 8, 1991 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Command Sergeant Major Yvette Nelson (1923-2013) faithfully served her country for 26 years. In 1968, while assigned to the WAC Training Battalion, she became the first WAC to achieve the rank of Command Sergeant Major. Upon retirement from the military, she continued her involvement and leadership in the Women’s Army Corps. She died May 14, 2011 at Brooklyn Center, Minnesota.

Sergeant Major of the Army (Ret) Ken Preston accepted the award on behalf of SGM James and CSM Nelson. SMA Preston served as the 15th Sergeant Major of the Army and is distinguished as being the longest serving SMA with more than seven years in the position.

**General Ann Dunwoody** was the first woman in U.S. military and uniformed service history to achieve a four-star officer rank, receiving her fourth star on November 14, 2008.

In 2005, General Dunwoody became the Army’s top-ranking female when she received the promotion to Lieutenant General and became the Army’s Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4 (logistics). She was nominated as Commanding General, U.S. Army Materiel Command, by President George W. Bush on June 23, 2008, and confirmed by the Senate one month later. On November 14, 2008, Gen Dunwoody became the first woman in U.S. military history to achieve the rank of four-star General. Her promotion ceremony was held at the Pentagon, with introductory speeches by U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Army Chief of Staff General George W. Casey. (continued on page 4)
Faces of the Fallen

SGT Donna R. Johnson

Sergeant Donna R. Johnson, 29, of Raeaford, NC died October 1, 2012 in Khost, Afghanistan along with two other soldiers of injuries suffered when an insurgent detonated a suicide vest while they were on dismounted patrol. They were all assigned to the 514th Military Police Company, 60th Troop Command, Winterville, NC.

A total of 14 people, including an Afghan translator and 4 Afghan police officers, were killed in the attack, when a suicide bomber drove his explosive-laden motorcycle into a crowd where a joint U.S.-Afghan patrol was operating. Three American soldiers and about 60 Afghan civilians were reported to have been wounded in the attack. The Taliban contacted the Western media afterwards to take credit for the carnage.


Donna leaves behind her spouse, Tracy Joe Dice of Raeford; parents, Mr. Philas Ray Johnson and Mrs. Sandra Guiton Johnson of Raeford; sister, Rene Anne Johnson Albattri of Raeford; and godchildren, Jason and Hanna.

BRONZE MEMORIAL PLAQUE

The Bronze Memorial Plaque program offers the opportunity to permanently honor deceased members of the Armed Forces, their friends and family, and the fallen heroes of current conflicts by placing their name on a bronze plaque that is located at the U.S. Army Women’s Museum at Fort Lee, Virginia. Donations in any amount are welcome and will be held until the required minimum of $100 for the individual is reached. The plaques are cast bi-annually, and once completed, all proceeds from the Bronze Memorial Plaque program will be used to further the mission of the Army Women’s Foundation and its programs. We are currently accepting names and contributions for Plaque XVII and will continue to through December 31, 2014.

CPT Sara M. Knutson Cullen

Captain Sara M. Knutson Cullen, 27, of Eldersburg, MD, died March 11, 2013 in Kandahar, Afghanistan. She was among five crew members killed when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed while on a training mission using night vision goggles. A sudden storm and powerful winds are believed to be what brought their chopper down.

She was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Hunter Army Airfield, GA.

Capt. Knutson, a 2003 graduate of Liberty High School in Eldersburg, was a law student at West Point and was also a member of the Judo team. She married a former Black Hawk pilot in November 2012 and had been serving in Afghanistan for two months. Sara made it clear to her family that she didn’t join the Army to sit behind a desk. She wanted to fly helicopters or be an MP. Her Mother received an email from her the night of the crash saying “Got to go mom, got to go fly.”

She is survived by her husband, Christopher, and her parents Bill and Lynn Knutson.

SPC Brittany B. Gordon

Specialist Brittany B. Gordon, 28, of St. Petersburg, FL died October 13, 2012 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked her unit with an improvised device. She was assigned to the 572 Military Intelligence Company, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

After high school, Gordon, who had expressed an interest in political science and law, spent a year at the University of Florida before setting her sights on a military career. Her dream was to serve because she wanted to make a difference. She graduated from basic training in 2010 and spent a year in Seattle before going to Afghanistan.

She is survived by her mother Brenda Gordon, and her father, St. Petersburg Assistant Police Chief Cedric Gordon.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The general public rarely has the opportunity to speak with women in today’s Army. Army women remain a mystery to most people. We are trying to change that, to put a “face” on Army women.

We recently had a wonderful opportunity to let people see what being an Army woman means. The Disney/ESPN Corporation used a Spring Training baseball game at the Wide World of Sports complex in Orlando to honor military service. We were one of three non-profits invited to participate in this first event of its kind. Our President, Major General (Ret) Dee McWilliams joined with Active duty, Reservists, Guard, Veterans and their families from across the area attended to watch the Braves beat the Astros in a tight game.

Thanks to 1st Vice President CSM (Ret) Cindy Pritchett, our information table inside the stadium was staffed by eight soldiers from the Orlando area. The volunteers, all enlisted soldiers, willingly and readily gave up their Saturday to represent the Army Women’s Foundation, and to tell their stories.

These women represent the women in today’s Army. Standing tall, confident and proud of their service in the Army, they were an impressive group. They shared their experiences with Disney staff and the public who stopped by our table. They spoke with parents who wanted to introduce their daughters to them. They truly put a face on women serving today.

And yet, when asked why these women joined the Army, their answers are very similar to the responses we received when we conducted a research study in partnership with George Mason University several years ago. In that study, Army women were asked why they joined the Army. And the number one reason was to “serve my country.”

The second reason was to get an education. The responses I heard were the same. All of the volunteers were motivated by patriotism; and many were taking, or had taken, advantage of educational programs in the Army. One was working on a college degree and others had obtained them. The Army women who served in past years laid the Foundation for Army women of today, just as today’s Army women are doing for the future. Those people who spoke with CSM Pritchett’s volunteers will not soon forget them. There was no question that the visitors went away with new appreciation for the dedication and competence of women in the Army.

Wherever the Foundation goes, we want to tell the stories of Army women and we want to put a “face” on the women who serve. The Army Women’s Foundation is here to help spread the word about the service and sacrifice of Army women. Mission accomplished in Orlando! Hooah!

Peggy Trossen
Executive Director
5TH ANNUAL ARMY WOMEN IN TRANSITION SYMPOSIUM
RE-FOCUSING YOUR FUTURE!

Members, supporters and guests of the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation gathered in Washington, D.C., on March 12 to celebrate the contributions women have made to the military and to look toward their future prospects.

The stories they shared re-enforced the patriotic fabric of the nation that women helped to weave, and highlighted still more opportunities for women in military and civilian jobs.

The Army Women’s Foundation welcomed about 200 participants to its 5th Annual Symposium and Hall of Fame awards and luncheon held in the stately Cannon Caucus Room in the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

Each year, during Women’s History Month, the Foundation presents its annual Army Women in Transition symposium, and honors the contributions and achievements of women who serve in the Army by inducting a select few into the Foundation’s Hall of Fame. This year’s Hall of Fame inductees include the women who served in the Korean War and “female firsts” Gen. (Ret.) Ann Dunwoody; and posthumous honors to Sergeant Major Carolyn James, the first female sergeant major, and Command Sergeant Major Yezetta Nelson, the first female Command Sergeant Major.

The Foundation also awards scholarships to help Army women and their children further prepare for their careers in or out of the military. This year, the Foundation awarded 29 scholarships, more scholarships than it ever has before, and it expanded the list of eligible programs to include certificate programs. Sponsorships from businesses, the Foundation’s Board of Directors, the Association of the US Army, MG (Ret.) Jan Edmunds, and institutes of higher education helped to fund the event and programs.

While it is tradition that the symposium occurs in March, this year is unique because the Pentagon has lifted its policy that prohibited women from serving in combat arms. ctl: The first panel of the 5th Annual Army Women in Transition Symposium was “In or Out, Landing On Your Feet,” addressed how to map and manage a career in the military or in the civilian sector.

Lt. General Howard Bromberg, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, US Army, delivered keynote speech at the symposium. Foundation President Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Dee Ann McWilliams, said Lt. General Bromberg has the reputation as “a soldier’s soldier.”

Lt. General Bromberg recounted the contributions of women, from Deborah Samson’s military service in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, to the heroic efforts of current era soldiers, including Silver Star recipients Leigh Ann Hester and Monica Brown.

The common thread dating back to 1776 to the present is one of service and sacrifice, where women put the needs of their fellow countrymen first, Lt. Gen. Bromberg said.

The theme for this year’s Army Women in Transition symposium was Re-Focusing Your Future! Transition, said symposium moderator, MG (Ret.) Donna Barbisch, is about change. Life is changing, and we can let it happen to us, or we can take steps to shape the outcome. Ending the combat exclusion rule may or may not affect a soldier’s career. The end of combat in the Middle East may change opportunities. Education can make a difference to the individual and the world, she said.

The symposium consisted of two panels that examined the military and civilian opportunities available to women who serve in the Army, and how those women can influence their futures. As CW5 Phyllis Wilson, command chief warrant officer of the Army Reserve said, “Changes are on the horizon for women in the military. Those with talent ... and drive will only be limited by their enthusiasm.”

Service members should begin preparing to move to a civilian career long before they anticipate leaving the military. Searching for jobs in companies that share their values, such as teamwork, can lead to success. Service members, however, must be prepared for the possibility of reduced income in civilian jobs when they first join a company. One 0-6, for example, earns less as a civilian for performing the same job she had as an Army officer.

The VOW Act has been helpful in that it requires the services to better prepare military members to transition to civilian employment. Even soldiers who have committed to a civilian employer still take part in the Army’s mandatory transition program. The program helps soldiers write resumes, network, learn to market themselves and build their skills.

Many companies want to hire veterans but don’t always know how to find the job candidates. There are a number of resources to connect veterans to prospective employers, including DoD’s Hero 2 Hired website, (https://h2h.jobs), where employers can post job openings on the site.

Some companies that have made a strategic effort to hire veterans have Human Resources programs that reflect an understanding of the qualifications of military members and the uniqueness of military service.

Successful programs exist to help prepare troops for civilian jobs. One such program is with the American pipefitters union, which offers courses to troops at some military installations to prepare troops for jobs as journeymen.

At the start of the Hall of Fame inductions that followed the symposium, Gen. (Ret.) Gordon R. Sullivan, president and chief executive officer of the Association of the United States Army, said that throughout the nation’s history, women have contributed their talents and given their lives for their country.

Women rose to the challenge in intelligence, aviation, command and other jobs during war and peace.

“It hasn’t been easy,” he said. “You need to know that people like me value your sacrifices for your country ... Being a soldier is not easy for anybody.”

The dedication of women to this country was apparent even to our enemies at the birth of the nation, Sullivan said, when British General Charles Cornwallis commented during the Revolutionary War, “We may destroy all the men in America, and we shall still have all we can do to defeat the women.”

Presenters shared common thoughts on several key points:

Lifting the policy that excludes women from combat arms will create more career opportunities, but whether or not the change in policy affects each woman will depend on her military occupation. At the same time that more opportunities will emerge for women, the Army will reduce its total number of personnel. The downsizing will be conducted in an organized manner to maintain a quality force. Panelists encouraged soldiers to seek mentors and leadership roles while in the military and when they transition to the civilian workforce.

Plan! Plan! Plan! At some point, every member of the military will leave service, either through demobilization, separation or retirement.
Among her other notable firsts, she became the first woman to command a battalion in the 82nd Airborne Division in 1992. She became Fort Bragg’s first female general officer in 2000. She became the first woman to command the Combined Arms Support Command at Fort Lee, Virginia in 2004. Gen Dunwoody retired from the Army on August 15, 2012.

In her acceptance speech, Gen Dunwoody thanked the Foundation for the recognition and induction, she said she was “humbled to be joining such a distinguished group of Patriots...” She recognized the “incredible cohort of women” who came into the Army at the same time she did, many of whom were in the room as they were the brand new group of 2nd Lieutenants that were the first to lead integrated platoons.

Gen Dunwoody also thanked the “generations of incredible women who went before us as they set the conditions and enforced the standards that led to the opportunities that we enjoy today. You have given all women who seek to serve their country a gift beyond measure—the gift of unlimited opportunity.”

She acknowledged today’s active duty force opportunities and challenges, giving them this advice, “Find your passion; have an unwavering belief in yourself; work hard; and maybe most importantly, always do the right thing for the right reason.”

Gen Dunwoody reflected on the fact that she was not really ready for the enormity of the event of her promotion to General until the barrage of cards and letters started to arrive. She received letters from people of all ages and walks of life stating how happy they were that the day had finally arrived for the Army to promote a woman to their highest grade. She read a portion of a letter she received from a Master Sergeant she had served with at Fort Bragg. It said “Now you get to pin on our nation’s highest military rank and I get to tell my five and seven year-old daughters that they really can be anything they want to be—even a general in the United States Army.”

She concluded her remarks by thanking everyone again and by asking the audience to pray for the deployed men and women for their success and safe return.

Finally, Major General (Ret) Dee McWilliams, President of the Army Women’s Foundation, accepted the honor on behalf of the Women Who Served in the Korean War, Brigadier General (Ret) Anna Mae Hays was scheduled to receive the honor on behalf of her Korean War counterparts, but could not be in attendance the day of the ceremony. During the Korean War, BG Hays mobilized with the 4th Field Hospital in 1950 and participated in the notorious Inchon landing. On June 11, 1970, she became the first woman and first nurse in American military history to attain general officer rank. She retired in 1971.

AWF Recognizes Congressman Randy Forbes

The Army Women’s Foundation honored Congressman J. Randy Forbes at a ceremony on Capitol Hill on March 12.

During a networking break between the annual symposium and the Hall of Fame luncheon, the Foundation recognized Forbes’ lifelong support of the Army Women’s Foundation and the US military.

The congressman has been a forceful advocate of a strong national defense and is a leading voice in calling for the end of defense budget cuts that are known as sequestration. The cuts were required under law that Congress passed in 2011. He also has consistently secured the space for the Foundation’s annual symposium and luncheon in the Cannon House Office Building.

Forbes, a Republican who represents Chesapeake, Virginia, chairs the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. He called for greater support of military members and an end to the defense budget reductions. Those reductions started even before sequestration and endanger service members, he said.

The congressman called for a larger defense budget so that no man or woman should be sent into harm’s way unless they are properly resourced, trained and equipped so that they have the highest chance possible that they will return home. He said, too, that the country must keep its promises to veterans.

Congressman Forbes complimented the Foundation’s work, saying, “It’s far bigger than I think many of you realize.”

Female Firsts: Trailblazers in the U.S. Army

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#### 2013 AWF Legacy Scholarship Winners

The Foundation’s Legacy Scholarship program recognizes the importance of education by providing financial support toward undergraduate degrees for Army women and their lineal descendants. Scholarships are based on merit, academic potential, community service and need and are evaluated by the AWF Scholarship Committee. For more information, visit [www.awfdn.org](http://www.awfdn.org).

Twenty-nine deserving Army women and their children, selected from an applicant pool from across the country, received the Army Women’s Foundation 2013 Legacy Scholarship. College tuition is on the rise and financial resources are declining, making scholarships even more critical to students today. The Legacy Scholarships are available for tuition assistance at the community college or four-year academic institutions: Community College/Certificate Program Legacy Scholarships are awarded in amounts up to $1,000. Four-Year College/University Legacy Scholarships are awarded in amounts up to $2,500.

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### Community College/Certificate Program

- Patricia Baisden
- Vicky Henderson
- Monica Holmes
- Bianca Jennings
- Chelsey Kovski-Swann
- Elizabeth Lenesi
- Kelly Miller
- Sharon O’Hara
- Sonja Reynolds
- Juanita Toomer
- Dezerae Valdez
- Rebeckah Whitney
- JoAnn Wilbert

### 4-Year College

- Samantha Albertson
- Oscar Barrera
- Elizabeth Boynton
- Marcus Brumfield
- Paige Campbell
- Adrienne Gray
- Mishalei Griffith
- Christa Higgins
- Kelly Loftus
- Taylor Merchant
- Jose’ Pagan
- Ashley Ross
- Cynthia Stinnett
- Christina Sung
- Kristin Trim
- Christina Walker
Upcoming Events

**April 21,** Marmora, NJ  
Vietnam Veterans Tribute  

**May 8-9,** Richmond, VA  
AUSA’s ILW Army Sustainment Symposium and Exposition  
[www.ausa.org/meetings/2013](http://www.ausa.org/meetings/2013)

**May 11,** Arlington, VA  
National Museum of the United States Army Staff Ride: War of 1812  
[armyhistory.org/events/](http://armyhistory.org/events/)

**May 18,** Casper, WY  
Promoting Our Women Warriors of Wyoming  
[www.cheyenne.va.gov/](http://www.cheyenne.va.gov/)

**June 13-18,** Tampa, FL  
33rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games  

**June 15,** Boston, MA  
Massachusetts Conference for Women Veterans  

**June 27-29,** Kansas City, MO  
AUSA ILW Mission Command Symposium  
[www.ausa.org/meetings/2013/](http://www.ausa.org/meetings/2013/)

**July 4,** Nationwide  
Independence Day

**August 22-24,** Scottsdale, AZ  
Women’s Army Corps Veterans’ Association 2013 67th Annual Convention “ARMY WOMEN — PIONEERS”  

**September 19,** Arlington, VA  
Military Women in Transition Career Coaching Workshop  
[academywomen.org/events](http://academywomen.org/events)

**September 20-21,** Arlington, VA  
Officer Women Leadership Symposium (OWLS)  
[academywomen.org/events](http://academywomen.org/events)

**November 9-11,** Washington, DC  
Vietnam Women’s Memorial 20th Anniversary Celebration  
[www.vietnamwomenmemorial.org/upcoming.php](http://www.vietnamwomenmemorial.org/upcoming.php)

Be sure to visit the U.S. Army Women’s Museum for upcoming events!  

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**SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION!**

An annual contribution of $25 or more entitles you and/or your Friend to receive our semi-annual newsletter, notices of events and reunions, and program updates.

**Name:**  
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**City/State/Zip:**  
**Phone:**  
**Email:**

**Donation Amount:**  
$____________, directed as follows:  
(Check one, or if more than one, specify amounts for each.)  

- Program Support & General Operations  
- Bronze Plaque Memorial Fund*  
- **$____________, Museum Support**

*Individuals or organizations may establish a memorial fund for a specific person. The deceased individual’s name is placed on a bronzed memorial plaque once the minimum $1000 donation is reached. The Memorial Plaque is dedicated every two years—the current plaque will run from Jan. 1, 2013–Dec. 31, 2014; you may add names of persons who died in an earlier period.

**Person to be Acknowledged:**

(Recipient of Friend’s gift or next of kin for Memorial Fund)

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**Rank (if any):**  
**Address:**  
**City/State/Zip:**  
**Phone:**  
**Fax:**  
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**Verification Code:**

**Method of Payment:**

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- Visa  
- MasterCard  
- Discover  
- Discover

Credit Card #:  
Name on card:  
Signature:  
Exp. date:  
Verification Code:  
(on back of card)

**Execution:**

- **Signature:**  
- **Date:**

The U.S. Army Women’s Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization and your contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

Mail or fax this form to: U. S. Army Women’s Foundation / P.O. Box 5030 / Fort Lee, Virginia 23801-0300 / FAX: (804) 734-3077

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