# BORDER CROSSING

by

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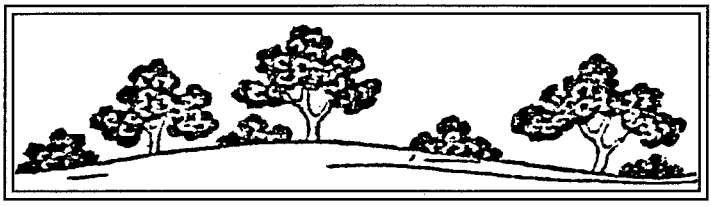

# Border Crossing

On a beautiful warm Labor Day weekend four female USAF captains arrived at the German-Switzerland border crossing in an Opel station wagon. I was one of the women and by far the youngest as well as the most recent arrival to Rhine Main Air Base in Germany. The other three had either orders or passports to expedite their border crossing. I had a three-day pass. After a cursory look by the Swiss guards, three of the captains were allowed to cross, but I had to get out of the car. As gales of laughter issued from the guards I was asked repeatedly if I was a "Captain." In my shorts and enthralled expression I probably deserved the repeated exclamation: "Capitain? Capitain!" Admittedly I had only held the rank for five weeks and did not know protocol or how to respond. I did not look or act like an officer in the United States Air Force. After all, I was a medic and one of only two women doctors in the air force, and our military training had been three weeks long, dealing mostly with physical standards. At least the other three captains smothered their smirks in front of the border guards, but

for the next hour they did not let me forget my first border crossing.

Crossing the border on various other trips into Switzerland was less humorous, but the visits were equally as enjoyable. Much later I learned how much of a novelty women in the military were and would remain so for another eight to ten years. By 1964, with more of our male military obligated to Vietnam and the Far East, avenues were opened for advancement of military women. This included opportunities to return to colleges and universities for advance degrees, an opportunity many of the men had taken advantage of to gain promotions. Rhine Main had a squadron of air med-evacs composed of nurses and technicians who flew all over Europe and frequently back to McGuire Air Force Base. They knew they were likely to fly into high-risk areas and advance their rank via the traditional male route of being promoted on the battle field or as a consequence of entering a potential war zone. Fortunately for us, the air evacuation crews were willing to share information about availability of schools that would accept active duty military into their classes. Armed with this information the four captains all asked for additional training and received it.

The oldest of the four was a nurse and asked to go to flight nursing school and did. She was later sent to the Philippines and flew in and out of there to various bases in Vietnam to bring back wounded and ill troops. The Air Force Institute of Technology provided opportunities for the rest of us. The captain from transportation had her expenses paid to attend the University of Tennessee to work on her master's degree in railroad transportation. In the 1960s railroads were considered essential for military logistics and rapid deployment. The communications captain

received the same opportunity to go to one of the California universities that was tops in communications at that time. I was supported in my request to finish my residency. During my payback time I was able to go to the School of Aerospace Medicine to become a flight surgeon, and the latter allowed me to continue my long career in the air force reserve after I left active duty. University and training-program directors should have loved the military applicants. Tuition at that time was paid promptly by the air force. The military students were older, more mature, and likely to be at the head of their class.

The opportunities afforded those of us who were in the military in the 1960s were really major crossings of barriers that women in the military had worked hard to breach. Each one was a border crossing, and now that I am no longer actively involved with the military, I have the time and the liberty to look at the history of women in the military and the borders that have been crossed. My original plan was to write about women in the medical field but that seemed too narrow and too full of statistics. There was not enough information about women flight surgeons to allow me to brag about their advances. Instead, I will review a little ancient history and touch on the give-and-take that has occurred over centuries based on the mission and the civilian views of women in the military.

Very little is known about women's role in early warfare. Archaeologists have provided us with some insight into when war became part of the culture of humanity. Archaeological findings and cave paintings depict human sacrifice during the Mesolithic epoch (12,000 to 4500 BC). Somewhere around 6500 BC in the Sudan, the remains of a young woman imbedded with twenty-one chipped stone

arrowheads were found. Whether sacrifice or ambush is unclear. But it is about that time that war began and weapons and warriors dominated religion and art. Wars were fought either for or by the direction of the gods. Oral histories of these wars were handed down over generations. Women played various roles from picking up weapons to fighting for conquest or to save their children. The weapon systems advanced rapidly from primitive sticks, to bows and arrows, to horse-drawn chariots and charges from horseback. The Old Testament provides a sample of the role of women in war. Moses ordered the Midian women to be killed because they aided the enemy. He punished his commanders for not doing so but did allow some of the children and virgins to be kept as booty. Joshua pledged to keep any woman of Jericho and her children safe if she would shelter his spies in the city. For her efforts she was escorted to safety. Other women are specifically mentioned for physically dispatching enemy soldiers, accompanying men into battle, and offering advise leading to the defeat of enemies of the Hebrews.

In 1830 BC, in Babylon, Hammurabi's code of laws gave women legal rights that were still denied to some women in the twentieth century. This had lead to puzzlement by nineteenth-century curators about the identity of some of the people seen in a series of Assyrian bas-reliefs that depict beardless faces and slightly fat bodies in battle scenes and in military camps. Were they boys or women? There is evidence that the Assyrians had a warrior queen in the ninth century BC. Sammuramat was immortalized by the Greek historian Herodotus. Much of her story was probably embellished, but she did extend the empire she inherited and invaded India and advanced as far as Pakistan.

Herodotus also wrote that among the Zavecians in North Africa it was customary to have women drive a war chariot. Egypt had its warrior queens who would fight at the head of their troops. Monuments left by the Egyptians support these histories. Libyan Amazons may have been pure fancy, but the classic writers of Greece and Rome recorded their exploits in detail. One, Myrina, was reported to have obtained permission to let her army pass through Egypt. This allowed her to conquer Arabia, subdue the countryside from Syria to Asia Minor, and found cities named after Amazon commanders. Two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World are attributed to these warring women. Sammuramat built the hanging gardens of Babylon and Myrina the magnificent temple to the goddess Artemis in the Amazon city of Ephesus. There are other references to women who served as warriors or as queens through the Peloponnesian Wars. Spartan women were trained to fight so they could defend their homes, and some may even have fought as soldiers as suggested by Plato in Book V of the *Republic.*

Some Roman women were trained to fight as gladiators and could have borne arms, but they were not mentioned in official accounts of battles. There are reports of the Roman armies encountering women who threatened their borders. One of these was Teuta from Illyria. She negotiated for no further action against Rome after retreating to an inland fortress. Her male successor was in a second war and lost. That ended the Illyrian threat. Roman historians idolized the ferocity of barbarian women, and it is clear the Roman legions faced fighting women in wars across Italy's northern border. Later depictions of women warriors are less romantic and more likely to give the traditional role of women as

camp followers who gave sexual favors and did the laundry. The exceptions are a few warrior queens who fought the Romans in England and those of the early barbarian Germanic tribes. Much later the maiden Joan of Arc was given the most recognition due to her particularly appealing model for female heroism. Physicians confirmed she was a virgin. She went into battle but never killed anyone by her own hand, and her career ended when she was burned at the stake. She easily fits the role of the female as an instigator, never drawing blood herself but inspiring others to do so.

In the early writings about war by the Greeks, women appeared to be members of armies or even to occupy most of the ranks in an army. As warfare seemed to replace the more peaceful times of the hunters and gatherers, weapons became more lethal, and strategic training became the norm, the writings changed. Women were mentioned more as commanders and less about the army being entirely composed of women. Notable among the barbarian women is Boudicca, who revolted against Roman occupation of Britain in AD 61. There was also Cleopatra of Egypt, who opposed Octavian and obscured the names of other Arab queens who faced the Roman legions. Most suffered from defeats after a single victory or lived short lives. Boudicca was the exception.

Historians give little insight into the real role of women in early war. Most of the stories that were passed on were considered myths. One must not forget the Roman soldiers' wives for a clue as to a woman's real role in the military. Early generals considered that such women were motivators of soldiers to fight. Later they were perceived as detrimental to the army, creating logistic and defense problems. Christianity and its spread, along with the message that sex

was a sin, further degraded the opinion of women who followed the armies. This opinion continued at least through the twentieth century.

The low opinion of women accompanying the military was pervasive and became universal after Christian teachings started to spread. This attitude is clearly seen in many writings and permeates the attitude of many today regarding the role of women in the military. As a new captain in the air force, I was soon to learn that the rarity of women in the military was in part due to the prevailing opinion of the rank and file as well as the civilian population that we were "whores or lesbians." I doubt, if I had known in advance the demeaning attitude toward women in military, whether I would have changed my mind about joining the service when I did.

My medical school classmates had assured me that I was an "old maid" and had been since the age of twenty. The title of "old maid" had not resulted in my looking for my Mrs. title immediately. My medical school classmates had all been drafted to serve in what most of us thought was a peacetime military, staving off the cold war threat to Europe and a resurgence of fighting in Korea. Did you know in the early 1960s about our involvement in Vietnam? I am sure it was in the news and that some people outside the military were aware of our involvement, but I think most of us considered this to be the time of nuclear deterrence and the era of Sputnik. I wanted to practice medicine where I could count on a paycheck and have the opportunity to travel and find adventure. I also thought I needed a break from training and that perhaps a little military discipline would help with deciding what I really wanted to do with my career. My assignment to Europe shielded me from what was really

happening at home and in the Far East. Armed Forces radio and the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper are very careful about what information is available to the troops.

My perception of the military and the opportunities it might afford was little different from that of most women who joined the service in modern times. The Roman regulations were restrictive in allowing marriage because they wanted a celibate army. But . . . you know human nature! So-called extralegal marriages occurred. Wives became legal about AD 197 by a decree from Septimus Severus. The armies became larger and less mobile and were largely based on the frontiers. The assimilation of the frontier force into the civilian community was one of the causes that eventually led to the fall of Rome in AD 476. Was this due to the integration of women into the garrisons or to the vast empire and the integration of barbarians into the Roman army? The women in this less mobile military were not part of the fighting force, but they did do the cooking, nursing and administrative duties that are a part of any military force.

In the thirteen hundred years following the fall of Rome, war continued to be a universal cultural institution. The influence of Christianity permeates the history of Europe. Although Christians were not supposed to wage war on each other, opponents were charged with perverting the true faith. Wars were fought in the name of Christ just as the Hebrews had fought earlier in the name of Yahwen. It was easier to fight if the enemy was pagan. When the Scandinavians attacked the newly Christian Britain, the British fought under the sign of the cross. In 878 Alfred the Great reached an agreement with the Vikings whereby Guthrun the Dane became a Christian and the two kings divided England between them. Alfred was never happy with the share

Guthrun gained, which was called Danelaw. He made alliances and had his daughter, Aehelflaed, marry into another Saxon royal family.

Aethelred was old and willing to accept political direction from his young wife. After Aetheflaed bore one child she refused further marital relations with her husband saying, "It was unbecoming the daughter of a king to give way to a delight, which after a time produced such painful consequences."[1] This return to chastity and symbolic virginity was much admired by the Christian English. Soon she was widowed and was able to exercise power in her own right as Lady of the Mercians. Aetheflaed was described as "a woman who protected men at home and intimidated them abroad."[2] At home she built fortresses, as did her brother, against the Danes, and when they were not the only threat, also against the Irish and Norwegian settlers. When the Welsh became assertive, she sent an army into Wales to capture the wife of a Welsh king and thirty-three members of his court. The Welsh bowed to her authority. In the summer of 917 she stormed the Viking military center at Derby without a preparatory siege. After her death and that of her brother, his son Athelstan completed the conquest of Danelaw.

Little is known about the women of Danelaw, but there are histories laden with myth about women among the Danes "who dressed as men and devoted every waking moment to the pursuit of war."[3] There was even the report of a band of Viking pirates—Saxon, Goth, and Swedish women—led by the princess Alvilda. And do not forget the story of Matilda, who in 1052 inherited a vast estate that represented the greatest concentration of power in Italy. She was trained to ride with a lance, carry a pike, and wield the bat-

tle-ax and sword. She fought for the pope against the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire, and her soldiers followed her into battle with the cry "Matilda by the Grace of God." She lived to her seventies and was rewarded for her devotion to the pope by having her remains reinterred in St. Peter's at Rome with a marble effigy by Bernini marking the place five hundred years after her death. This is in sharp contrast to the opinion of the women who followed the crusades. Christian chroniclers were particularly unkind as were later historians. The assumption was that the women who followed the cross were only interested in selling their bodies. For Christian Europe the camp followers were objects of scorn and disgust. They were moral contamination, and all women associated with military activity have since faced such slander.

Despite the scorn, interest in women involved in war has persisted. Women warriors were reported in the wars that engulfed Asia. The Tartar women were noted to be particularly ferocious. It was reported that Columbus was fired upon by a party of women archers during his journeys to the Western Hemisphere. There are stories of women who fought in the crusades wearing heavy armor who were only discovered after they were stripped and plundered. The queens who accompanied their kings in the crusades did not think that the papal bull that forbade concubines to follow the army applied to them or their noble ladies. Would you have expected Eleanor of Aquitaine to think otherwise? They rode horseback, appropriately garbed and armed with lances and battle-axes. They volunteered their military service and would coerce men who were reluctant to take the pledge as they passed through their villages. By the time of the Third Crusade, "King Henry II of England and his son

Richard the Lionhearted for the first time officially recognized the lower-class women charged with doing women's work for the army."[4] They were the laundresses with the assumption that was merely a euphemism for "prostitute." Until the twentieth century when military organizations began to include women who were not wives, those women listed as laundresses were expected to do all "women's work." This was filthy work and included nursing the sick and injured as well as washing linens and bandages. Clothing was expensive so repairing damaged clothes was an added task. If washing the body in medieval Europe was close to sin, sexual activity was clearly over the line. Chastity was to be enforced by those in command and punishment was dire if a warrior was identified. King Louis IX dismissed a large number of men when he returned from captivity because of their debauchery. He preserved his own reputation by placing his bed in his tent in a manner that would prevent any dealings with women. Most commanders were less chaste.

By the end of the thirteenth century, despite the Christian belief in the virtue of poverty, really poor people were not expected to be good Christians or devoted to chastity. Under Philip Augustus of France, units composed of lower-class soldiers were permitted to have as many women as they wished. Any man who committed adultery with a married woman had to pay. This system of paying for the services of the women led to brothels within the units. The idea soon spread to the Germans, and the English made comparable arrangements. As the practice spread, the commanders would place a sergeant in charge of the number of women who would be designated prostitutes. "Thus a military unit marching through Paris in 1465 was described this way: 'The superb company of mounted archers passed through

the city in good order, well equipped, lacking nothing not even eight daughters of joy on horseback, who with their father confessor followed the company.' "[5] Under the Germans these public women had other duties and the word *whore* was employed to mean any woman who was "common."

The first case of syphilis was recorded in 1494 following a French invasion of Italy. Syphilis and gonorrhea were spread everywhere in Europe, and promiscuity rather than sex became a medical problem for the military. Prostitutes became physical as well as moral contaminants. Men were hired as sutlers, cleaners, and cooks to take care of the single men. This did not take care of the problem nor did limiting women on the march to legal wives. Women represented not just sex but all creature comforts. They also went to work to supplement the poor army pay. Another unusual opportunity the seventeenth-century wars offered women was to enlist as paid soldiers. Some women from Holland, Germany, and England did chose to put on male clothing to become soldiers or sailors during the Thirty Years' War and the wars that followed in early modern Europe. They were much like the camp followers in background, age and class. Motivation was similar to that today: patriotism, adventure, economics, or to follow their man. From the late sixteenth through the eighteenth century, everyone knew that hundreds of women served as soldiers and sailors. Ballads celebrated these women and grew in popularity over the next two centuries. Stories and then books that appeared about women in uniform encouraged other women to consider a military career. Twentieth-century women interjected their views about cross-dressing women who worked hard to hide their identity. Certainly most were not lesbians.

Wars continued intermittently in Europe, leaving the colonists in North America to pretty much fend for themselves against the Indians for almost two hundred years. The settlers and the Indians remained in a continuous state of war, with the British troops only participating at the end of the Seven Years' War. The British aim was the acquisition of French Canada. Following the French defeat in 1763, the British sent an army to protect the colonists from the Indians. This act did not sit well. The soldiers were expensive and had an unsavory reputation. Although their mission was the western frontier, they stayed in the port cities on the Atlantic coast. Street fights with civilians and new taxes ultimately led to the battles of Lexington and Concord and the American War of Independence on April 19, 1775. American women were well versed in preparing for self-defense, and they organized home guard companies for local defense. The men had the guns and the women used the tools they had to defend themselves. Some women joined the "real" armies as well—some as camp followers with the traditional duties and a few in disguise as soldiers. One of the duties of the camp followers was to crawl over the battlefield to strip the dead and dying of clothes for their own men. Washington managed the camp followers in a manner similar to the British with a sergeant supervising them. As the Europeans had experienced, the women slowed down the army and became war refugees. Others were a menace and seen to spread venereal disease and encourage drinking and were suspected as spying for the enemy. Prostitutes who worked outside of the camps were more of a problem, as were the purveyors of alcohol who sometimes did work as intelligence agents by heeding conversations as they sold their wares. Tales of individual efforts are recorded, but lit-

tle is known of the actual number of women who served in the American armies.

Military technology changed radically between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. Military doctrine did not keep pace with the massive carnage endured on all sides, as bayonets and sabers were shown to be less effective than the new rifles and trench warfare. Women in the Civil War participated much as they had in the past. A few put on pants and enlisted, while others organized all-female home guard units. Despite the fact that the army had hired laborers to do some of the chores such as washing and nursing, some women and families followed the armies as they had in the past. Other women, having heard the exploits of Florence Nightingale, became army nurses. These were professionals and had to be unmarried and celibate to be hired. They did not have rank and were considered contract labor. Women in the ranks were few and far between. Sympathy in general was not for the women in the ranks. Nurses who discovered them worked to convince them to go home. Estimates are that the Confederate forces numbered 250 women soldiers and the Union armies about 400. Some wrote about their experiences. The number who served as nurses is far higher. It is estimated that the North and South combined had more than 10,000, and the numbers may be higher based on the number of women who requested pensions after the passage of the Nurses' Pension Act in 1892.

Nurses were not officially recognized as military personnel in the United States until the twentieth century. However, the Union army established a civilian nursing corps in June 1861. The French had started this in 1840 by calling on women in the Catholic religious orders to work as nurses. The British were shamed into doing something similar in

the Crimean War. Florence Nightingale was in charge. The superintendent of the Union army nurses was Dorothea Dix, who denounced camp followers and went out to recruit "spinsters"—unattractive, middle-aged women who wore plain clothes without hoops. Many were unsuitable for the position. Dix also rejected two women surgeons, Ester Hill Hawks and Mary E. Walker, because they were too young, too pretty, and it was unwomanly to train as a regular physician and practice medicine as a man. Hawks joined her surgeon husband at Beaufort, South Carolina, and provided service when he was gone. Walker was more stubborn and when denied a commission she practiced medicine without official approval. General Ambrose Burnside recommended that Walker be commissioned, and after hot debate in the War Department she was appointed acting assistant surgeon for the 52d Ohio Infantry and was with the unit at Chickamauga. She worked as a contract surgeon from late 1863 until April 1864, treating civilians for the 52d, and was technically behind Confederacy lines. She was captured and sent to Richmond as a suspected spy and after four months she was released in a prisoner exchange in August 1864. Her reward was an appointment as an acting assistant surgeon away from the field. The Congressional Medal of Honor she was awarded in 1865 was revoked in 1917 when Congress decided retroactively to make noncombatants ineligible to receive the award. She refused to give it up, and decades after her death, Congress, in 1977, restored the award retroactively. No other woman has been so honored.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the end of Western imperialism. Before, the United States had been immune to the competition for overseas colonies and had acquired several islands in the Pacific. However, in the Mari-

ana Islands, the United States encountered and fought women under female leaders. It was claimed these women fought like Amazons. Women were still not allowed to serve in the United States military, but were hired as contract workers to serve as nurses during the Spanish American War. Clara Barton's American Red Cross nurses were in Cuba before war was declared. Needless to say, this was without an invitation. The Army Reorganization Act of 1901, with the help of Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee, established a permanent nurse corps. The corps was to be headed by a nurse, leaving Dr. McGee without a position or a military career.

By the beginning of the twentieth century there was a slow evolution to incorporate women into the military. The days of the traditional camp follower were over. Men had been hired for the housekeeping chores for single men in the military; nurses were part of the military for care of the wounded and ill; and those officers and members in the ranks who were married had wives who were more like civilian wives. Permission to marry was still required from the commander. Further integration of women into the military did not occur until World War I.

The revolution in Russia brought about integration within units and the creation of real Amazon units, "the all-female Battalions of Death." Maria Bochkareva organized the first battalion in 1917. Her appeal for female volunteers resulted in women's battalions in Moscow, Perim, Odessa, and Ekaterinodar. The Russian women soldiers were armed and trained for combat but the emphasis was on feminine values. They were subordinate to a military hierarchy and a nation-state controlled by men. They were in segregated units to protect their children and to protect the freedom

of their country against Germany by embarrassing the Imperial Russian Army into fighting harder. Many felt the scorn bestowed upon them by the tired soldiers and left to join the conventional male battalions. The last action of the all-woman Russian military unit was the unsuccessful defense of the Winter Palace against Bolshevik revolutionaries on October 25, 1917. Women continued to serve but were primarily integrated into regular fighting units. Contrary to custom, the women nurses who served with the Bolshevik military received rifle training.

During World War I noncombatant women from Europe, England and America went off to serve at the front. Some served independently in aid stations and some were able to join the Red Cross. The greatest number of women who went to the front were primarily involved in caring for the wounded. They performed surgery, drove ambulances, and buried the dead under dirty, dangerous, stressful conditions. Women had been doing this for centuries but the Great War afforded other opportunities. Some of the jobs the American women who went to Europe filled included "physicians, dentists, dietitians, pathologists/bacteriologists, occupational and physical therapists, administrators."[6] The position of prostitute was not on this list. However, as in all wars, wartime Europe produced plenty of opportunities for prostitution. The European armies continued their nineteenth-century practices of regulating the trade, including marching to the houses companies of enlisted and non-commissioned officers, examining them for venereal disease and giving them a tube of preventive salve prior to entrance. Remember the long-held attitude that people from the lower ranks were less likely to be chaste and to consider sex a sin. English and American officers faced a dif-

ferent challenge. They did not think they could enforce celibacy on the soldiers the way it was enforced on their nurse sisters. The solution was to regulate sexual behavior and provide safe sex in a covert manner. Houses were established, to be run by civilians, in inconspicuous places or inside the support camp not readily visible to visitors. The Army Medical Corps examined the women and treated them for venereal disease. Regretfully, these measures did not eliminate the practice of rape in captured territory, and for the soldiers accused of the charge, the response would be that the woman was willing or a sexual aggressor.

Attitudes toward women in the military are difficult to eradicate. The "women's auxiliaries" that accompanied the military during the Great War were assumed to provide clean girls for soldiers' needs. The women who were not paid by the military had a better reputation and considered to be from a higher social class. The British did not establish a non-nursing women's service until after 1917, when the slanderous tales continued despite investigations to the contrary. Sexual harassment and the expectation of sexual service from the women clerks and telephone operators were the norm.

When the United States entered the war in April 1917, it had two women's auxiliary services: one for the army—designated Nurse Corps (female)—and the other for the navy. The women did not have military rank, were not entitled to veterans' benefits, and received lower pay than men for similar work. The Naval Coast Defense Reserve was established to enlist women for routine office work. They were given a new rating: "Yeoman (F)." A few put on overalls and assembled torpedoes, a dangerous job. The Marine Corps Reserve followed suit to enroll women for clerical duty at Marine Corp

Headquarters and other offices in the United States. Unlike the nurses, they had full military status and received the same pay as enlisted men in their pay grade but could not advance to the higher ranks. There were 12,500 women yeomen and 305 women marines by the end of the war. The secretary of war would not let the U.S. Army do the same. General Pershing got around this by not asking permission and in November 1917 issued a call for women recruits. He needed women switchboard soldiers. The women had to be experienced switchboard operators, fluent in French, free of any German connection, and not have a male relative overseas. Out of 7,000 applicants thirty-three women were accepted for service in the new Signal Corps unit. They were sworn in, given a physical examination, measured for uniforms, and charged five hundred dollars for the uniforms. With two weeks training they sailed to France. Upon arrival they were given quarters abandoned as inadequate for other soldiers, an improvised toilet, and worked extended to 24/7. Eventually, 223 women toiled in the war zone. When the women were ordered home, the adjunct general sent them "service termination letters." They were not awarded federal equivalent status until 1977.

What about the nurses who had served? Well, they were not considered really in the service either. The Army Reorganization Act of 1918 created the new designation Army Nurse Corps (ANC), and another act in 1920 authorized relative officer ranks with lower pay than equivalent male ranks. The superintendent of the ANC from 1919 to 1937, Julia Stimson, helped to gain veterans' status, including retirement pay, for the nurses. The navy and Marine Corps loophole to enlist women was closed. End-strength for the nurses at the end of the Great War was Red Cross 10,000,

army 21,480, and the navy 1,500. Only the nurses survived the demobilization.

Between the wars little was done about incorporating women other than nurses into the U.S. military. There were at least three plans that were immediately shelved or buried. All assumed women would serve with, not in, the military. In September 1940 the first peacetime selective service became law. Pressure came for incorporating women into the service, but there was considerable foot dragging in Congress and above all in the War Department. The bill to establish the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was passed in May 1942. The navy took the route of placing women in the reserve and not in an auxiliary corp. When the bill was passed in July, the women were recognized as WAVES—Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. The Coast Guards Women's Reserve, with the acronym SPARS for "Semper Paratus—Always Ready," was authorized at the same time. Wisely, the marines decided not to have an acronym. You can imagine the play on words these acronyms evoked. The director of the WAACs, Oveta Culp Hobby, had an impossible job with many requests for the services of the women in the new corps but little direction and no support from the War Department. There was internal bickering over who would be stuck with the women. The uniforms became a turn-off for enlistment. Some of the rules Hobby established were also a turn-off: you couldn't get pregnant and you couldn't get an abortion. If unmarried and pregnant, discharge was dishonorable (usually reserved for convicted criminals) as it was for having an abortion. Even after the reorganization to Women's Army Corps (WAC), the director was not a commander but an advisor, coordinator, catalyst, and titular head.

The navy was a little wiser and turned to the academic world for advise and assistance in organizing the women's programs. They had uniforms designed by a fashion designer. The marines and the Coast Guard followed their advice for realist recruiting goals and requirements for officers. At first the Coast Guard and navy women trained together, but due to the competition the Coast Guard transferred its training to plusher facilities and finally its officer training to the Coast Guard Academy, becoming the first of the services to train women at an academy. The WAVES director, Lt. Commander Mildred McAfee, had her office in the Bureau of Naval Personnel and learned the system on how to get things done. She also had the support of Rear Admiral Randall Jacobs.

World War II should have been a turning point for women and the military's need for using more women, but traditions die "Oh so slow." The requested 600,000 women were never recruited for a variety of reasons but mostly due to resistance by the higher echelon. The public had a more positive view of women in uniform. By 1943 the Gallop poll showed that seventy-eight percent of the population thought single women should be drafted instead of fathers. The women thought if the military really needed them, it should establish a draft for women. To make matters worse, in February 1943 the War Manpower Committee compelled the services to accept limitations on enlistments of women because they were more needed in the civil service, war industries, or agriculture. By 1944 the services were desperate for more men. Finally, the secretary of war recommended recruiting more women instead of 4F men. The Chiefs of Staff concurred. Many women did serve and with honor, especially after the number of skills they could cover in-

creased from four in 1942 to a wide range of military jobs just short of direct combat. General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold pushed for "Air-WACs," and no AAF schools were closed to women except combat and flying schools. Eventually, close to 40,000 women served as Air-WACs at bases around the world. They constituted almost half of the women in the army. One in four women in the navy and nearly one-third of those in the marines served in aviation, but not as pilots.

We must not forget the non-military service women provided in World War II. Some were in espionage. Remember, Julia Childs worked in France for the OSS. A thousand women were hired as pilots with civil service status to ferry military aircraft, tow air gunnery targets, and teach flying to cadets. The Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) logged nearly 300,000 flying hours and flew almost every aircraft in the inventory. The director of Women Pilots was Jacqueline Cochran, who had flown almost everything with wings. When the WASPs were disbanded in 1944, they had lost thirty-eight members to accidents. They were never granted full military status, and those who received commissions in the armed forces did so but not as pilots. Only reluctantly in 1976 did the air force take that step and allow women to train in the military to fly.

In remembering those women who served in World War II, we cannot forget the nurses. At the beginning of the war they were the only women who could serve in the services. In 1940 the army nurse corps had 940 nurses and the navy had 430. By June of 1942 the numbers had increased to 12,500 for the army and 1,800 for the navy. When Corregidor fell in May 1942, sixty-six army nurses and eleven navy nurses were among the captives to remain prisoner for thir-

ty-seven months in the Philippines. Five navy nurses, captured at Guam, were sent to a military prison in Japan. The nurses served all over the world and sometimes behind enemy lines even though they were supposed to be away from the field of battle. In Africa, as the bases would be overrun, they might one day serve under the flag of the United States, the next day German or Italian, followed by the French or British. Their tea bags were not replaced by the enemy. They did what they did best—caring for the wounded soldier. They were in the tent operating rooms during the Battle of the Bulge. Throughout the war they were restricted to remaining single and had imposed upon them the same rules the WAACs had.

The war's sudden end brought forward many concerns for demobilization. The weary troops wanted to go home. The directors of the WASPs, SPARs, and women marines wanted their organizations disbanded as rapidly as possible. After all, women were to serve only in wartime. General Eisenhower wanted the WACs to remain and help with demobilization. In the summer of 1945 there were nearly 100,000 WACs, 86,000 WAVES, 18,000 women marines, 11,000 SPARS, 57,000 army nurses and 11,000 navy nurses. The commanders in the theaters thought the clerical WACs were indispensable and froze them in their assignments until acceptable replacements arrived. The War Department disagreed. Fortunately, some of the WACs volunteered to stay and help with the occupation forces. This resulted in a rumor that the women were there to discourage U.S. troops from fraternizing with German women. Oddly enough, the WACs resented this accusation. The challenges for retaining women in the military continued as the senior officers disagreed on retaining women and reverted to the old tradition that a woman's place is in

the home. The agreement was that the nurse corps would remain and reluctantly the WACs as well.

On June 12, 1948, the Women's Service Act of 1948 was signed into law. It established a permanent place for women in the army, navy, air force, and Marine Corps. This was also the year that President Harry S. Truman ordered the end of racial segregation. The Korean War did not instill a desire among women to enlist. Each service had been restricted as to the percentage of women—not more than two percent—that could comprise its total military strength. The services were not near that goal in 1951. The assistant secretary of defense for manpower, Anna Rosenberg , suggested to the secretary of defense, George C. Marshall, that a committee of fifty prominent women might help with recruiting. And so DACOWITS, The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, was organized. Part of their mission was to reassure parents about the care and supervision of the young women who joined the military and to raise the prestige of military women in the public eye. Surprisingly, since it failed to improve recruiting, DACOWITS still exists. It does supply useful information to Congress.

The war in Vietnam, from 1958 to 1973, did little to change the opinion or use of women in the services. Of the 7,500 women who served in Vietnam, fewer than 1,200 were WACs, WAFs or women marines. Nine army nurses gave their lives. None of the women received weapons training. The war did bring one long overdue significant change. Women in 1967 could be promoted to general and admiral. The army promoted two women to brigadier general two and a half years later. Public Law 90-130 also significantly removed the two percent ceiling on regular strength.

The end of the draft and institution of the all volunteer service in 1973 brought about changes. The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) had been opened to women in 1972. In 1976, the first women entered the service academies. In 1978, navy women were assigned to noncombatant ships. The same year the Women's Army Corp was dissolved and women were integrated into the regular army units. In Panama two woman commanded units in 1989 and the following year the first female commanded a navy ship. Service recruitment goals would never have been met if women had not joined the all-volunteer service. With the lifting of the draft, women thought their services would be used. In 1971 there were 40,000 women, roughly one percent, in the service. By 1991 the numbers had increased to a total of 378,000, or thirteen percent, of whom 223,000 were active duty and the other 155,000 divided between the guard and the reserve.[7]

However, integration of women into the units was not without problems. By the end of the Vietnam War everyone had an opinion of women in the military. The saying that "All military women are whores" was changed to "All military women are either whores or dykes."[8] Long-held beliefs were hard to dispel. Sexual harassment became a problem with threats that if you spurned a male's advances this proved you were a lesbian and if you surrendered it opened the doors to prey by other males in the unit.[9] These problems have reached appropriate notoriety in the press coverage of "Tailgate," the Air Force Academy scandals, and the conduct of drill instructors at several basic training bases. The reserves have had similar, less publicized issues. The escalation of the percentage of women in the service has not put these problems to rest in the military. Civilian employ-

ment has addressed harassment in the workplace with better results, but the macho young male in the military has been unable to come to grips with the role of the women in the service.

Gulf War I brought about the first real call-up of large numbers of the reserve force, to support the active duty forces. Women were still not allowed in combat units nor were they to be put at risk from enemy fire. The women were to continue in their role of supporting the combat soldier. Little did anyone realize how rapid the ground advances would be when the ground war started. The support units found themselves sometimes overrunning advance forces because of sand and smoke. Scud missiles were launched at the support facilities. Evacuation helicopters held crews of both genders. And everything was captured on CNN. The women were under the stress of potential scud attacks with chemical warheads, heat, sand, and separation from their children and they did not fall apart, cry, and ask to go home. They drove ambulances through mine fields and proved they could handle themselves in the field as well as the men. Major Marie T. Rossi, commander of "B" Company, 18th Army Aviation Brigade, and a pilot who flew her helicopter into Iraq within hours of the onset of the ground war, felt she was just doing her job. Unfortunately, she lost her life in a helicopter accident one day after the war was over. Major Rhonda Fleming, a flight surgeon who was aboard another helicopter that flew to rescue a downed pilot, was shot down, injured and taken captive by the Iraqi army. She shared the dubious distinction of being a POW with another female who was part of a lost transportation unit. They were treated with respect by the Iraqi prison guards. Major Fleming's comment when released was that

had their helicopter been armed it would not have been shot down. So much for the demur female!

With the positive change in attitude by the civilian public and the military, the politicians began a dialogue about opening more occupations to women in the military. One was to allow women to fly fighter aircraft in combat. Certainly women flew aircraft over combat zones during the war. I had been denied the right to fly in a plane once because the paratroopers carried weapons. My complaint went up the line, along with one from the paratroopers who were aware of the pilot as aircraft commander sending me away. A paratrooper during the flight incurred an injury. The protests brought about a change in regulations. As long as I was not directly involved in combat, I could fly in any aircraft, as could any medical personnel regardless of gender. Our flight nurses had been flying with POWs and Korean soldiers who refused to give up their weapons just to see a doctor.

Gulf War II was officially over with the capture of Saddam Hussein but the fighting continues. This war was not accompanied by the massive troop buildup that occurred in Gulf War I. The Department of Defense has had to rely heavily on using troops from the guard and reserve. To reduce end-strength and reorganize the military, considerable services had either been outsourced or delegated to the guard and reserve. After 9/11, considerable mobilization had occurred to provide military police support of our assets. The attack on Iraq was to be done with limited military resources. But both Afganistan and Iraq have exposed a different kind of warfare. Front lines do not exist. Support units have come primarily from the guard and reserve. Significant numbers of these volunteers called to serve are

women. They have had minimal training in the use of weapons. After all, they do not need the training. They are not military combatants. They drive unarmored trucks along roads that are mined or are exposed to grenades that leave them maimed as well as exposed to others with horrific injuries. I do not have the statistics for how many women have been sent to Iraq. We have all read about the transportation unit that made a wrong turn and ended up with a number of casualties. One woman was held as a POW and rescued within days. Her injuries were sufficient to earn her a medical retirement from the military.

Our women have served with dignity and many with honor and courage. They have served without complaint under considerable hardship whether they are officers or enlisted. The exact number of women killed is hard to find unless one reads the DOD archives for the names and pictures of the more than 1,500 deceased. An enlisted woman lost a forearm. A woman officer, a West Point graduate, lost an arm, and an army warrant officer lost both legs in a helicopter accident. The army cannot make up its mind about the awards they should give to people who serve in noncombat units. The boundaries of warfare have become blurred. When our military finally leaves Iraq, politicians and the military will again ask, What role do women play in the military? Have our women lost their femininity? Should we really train them how to use a rifle because they may need to fight? If they were given military combat positions, would they handle things differently? There are so many more borders to be crossed.

## Notes

1. Linda De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to the Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 83.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 84.
4. Ibid., 91.
5. Ibid., 98.
6. Ibid., 218.
7. Maj. Gen. Jeanne Holm, USAF (Ret.), *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution,* rev. ed. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 397.
8. De Pauw, 280.
9. Kate Muir, *Arms and the Woman* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, Cornet Edition, 1993), 193-207.

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