

## TEXT ABOUT SPECIAL PERSONS WHO WERE OR ARE IN THE MILITARY

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**John Kennedy** – He graduated from Harvard University in 1940 before joining the U.S. Naval Reserve the following year. During World War II, he commanded a series of PT boats in the Pacific theater and earned the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his service and war heroism.

After he graduated from Harvard, the United States entered World War II. His efforts to join the US Navy were initially thwarted by his ill-health, but after his father intervened, he was eventually admitted and assigned to serve in the South Pacific, commanding a small motor-torpedo boat, or "PT boat." Kennedy and his crew participated in the campaign to wrest thousands of islands from Japanese control.

In August 1943, as the sailors were sleeping without posting a watch (in violation of naval regulations), a Japanese destroyer rammed his boat, PT 109. Towing a badly burned crewmate by a life-jacket strap clenched in his teeth, Kennedy led the crew's ten survivors on a three-mile swim to refuge on a tiny island. The crew hid on the island from the enemy for days until Kennedy managed to summon help.

Widely credited with the rescue of his crew, Kennedy received the US Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Valor and a Purple Heart, for injuries he sustained.

Nevertheless, he returned home to a naval inquiry on the sinking. Although a board found evidence of poor seamanship, the Navy needed heroes more than it needed scapegoats, and Kennedy was cast as the former to build public morale and recruited to go on speaking tours.

**HAZEL AH YING LEE** was the 1st Chinese American woman to join the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), during World War II.

Lee fell in love with flying at a time when less than 1% of American pilots were women.

She learned about an opportunity to fly military aircraft by training to become a WASP. She applied and was accepted to begin formal training at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas.

She was considered by her peers to be a fine aviator with an added strong, fun personality.

Former WASP Anna (Flynn) Monkiewicz, 93, of The Dalles, Oregon., was stationed with Lee in Michigan. She recalls Hazel being a prankster and a nice person.

In her lifetime, she flew more than 70 different aircraft and died doing what she loved: flying.

**Audie Murphy** - (1925–1971) - The most decorated U.S. soldier of World War II, Audie Murphy returned home a hero and became an actor, starring in his own story, 'To Hell and Back.'

He eventually became the most decorated U.S. soldier in World War II. Though he was around 20 years old at the end of the war, he had killed 240 German soldiers, had been wounded three

times and had earned 33 awards and medals. After the war, he appeared in more than 40 films. He suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder throughout his life.

Born in Kingston, Hunt County, Texas, on June 20, 1925, Murphy was raised in a sharecropper's dilapidated house. Murphy's father, Emit, fell short on his parental responsibilities, continuing to father children, 12 in all, despite the fact that he had no plan for how to feed them. Picking up the slack, Murphy helped feed his mother and siblings by hunting rabbits and other small animals around their property.

In 1940, Murphy's father deserted the family for good, and his mother passed away a year later. Moved to do something to honor his mother's life, Murphy enlisted in the military 10 days after his 17th birthday. In February 1943, he left for North Africa, where he received extensive training.

A few months later, Murphy's division moved to invade Sicily. His actions on the ground impressed his superior officers and they quickly promoted him to corporal. While fighting in the wet mountains of Italy, Murphy contracted malaria. Despite such setbacks, he continually distinguished himself in battle.

In August 1944, Murphy's division moved to southern France as part of Operation Dragoon. It was there that his best friend, Lattie Tipton, was lured into the open and killed by a German soldier pretending to surrender.

Enraged by this act, Murphy charged and killed the Germans that had just killed his friend. He then commandeered the German machine gun and grenades and attacked several more nearby positions, killing all of the German soldiers there. Murphy was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions.

**Anna Monkiewicz** - "Flying was a great job. I got paid for doing something I loved."

Anna (Flynn) Monkiewicz's passion was to fly. Since her first trip into the blue in the 1930's as a teenager, Anna knew that the wild blue yonder was where she wanted to be.

"I was inspired by Charles Lindbergh's crossing the Atlantic Ocean and flying to Paris in 1927," she said. "I was in a motel elevator while serving as a Women's Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) and he came in with a friend. I was awestruck and couldn't speak."

During World War II female pilots like Anna Monkiewicz, from the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), were credited with freeing male pilots for combat service.

Between September 1942 and December 1944, the WASP and their predecessors in the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS), had delivered 12,650 aircraft and had flown more than 60 million miles in almost every type of military aircraft.

"Of all the 1,078 WASPs, I was one of nearly 130 of us who were assigned to fly fighter planes. I loved flying the sleek-looking P-51 Mustang the most," Anna said. "Although I really liked the P-47, too."

**John Lincoln Clem** changed his own middle name from Joseph to Lincoln sometime before he tried to enlist in the Union Army at the outbreak of the Civil War when he was 9. After being rejected by another unit, he made it into the 22nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry who sawed down the musket he later used to kill a Confederate officer who demanded his surrender.

He was promoted to sergeant and became a national hero before being discharged in 1864. He returned in 1871 and rose to major general before retiring in 1915.

**OLGA CUSTODIO** - The moment Olga decided that she wanted to become a military pilot it became her mission, and she was not going to take "no" for an answer.

Olga's desire to fly began at a young age. Her father was in the Army and she has many memories of traveling around the world with her family.

However, when she first attempted to become a military officer through her university's United States Air Force (USAF) Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), she was told women were not allowed into the program.

A later attempt to enter through the USAF Officer Training School was also denied. Despite the obstacles that were placed in her path, Olga continued toward her goal full throttle with grit and determination.

When she was 26 years old, already with a family of her own, she decided to make one last attempt to apply to USAF Officer Training School. Her three career choices on her application: pilot, pilot, and pilot. She became all three and then some.

Olga became the first Hispanic female to graduate from USAF Undergraduate Pilot Training, as well as the first female T-38 Talon Flight Instructor at both Laughlin Air Force Base (AFB) in Del Rio, Texas and Randolph AFB in San Antonio, Texas.

It was during her time as a T-38 instructor that she was awarded the Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Aviation Safety Award for the superior airmanship she displayed while handling an in-flight emergency when one of her engines failed after a bird strike.

In total, Olga served 24 years in the military and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve. She flew with American Airlines, retiring with over 11,000 hours flying the Boeing 727, Fokker 100, Boeing 757 and Boeing 767. She was recognized on two occasions by the Senate of Puerto Rico as an outstanding and exemplary citizen.

**Sgt. Alvin York** tried to stay out of World War I as a conscientious objector. When his plea was denied, he followed orders and went to war where he captured 132 German soldiers almost single-handedly. He then escorted those prisoners through German lines, marching them past their own comrades.

**Edna Modisette Davis** was born September 18, 1921.

She was the first woman to solo pilot the twin-engine Martin B-26 Marauder, often nicknamed "The Widow Maker" and "The Flying Coffin." A truly remarkable woman, Edna was the embodiment of resilience and courage. She was born September 18, 1921 and grew up flying, as her father was a pilot. She would eventually earn her wings as a WASP in the class of 43-W-5.

**Sgt. Henry Johnson** was a "Harlem Hellfighter" of World War I.

During a fight in the Argonne Forest, Johnson and a buddy came under attack by a dozen Germans. Johnson held them off with grenades and rifle fire until he ran out of ammo, then he finished the job with a knife, saving the rest of his unit.

Recently, the U.S. House of Representatives paved the way for our nation to finally pay the 95-year-old debt of gratitude. He was approved to receive the Medal of Honor, the highest military award, for his acts of heroism in World War I. The Senate will vote on the national defense bill, which carries a provision that would allow honors for Johnson, for his bravery nearly a century ago.

**Phyllis Latour Doyle**

In May 1944, a 23-year-old British secret agent named **Phyllis Latour Doyle** parachuted into occupied Normandy to gather intelligence on Nazi positions in preparation for D-Day.

As an agent for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), Doyle – who celebrated her 100th birthday – she secretly relayed 135 coded messages to the British military, before France's liberation in August.

She took advantage of the fact that the Nazi occupiers and their French collaborators were generally less suspicious of women, using the knitting she carried, as a way to hide her codes. For seventy years, Doyle's contributions to the war effort were largely unheralded, but she was finally given her due in 2014 when she was awarded France's highest honor, the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

Doyle first joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force at age 20 in 1941 to work as a flight mechanic, but SOE recruiters spotted her potential and offered her a job as a spy.

She first deployed to Aquitaine in Vichy France where she worked for a year as a spy using the code name Genevieve. Her most dangerous mission, however, began on May 1, 1944 when she jumped out of a U.S. Air Force bomber and landed behind enemy lines in Nazi-occupied Normandy.

Using the codename Paulette, she posed as a poor teenage French girl. Doyle used a bicycle to tour the region, often under the guise of selling soap, and passed information to the British on Nazi positions using coded messages.

Coded messages took a half an hour to send, and the Germans could identify where a signal was sent from in an hour and a half, so Doyle moved constantly to avoid detection.

At times, she stayed with Allied sympathizers, but often she had to sleep in forests and forage for food. Doyle continued her mission until France's liberation in August 1944.

Following the war, Doyle eventually settled in New Zealand where she raised four children. It was only in the past 15 years that she told them about her career as a spy.

The Olympian and West Point graduate **Gen. George S. Patton** is considered one of the most successful combat generals in U.S history.

He was born November 11, 1885, in San Gabriel, California

Striving to follow in his family's footsteps, he enrolled in Virginia Military Institute in 1904. A year later, he attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating on June 11, 1909. In 1910, he married Beatrice Ayer, a childhood friend.

Despite his grace with a sword, Patton had a reputation for being an accident prone young man. Some even speculate that his explosive temper and incessant cursing were the result of a skull injury in his 20s.

He was the first officer assigned to the Tank Corps in WWI. During WWII, he helped lead the Allies to victory in the invasion of Sicily and was instrumental to the liberation of Germany from the Nazis.

Patton had his first real taste of battle in 1915, when leading cavalry patrols against Pancho Villa at Fort Bliss along the Mexican border. In 1916, he was selected to aide John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in Mexico.

In Mexico, Patton impressed Pershing by personally shooting Mexican leader Julio Cardenas during the Battle of Columbus. Pershing promoted Patton to captain and invited him to lead Pershing's Headquarters Troop once they left Mexico.

He was later wounded in the battle of Meuse-Argonne and later earned the Distinguished Service Medal for his leadership of the tank brigade and establishing the tank school. He died on December 21, 1945 in Heidelberg, Germany.

**Susan Ahn Cuddy** – she said "A lot of people thought that women didn't belong in the service. That made us try harder."

Born in Los Angeles to Korean immigrants, Susan Ahn Cuddy and her siblings were taught from day one to be "good Americans."

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor during World War II, Cuddy decided to join the war effort by enlisting in the U.S. Navy — and became the first Asian American female officer in the military branch.

She went on to break even more barriers by becoming the service's first female gunnery officer. And despite facing racism and sexism by some in the Navy, she successfully trained both sailors and pilots to shoot down Japanese fighter planes.

**Douglas MacArthur** lived from January 26, 1880 to April 5, 1964).

He was an American military leader who served as General of the Army for the United States, as well as a Field Marshal to the Philippine Army. He was Chief of Staff of the United States Army during the 1930s, and he played a prominent role in the Pacific theater during World War II.

During the 1914 United States occupation of Veracruz, he conducted a reconnaissance mission, for which he was nominated for the Medal of Honor.

In 1917, he was promoted from major to colonel and became chief of staff of the 42nd (Rainbow) Division. In the fighting on the Western Front during World War I, he rose to the rank of brigadier general, was again nominated for a Medal of Honor, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross twice and the Silver Star seven times.

He retired from the U.S. Army in 1937 and became Military Advisor to the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines.

He was recalled to active duty in 1941 as commander of United States Army Forces in the Far East.

After the United States used atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he officially accepted the surrender of Japan on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945, aboard the USS Missouri, which was anchored in Tokyo Bay, and he oversaw the occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1951. As the effective ruler of Japan, he oversaw sweeping economic, political, and social changes.

He led the United Nations Command in the Korean War with initial success; however, the invasion of North Korea provoked the Chinese, causing a series of major defeats. MacArthur was contentiously removed from command by President Harry S. Truman on 11 April 1951. He later became chairman of the board of Remington Rand. He died in Washington D.C. on 5 April 1964 at the age of 84.

Remembering 2nd **Lt Ruth M. Gardiner** (Indianapolis, Indiana), the first American flight nurse killed in a combat theatre.

She was a compassionate, kindhearted and caring woman who became a nurse. Right after the attack on Pearl Harbor, she joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and served with the 805th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron.

Stationed in Alaska, this devoted flight nurse evacuated and treated American soldiers wounded during the Aleutian Islands campaign. Day after day, mission after mission, Ruth did everything she could to keep these young men alive and ease their pain. On July 27, 1943, she was evacuating another group of injured soldiers but her C-47 aircraft crashed near the Naknek Air Force Base (Alaska), killing everyone on board. Ruth was only 29 years old.

To honor this exceptional woman, in July 1944, the Gardiner General Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, was named after her.

**Tibor Rubin** survived the Mauthausen, Austria concentration camp and joined the U.S. Army to show his appreciation for them liberating him. In Korea, he held a hilltop on his own for 24 hours while his unit retreated using the road he was guarding. When he was finally captured, he refused offers by the Chinese to send him to his native Hungary, instead staying as a prisoner and stealing food for others.

**Rose O'Neal Greenhow** (1817-1864) Rose O'Neal was a spy for the Confederacy during the American Civil War. She lived in Washington when the civil war broke out. However, she used her contacts and knowledge to pass on information about the Union forces to the Southern armies. The Confederate President Jefferson Davis credited her information with helping their victory in the First Battle of the Bull Run. In 1862, she was arrested for espionage activities along with her daughter and she was deported to the south.

**Lewis Millett** joined the Army in 1941 but got tired of waiting for the U.S. to invade someone, so he deserted to Canada and got himself deployed to London. When America entered the war, he jumped back under the Stars and Stripes and twice saved men in his unit from certain death before his desertion charges caught up with him.

He was convicted and then promoted to second lieutenant within weeks. When Korea rolled around, he was an infantry captain who received a Distinguished Service Cross for a bayonet charge he led on Feb. 4, 1951 and a Medal of Honor for another bayonet charge on Feb. 7. He later served in Vietnam and retired as a colonel.

**Frank Luke, Jr.** was born in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 19th, 1887. His story began when his father, Frank Luke, Sr., came to the sun-scorched, wind-weathered desert of the Arizona Territory in 1873. Born of sturdy German stock, he had originally immigrated to New York, but his restless, adventurous spirit soon brought him westward. He eventually married Tillie Lubenow and settled in the area that is now the city of Phoenix. There they raised a family of nine children, including Frank, Jr., the eldest son.

Frank Luke, Jr.'s spirit reflected that of his pioneering father. He grew up in the rough and tumble life of the Old West. He understood that the price that Man paid for conformity was individual freedom and freedom was something he clearly understood. He spent much of his time in the saddle. He loved to hunt and was an excellent marksman.

He earned his wings in 1917 at Rockwell Field, California.

During a 5 day period, Sept. 12-18th, 1918, he scored 13 confirmed victories, including an amazing five victories (two balloons and three airplanes) on the last day.

They called him the "Sausage Buster," and "the Arizona Balloon Buster". Altogether Luke shot down 14 enemy balloons and four airplanes. He was killed near Murvaux, France by enemy soldiers when he refused to surrender and tried to hold them off with a pistol.

He received, posthumously, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Captain Eddie Rickenbacker said of Luke: "He was the most daring aviator and greatest fighter pilot of the entire war. His life is one of the brightest glories of our Air Service. He went on a

rampage and shot down fourteen enemy aircraft, including ten balloons, in eight days. No other Ace: Britain's Bishop from Canada, France's Fonck or even the dreaded Richthofen had ever come close to that."

**Cher Ami** (French for "dear friend" was a male homing pigeon who had been donated by the pigeon fanciers of Britain, for use by the U.S. Army Signal Corps in France during World War I and had been trained by American pigeoners.

He is famous for delivering a message from an encircled battalion despite serious injuries during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October, 1918

He delivered twelve important messages within the American sector at Verdun; on his last mission, October 4, 1918, he was shot through the breast and leg by enemy fire but still managed to return to his loft with a message capsule dangling from the wounded leg.

The message Cher Ami carried was from Major Charles S. Whittlesey's "Lost Battalion" of the Seventy-seventh Infantry Division that had been isolated from other American forces.

The message brought about the relief of the 194 battalion survivors, and they were safe behind American lines shortly after the message was received.

For his heroic service, Cher Ami was awarded the French Croix de Guerre with palm. He was returned to the United States and died at Fort Monmouth, N.J. on June 13, 1919, as a result of his wounds.

Cher Ami was later inducted into the Racing Pigeon Hall of Fame in 1931, and received a gold medal from the Organized Bodies of American Pigeon Fanciers in recognition of his extraordinary service during World War I.

**Edward (Eddie) Rickenbacker** was born on October 8, 1890 in Columbus, Ohio, and died on July 23, 1973, in Zürich, Switzerland. He was an excellent pilot, industrialist, and the most celebrated U.S. air ace of World War I.

He developed an early interest in internal-combustion engines and automobiles, and, by the time the United States entered World War I, he was one of the country's top three racing drivers.

He entered the army in 1917 as a driver attached to General John J. Pershing's staff and drove a car for Colonel William ("Billy") Mitchell, the noted advocate of tactical air power.

With Mitchell's help, he became a fighter pilot and was assigned to the 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron. He accumulated 26 air victories and numerous decorations, including the Medal of Honor. His war exploits are published in his book *Fighting the Flying Circus* (1919).

He returned to work in the automobile industry after the war, first with his own company and later with the Cadillac Motor Car Company.

He joined American Airways in 1932, moving to North American Aviation, Inc., in 1933, and finally, to Eastern Air Lines in 1935. Rickenbacker became president, general manager, and director of Eastern three years later. After leading the company ably for many years, he resigned as president in 1959 and as director and chairman of the board in 1963.



**Cathay Williams** is the only documented African American woman who served as a soldier in the Regular U.S. Army in the nineteenth century.

Born in September of 1842, Cathay Williams was a slave who would later come to pose as a man under the pseudonym Williams Cathay in order to join the army, becoming the first African-American female to enlist. Although her father was free, her mother was a slave which made her a slave. She worked on a plantation in Jefferson City, Missouri until 1861 when the area fell under Union control during the Civil War.

As such, she was freed from her plantation work, however, early on in the Civil War, slaves were pressed to join the Union army as support staff, such as cooks, laundresses or nurses. For the duration of the war, she continued to accompany different regiments across locations including Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Washington D.C.

At that time, women were not allowed to serve in the military, however on November 15, 1866 Cathay Williams enlisted under the pseudonym William Cathay with the 38th U.S. infantry posing as a man. During her military career, only her cousin and one friend knew her secret and both of them served in her regiment.

Following her discharge from the Army, Cathay resumed her identity as Cathay Williams and lived in Pueblo, Las Animas, and Trinidad, Colorado, where she was known as Kate.

Although Cathay Williams made her mark in history for becoming the first African American woman to enlist in the Army, it is disheartening to consider how difficult and challenging her later life was despite this accomplishment. Williams' initial reason for joining was to become financially stable, however she died impoverished, denied the pension she had earned through her service.

**Lawrence Brooks**, the oldest known World War II veteran from New Orleans, has turned 112 years old.

Brooks, born in Norwood, La., in 1909, was one of 15 children. He was drafted in 1940 and served until 1945 as a private in the predominantly Black 91st Engineer Battalion, which was stationed in New Guinea and the Philippines.

"We was building roads, bridges and airstrips for planes to land," Brooks recalled in a 2018 video.

After the war, he worked as a forklift operator, until retiring in his 70s.

Brooks is the beloved patriarch of his family: He has 5 children, 13 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. His wife, Leona B. Brooks, died in 2008.

The National WWII Museum in New Orleans organized a drive-by celebration to honor Brooks with a Jeep parade and live performances from the Museum's vocal trio, The Victory Belles, as well as other local musicians.

It has been a yearly tradition, but it was brought outside his home for the past 2 years due to the coronavirus pandemic. The City of New Orleans also issued an official proclamation recognizing Brooks' birthday.

7 years ago, Peter Crean, a vice president at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, said "He was coming up on his 105th birthday. It was pretty remarkable, and we thought we should have some sort of celebration".

"Mr. Brooks represents a generation that saved the world that we know. He was one of 16 million Americans who did his part for his country and the world to make it a better place."

### **Sybil Ludington** (1761 - 1839)

It's a rare person who hasn't heard of Paul Revere and his "Midnight Ride," but did you know that, two years later, a 16-year-old girl named Sybil Ludington rode twice as far as Revere to muster her father's regiment against another British attack?

On April 26, 1777, Ludington heard that the British forces were planning an attack on Danbury, Connecticut; she became determined to reach her father, Colonel Henry Ludington, so he could prepare his 400 militiamen to respond.

She rode through soaking rain, alerting troops along her way, warning the people of Danbury, and even fighting off a highwayman with a stick as she rode.

While her efforts could not stop the British from burning Danbury, Col. Ludington's troops were able to join forces with the Continental Army at the Battle of Ridgefield, forcing the British to return to their boats.

Although she was personally thanked by General George Washington for her efforts, it was Paul Revere who became a household name; it's only thanks to a written account from her great-grandson that the exciting tale of Sybil Ludington's ride has been preserved.

**Private Marcelino Serna** was born at the Hacienda Robinson mining camp outside Chihuahua City, Mexico on April 26, 1896. In 1916, when he was 20 years old, he came to the United States. He served as a member of the maintenance crew for two railroad systems and worked as a farmhand in Colorado.

The United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. That same year, federal officials detained a group of young men until their draft status could be verified. Rather than wait, Private Serna voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. Army. After three weeks of training at Camp Funston, Kansas, he deployed to France with Company B, 355th Infantry, 89th Infantry Division.

Upon learning Private Serna was not a U.S. citizen, his commander offered to discharge him. He declined, reportedly saying, "I told the captain I wanted to stay with my buddies, and he told me it would be okay."

In September 1918, during the battle of Saint-Mihiel, German machine gunners opened fire on his unit, killing 12 soldiers. As the scout, Private Serna requested permission to continue moving forward. During an interview in 1962 with El Paso Times reporter Bill Birch, he recounted the details of the attack:

"I jumped up and ran about ten yards and then hit the dirt. I kept this up until I was in the machine gunner's left flank. He had hit my helmet twice with bullets during this run. When I got

close enough, I threw four grenades into the nest. Eight Germans came out with their hands up. Another six were in the nest dead. I held my prisoners until help arrived."

On Nov. 7, 1918, just four days before the Armistice, a sniper shot Private Serna in a leg. During his recovery at a French hospital, General John J Pershing, the commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, presented him with the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest American combat award. He also received two French Croix de Guerre with palms.

### **Florence Nightingale (1820 - 1910)**

When Florence Nightingale was born to a wealthy British family, it was expected that she would become a proper high society lady -- but she had other plans.

She defied her parents' plans for marriage and instead, in 1854, she traveled to Scutari in the Ottoman Empire with 38 volunteer nurses that she had trained to treat the wounded soldiers of the Crimean War.

She was appalled at the poor hygiene and lack of nutritious food that resulted in thousands of soldiers — ten times more than were wounded or killed in battle — dying of communicable diseases like typhoid, cholera, and dysentery.

Nightingale became famous as "The Lady with the Lamp" who conducted rounds among the sick and wounded. Nightingale's ongoing legacy is her role founding the modern nursing profession and in using her skills to show the importance of proper sanitation. However, to the troops under her care, she was forever remembered as what The Times called a "ministering angel" who "when all the medical officers have retired for the night... may be observed alone, with a little lamp in her hand, making her solitary rounds."

**Joe P. Martinez** - Over a period of several days, repeated efforts to drive the enemy from a key defensive position high in the snow-covered precipitous mountains between the East arm of Holtz Bay and Chichogof Harbor, had failed.

Holtz Bay was among the landing sites of United States Army troops in the Battle of Attu on May 11, 1943, which led to the recapture of the island from the Japanese during World War II.

On 26 May 1943, troop dispositions were re-adjusted and a trial coordinated attack on this position by a reinforced battalion was launched. Initially successful, the attack hesitated.

In the face of severe hostile machine-gun, rifle, and mortar fire, Pvt. Martinez, an automatic rifleman, rose to his feet and resumed his advance. Occasionally he stopped to urge his comrades on. His example inspired others to follow.

After a most difficult climb, Pvt. Martinez eliminated resistance from part of the enemy position by BAR fire and hand grenades, thus assisting the advance of other attacking elements. This success only partially completed the action. The main Holtz-Chichogof Pass rose about 150 feet higher, flanked by steep rocky ridges and reached a snow-filled defile. Passage was barred by enemy fire from either flank and from tiers of snow trenches in front.

Despite these obstacles, and knowing of their existence, Pvt. Martinez again led the troops on and up, personally silencing several trenches with BAR fire and ultimately reaching the pass itself. Here, just below the knifelike rim of the pass, Pvt. Martinez encountered a final enemy-

occupied trench and as he was engaged in firing into it he was mortally wounded. The pass, however, was taken and its capture was an important preliminary to the end of organized hostile resistance on the island.

### **Mary Walker** (1832 - 1919)

The only woman to ever be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor was best known during her life as a feminist, abolitionist, surgeon... and the woman who insisted on wearing pants!

Mary Edwards Walker was one of America's first female doctors, and eschewed the heavy dresses expected of women, writing that "The greatest sorrows from which women suffer to-day are those physical, moral, and mental ones, that are caused by their unhygienic manner of dressing!"

Instead, her preferred garb was trousers under a knee-length jacket or dress.

When the Civil War broke out, she quickly volunteered to provide medical care for the Union army. At first, she was only permitted to work as a nurse, but by 1863 she was officially contracted as a civilian surgeon — one who frequently crossed battle lines to assist the wounded, and who regularly treated civilians.

She was captured by Confederate forces in 1864 and accused of being a spy, but later was freed as part of a prisoner exchange.

President Andrew Johnson awarded her with the Medal of Honor in 1865. In her later life, she went on to argue for women's suffrage -- and for a cause close to her heart, dress reform.

**The Tuskegee Airmen** were a group of primarily African American military pilots (fighter and bomber) and airmen who fought in World War II.

They formed the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group and the 477th Bombardment Group of the United States Army Air Forces. The name also applies to the navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, instructors, crew chiefs, nurses, cooks, and other support personnel.

All black military pilots who trained in the United States trained at Griel Field, Kennedy Field, Moton Field, Shorter Field and the Tuskegee Army Air Fields.

They were educated at the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), located near Tuskegee, Alabama. Of the 922 pilots, five were Haitians from the Haitian Air Force and one pilot was from Trinidad. It also included a Hispanic or Latino airman born in the Dominican Republic.

The 99th Fighter Squadron was finally equipped with the aircraft with which they became most commonly associated - the North American P-51 Mustang, used in July, 1944).

When the pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group painted the tails of their P-47s red, the nickname "Red Tails" was coined. The red markings that distinguished the Tuskegee Airmen included red bands on the noses of P-51s as well as a red rudder; the P-51B and D Mustangs flew with similar color schemes, with red propeller spinners, yellow wing bands and all-red tail surfaces.

The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African-American military aviators in the United States Armed Forces.

During World War II, black Americans in many U.S. states were still subject to the Jim Crow laws and the American military was racially segregated, as was much of the federal government. The Tuskegee Airmen were subjected to discrimination, both within and outside the army.

**Sarah Emma Edmonds** (1841 - 1898) - At one point in Sarah Emma Edmonds' strange but true Civil War career, she was a woman, disguised as a man... disguised as a woman!

The Canadian-born Edmonds fled an abusive father for the United States in her teens, and when the Civil War broke out, she felt impelled by patriotism to join the war effort.

Inspired by a book, she disguised herself as a man and joined the 2nd Michigan Infantry as Franklin Flint Thompson, serving as a field nurse.

But partway through the war, she started operating as a spy for the Union, disguising herself in a variety of ways, including as a black man or as a laundry woman.

"Frank Thompson's" career ended when she contracted malaria, since she didn't dare present herself at a hospital without her true identity being discovered, and she was given a dishonorable discharge for desertion.

However, after publishing a best-selling account of her military experience, her desertion charge was dropped and she received a government pension for her military service.

In 1897, she became the only woman ever admitted to the Civil War veteran's organization, The Grand Army of the Republic.

**Sergeant Angel Mendez** (August 8, 1946 – March 16, 1967), was a United States Marine who was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

On March 16, 1967, Mendez was conducting a Search and destroy mission with his company when they came under attack from a Viet Cong battalion.

Half of his platoon was pinned down in a rice paddy under enemy fire, and Mendez volunteered to lead a squad to assist the pinned-down Marines in returning to friendly lines with their two dead and two seriously wounded men.

He exposed himself while returning fire with his M79 grenade launcher on the enemy. His Platoon Commander, Lieutenant Ronald D. Castille was seriously wounded and fell, unable to move.

Using his own body, Mendez shielded Lt. Castille as he applied a dressing to the wound, he then picked up the Lieutenant and started to carry him to friendly lines, which were more than seventy-five meters away.

Mendez was hit in the shoulder and two of his comrades rushed to help him with their commander, Mendez however refused to let go of his platoon commander and chose to act as

rear man. Mendez continued to shield his Lieutenant with his own body until he was mortally wounded. Mendez was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross and promoted to Sergeant.

Lieutenant Ronald D. Castille went on to become the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

The St. George Post Office in Staten Island was renamed and is now known as the "Sergeant Angel Mendez Post Office."

**Carmen Contreras Bozak** was the first Puerto Rican woman to join the Women's Army Corps, where she served as interpreter. She spoke five languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and French.

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, she later moved to New York City and graduated from Julia Richman High School in the Bronx. Six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Carmen joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.

During the time that the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was being established, they were looking for bilingual Hispanic women to fill career fields such as cryptology, communications and interpretation.

In January 1943, she was one of 195 women who made up the first group of women sent overseas. She arrived in North Africa and was assigned not as a typist or stenographer, like many at the time, but to the Signal Corps — sending and receiving coded messages between General Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in Algiers and the battlefield in Tunisia.

After she contracted an eye infection while in Africa, she was sent to Valley Forge Hospital in Pennsylvania. It was there that she met Theodore Bozak, an Army soldier who was recovering from shrapnel wounds in his head. They were married six months later.

After the war, she worked at the post office, as a real estate broker and volunteered for decades at the VA. She started a chapter of WAC Veterans in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Carmen and Theodore raised three children.

**Richard Cavazos**, a Mexican-American, was born on January 31, 1929, in Kingsville, Texas.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in geology from Texas Technological College in 1951, where he played on the football team and was a distinguished graduate of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program.

He received further military education at the Command and General Staff College, the British Army Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the United States Army War College.

He received basic officer training at Fort Benning, Georgia, followed by training at Airborne School. He then deployed to Korea with the 65th Infantry.

During the Korean War, as a member of the 65th Infantry Regiment, a unit of mostly natives of Puerto Rico, he distinguished himself, receiving both the Silver Star and Distinguished Service Cross for his heroic actions.

**Beatrice Arthur** - On Feb. 13, 1943, the U.S. Marine Corps put out its rallying call: "Be a Marine...Free a Man to Fight." Five days later, Beatrice Arthur, then Frankel, enlisted as one of the first members of the Women's Reserve.

Born in 1922 in Brooklyn, New York, Arthur was a first-generation American, raised by Jewish immigrants from Europe. According to her enlistment paperwork, her hobbies included hunting with a .22 caliber rifle and playing the piano.

In a letter dated Feb. 23, 1943, Arthur wrote that she enjoyed working as a hospital lab technician but did not make enough money to support herself. Instead of starting a new job, she changed her mind after hearing that enlistments for women in the Marines were open.

As part of the enlistment process, Arthur underwent multiple interviews and personality appraisals. One male interviewer described her as "frank and open," but also "argumentative" and "over aggressive," without being too "cocky." A handwritten note on the assessment sheet read: "Officious—but probably a good worker if she has her own way!"

After basic training, Arthur served as a typist at Marine headquarters in Washington, D.C. In June 1943, the Marine Corps accepted her transfer request to the Motor Transport School at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. She said she offered more value to the Marine Corps in this duty based on her past experience. Arthur then worked as a truck driver and dispatcher in Cherry Point, North Carolina, between 1944 and 1945.

She was honorably discharged with the rank of staff sergeant, in September 1945. Afterward, she began a successful acting career, best known for her Emmy Award-winning portrayal of Maude Findlay on "Maude" and as Dorothy Zbornak on "The Golden Girls."

### **Benjamin O Davis Sr., first African American General**

On Oct. 25, 1940, Benjamin O. Davis Sr. became the first African American to hold star rank in the U.S. Army and in the armed forces. He was promoted to brigadier general, temporary -- a situation with which he was all too familiar, as his promotions to major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel had all originally been "temporary." Such was the situation for black officers in Davis's day -- all two or three of them.

Davis's service as an officer with the famed "Buffalo Soldiers" regiment in the Philippines and on the Mexican border was exemplary, yet his subsequent assignments as a college ROTC instructor and as a National Guard advisor were far from the front lines. All of his postings, including duty as the military attache to Liberia, were designed to avoid putting Davis in command of white troops or officers.

As an advisor on race relations in the European theater during World War II, Davis, as his Distinguished Service Medal citation relates, showed "initiative, intelligence and sympathetic understanding" while conducting investigations, bringing about "a fair and equitable solution to problems which have since become the basis of far-reaching War Department policy."

Davis's slow, steady, and determined rise in the Army paved the way for countless minority men and women -- including his son, Benjamin O. Davis Jr.

**DOGS, CATS AND THE END**