

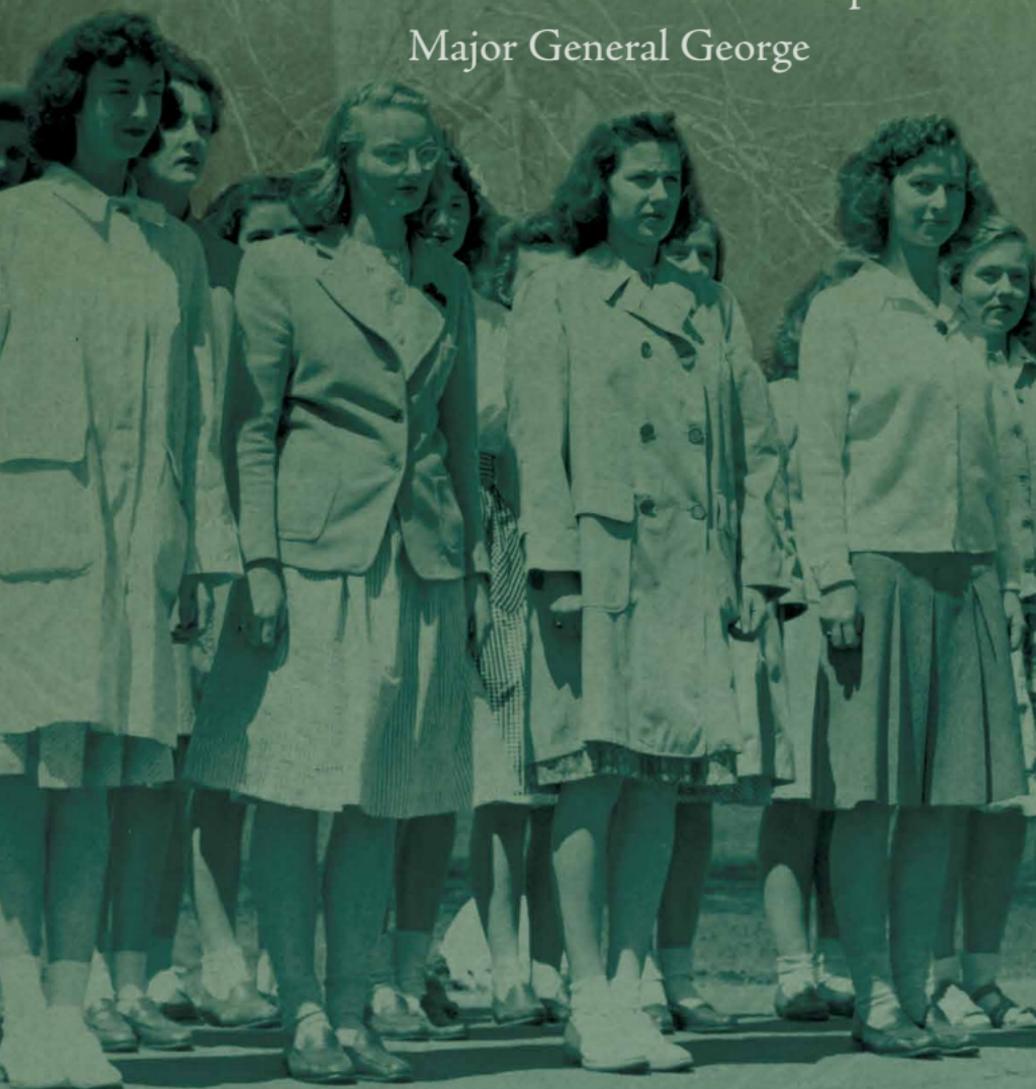
WOMEN
IN THE
UNITED STATES
MARINE CORPS



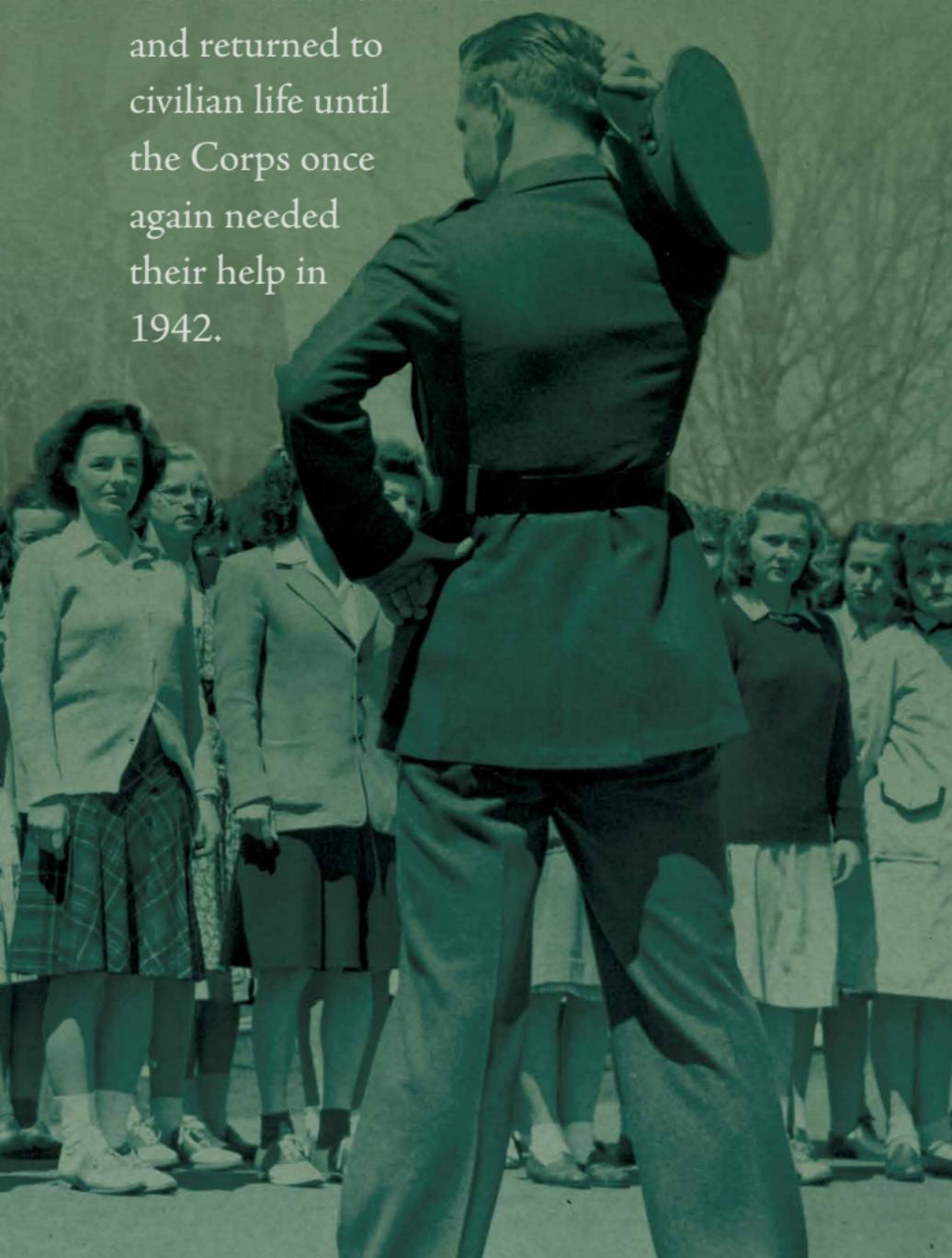
**ACCORDING TO MARINE CORPS
LORE, THE FIRST WOMAN TO WEAR
THE EAGLE, GLOBE, AND ANCHOR**

in service to her country was Lucy Brewer. Disguised as a man, she supposedly served aboard the *USS Constitution* during the War of 1812. While no evidence has ever been found to support this legend, no one can dispute Opha Mae Johnson's claim to be the first woman to enlist in the Marine Corps Reserve on 13 August 1918.

Three hundred women followed Private Johnson into service during World War I after gender barriers prohibiting female enlistment were removed by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels on 8 August 1918. Commandant of the Marine Corps Major General George



Barnett now had the authority to enroll women to support the growing administrative demands of the war. Although some male Marines were less than positive in their attitudes toward these first Women Marines, most welcomed them into the ranks. Their treatment as equals was ensured by the Commandant when he directed that all Marines earn the same pay and entitlements regardless of gender. All Marines—men and women—were held to the same exacting standards of physical fitness, bearing, and demeanor. At war's end, Women Marines took off their uniforms and returned to civilian life until the Corps once again needed their help in 1942.



The National Museum of the Marine Corps opened with three historical galleries that highlight the Marine Corps' service during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Visitors also learn what it's like to become a Leatherneck in "Making Marines," a gallery that explores boot camp life and officer training. There are no separate galleries dedicated to the many groups that comprise the Marine Corps. Instead, their stories are told within the context of history. This brochure serves as a special topic guide about the contributions of women to the Marine Corps. The Scuttlebutt Theater provides an informative orientation film, with testimony from Lieutenant General Carol Mutter, USMC (Ret). It's a good place to begin your tour of the Museum.

Uncommon Valor: Marines in World War II

1

The U.S. entered World War II in December 1941, and it soon became clear to the senior officers of the Marine Corps that they would be sending most of their Marines to the Pacific to fight the Japanese. Once again, the Corps would seek women to replace men in stateside billets. In response to Commandant Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb's request, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the formation of the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve on 7 November 1942. Recruitment began on 13 February 1943 with an initial goal of signing up 6,500 Women Marines and building to an end

strength of 19,000. In accordance with existing policies throughout the armed forces, the Marine Corps established separate training facilities for women. Recruits attended boot camp at Hunter College in New York City, and officer candidates resided at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, until a combined training facility could be established for them in North Carolina. In July 1943, the first class of recruits and candidates reported to Camp Lejeune.

Please visit the World War II gallery to learn more about the Women Marines and their experiences from Camp Lejeune to stations across the

U.S. and Hawaii. An exhibit titled "Free a Man to Fight" details recruitment and training of Women Marines.

Additionally, a display in the Museum Store called "A Few Good Women" further explores the accomplishments of these World War II Marines.



Send in the Marines: The Korean War

2 The rise of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) as the two dominant powers at the end of World War II brought about tensions with global repercussions. Cold War anxiety over the possibility of armed conflict involving the U.S. and a Soviet bloc country prompted the Army and Navy to press Congress into fully integrating women into their respective services to eliminate the roller coaster cycle of mobilizing women during times of need and then cutting their numbers back after the crisis was over. Commandant General Alexander A. Vandegrift was unwilling to sacrifice combat billets to make room for women, given the



Marine Corps' limited enlistment strength and budget. However, on 12 June 1948, Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, making women a formal part of all U.S. military services.



The act allowed the Marine Corps to determine the strength and organization of the new Marines, making their integration more palatable for the Corps as a whole.

Even before hostilities broke out in Korea in 1950, the Marine Corps was contacting former Women Marines regarding assignments to Volunteer Training Units. These reserve units were staffed by both male and female volunteers in active status, who trained and worked together at various locales across the U.S. Many of these volunteers later joined Organized Reserve Units, and then went on to regular active duty assignments, providing the first test for the newly gender-integrated Marine Corps. This gradual adjustment period proved advantageous for both the Women Marines and the Corps. Nearly 2,800 Women

1

STORE
1

ENTRANCE →

MARINES
MAKING

LEGACY WALK



Marines served their country during the Korean War.

Starting in 1949, enlisted women trained at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in South Carolina. Another barrier was broken the same year, when the first black women were accepted for enlistment in the Marine Corps. From the beginning, the reception, training, and housing of black Women Marines was completely integrated.

Details regarding the integration of the Marine Corps and women's service during the Korean War can be found in the Korean War gallery in an exhibit titled "The Women Marine's Third War."

In the Land, Air, and Sea: The War in Vietnam

3 The Vietnam War, America's longest armed conflict, erupted amid a period of immense social and political turmoil in the U.S. America's armed forces entered the conflict fully integrated, and men and women alike faced the challenges wrought by a changing political landscape. During the 1960s and 1970s, women in the Marine Corps took advantage of increased opportunities within expanding military occupational specialties, inclusion into formal technical, professional, and leadership schools, postings to overseas duty stations including Saigon, and the opportunity to be equally promoted along with their male colleagues. During the Vietnam War, Women Marine strength grew to 2,700. In 1978, Margaret A. Brewer became the first woman general officer to serve the Marine Corps.

The Vietnam War gallery provides a glimpse into the trials that Marines faced in combat. An exhibit titled "Women Marines Go to War" offers more details on Women Marines' contributions and achievements during this conflict.

The Modern Marine

4 Women continue to serve the Marine Corps with distinction during times of peace and war. Approximately 1,000 women deployed during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990-91. A significant milestone occurred in 1993 when 2d Lieutenant Sarah Deal became the first Woman Marine selected for naval aviation training. Women Marines continue to serve with distinction today in Iraq and Afghanistan. See images from today's Global War on Terrorism taken by Marine Corps combat photographers and created by combat artists. The National Museum of the Marine Corps is a constant work in progress. As new exhibits and artifacts are added to its galleries, so, too, will new images and information about this special topic.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

To explore the topic of women's contributions to the Marine Corps further, please consider the following:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hewitt, Linda. *Women Marines In World War I*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974.

Holmstedt, Kirsten. *Band of Sisters: American Women at War in Iraq*, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2007.

Meid, Pat. *Marine Corps Women's Reserve in World War II*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1968.

Stremlow, Mary. *A History of the Women Marines, 1946-1977*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1986.

Stremlow, Mary. *Free a Marine to Fight: Women Marines in World War II*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1994.

Wise, James E., and Baron, Scott. *Women at War: Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Conflicts*, Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2006.

INTERNET LINKS OF INTEREST

Women Marines Association:

<http://www.womenmarines.org>

Free a Marine to Fight: Women Marines in World War II:

<http://tinyurl.com/me32gg>

Orders and Directives: Historical:

<http://tinyurl.com/nbce49>

Marine Corps History Division:

www.history.usmc.mil

MUSEUMS AND SITES OF INTEREST

Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C.,

www.womensmemorial.org



NATIONAL MUSEUM
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