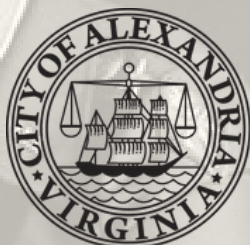


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Welcoming March, we recognize Women's History Month and the incredible contributions of women in the military. During this month, join the Military Women's Memorial as they celebrate Women's History Month with various programs throughout March. In addition, learn about workshops and programming ranging from military children's talent auditions, job fairs, and wellness events! You'll also find special observances, book reviews, and tributes that celebrate the historic and diverse experiences of women in service. Join us in honoring the legacy of women in the SMVF community and check out the event information listed below to enjoy.



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
AND HUMAN SERVICES

## Community Events

- ✓ Saturday, March 8, 2 – 4 p.m. : Homes for Heroes. [Register](#)
- ✓ Saturday, March 8, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. : Networking: Building Business Resilience in the Veteran Community. [Register](#)
- ✓ Wednesday, March 12, 12 – 1:30 p.m. : The Unique Journey of United States Women Veterans: Past, Present, Future. [Register](#)
- ✓ Sunday, March 16, 1– 3 p.m. : Men + Mental Health Check-In "Healing Through Art". [Register](#)
- ✓ Sunday, March 16, 2– 4 p.m. : "The Hello Girls" Documentary Screening. [Register](#)
- ✓ Wednesday, March 19, 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. : Bridges to Success: Career Pathways for Military-Connected Families. [Register](#)
- ✓ Thursday, March 20, 1 – 3 p.m. : Caring for Women Veterans: Navigating VA Healthcare, Maternity Care, and Mental Health. [Register](#)

- ✓ Thursday, March 20, 12 – 1 p.m. : Tricare for Life. [Register](#)
- ✓ Thursday, March 20, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. : Boots to Business (Entrepreneurship) Class. [Register](#)
- ✓ Thursday, March 20, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. : Virginia Women Veteran's Ceremony. [Register](#)
- ✓ Wednesday, March 26, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. : E2I/OWF Federal Internship and Employment Fair. [Register](#)
- ✓ Saturday, March 29, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. : Her Valor: Honoring Women Veterans. [Register](#)

## Special Observances & Resources



[SMVF WEBSITE & RESOURCES](#)

- ✓ **Monday, March 3: U.S. Navy Reserve Birthday**
- ✓ **Monday, March 10: The National Day of Rest for Black Women & Honoring Harriet Tubman**
- ✓ **Thursday, March 13: K-9 Veterans Day**
- ✓ **Friday, March 21: Rosie the Riveter Day**
- ✓ **Sunday, March 23– Sunday, March 30: Military World Games in Switzerland**
- ✓ **Tuesday, March 25: Medal of Honor Day**

## Honoring a Historic Legend and our Mental Health



March 10 represents The National Day of Rest for Black Women. This day serves as a time for reflection, restoration, and resilience, while also honoring the anniversary of Harriet Tubman's death. Posthumously recognized as a one-star general by the Maryland National Guard for not only guiding enslaved people to freedom after escaping from slavery herself, but also serving in the Union Army, Harriet Tubman as we know was a key figure in American history and the abolitionist movement. We want to continue to celebrate her courage, leadership, and contributions to the fight for freedom.

By observing this day on her anniversary, it connects the day of reflection and resilience to Tubman's legacy of strength, sacrifice, and advocacy for Black women and their rights. This day serves as a reminder of the importance of rest and self-care, especially considering the historical and ongoing challenges faced by Black women. It encourages individuals and communities to prioritize mental, emotional, and physical well-being, fostering environments where rest is recognized as a vital component of health and empowerment. You can express love by telling a Black woman you care, recognizing the ways she has supported you, and thanking her for her vulnerability.



An example of an event in the City of Alexandria commemorating this day occurred at Wellness Bliss, located at 209 Madison St. Floor 3, Alexandria, VA 22314. Wellness Bliss hosted a day dedicated to pampering, and self-care, providing attendees with opportunities to relax, rejuvenate, fellowship and prioritize well-being. [Wellness Bliss: National Day of Rest for Black Women](#)

- **Naisha Chinnery, SDA Coordinator, DCHS**

# Need Some Reminders On How to Engage in Self-Care? Here are 12 Simple Ways to Support Your Overall Well-Being:

- 1 Prioritize Rest and Sleep** – Prioritize quality sleep and allow yourself to rest without guilt. Rest is needed for both physical and mental health.
- 2 Set Healthy Boundaries** – Protect your energy by saying “no” to things that drain you and “yes” to what nourishes you. Healthy boundaries help maintain balance in relationships and work life.
- 3 Nourish Your Body** – Eat nutritious, balanced meals that make you feel good, and stay hydrated. Food is fuel, and proper nourishment enhances mood, energy, and overall wellness.
- 4 Move Your Body** – Engage in physical activity that you enjoy, whether it’s walking, yoga, dancing, or strength training. Exercise is a great way to relieve stress and boost mental clarity.
- 5 Ground Yourself**– Walk barefoot (when the weather gets warmer of course). You can walk on grass, sand, or even mud. Walking without shoes or socks allows the skin to touch the natural ground, which can provide grounding energy.
- 6 Practice Mindfulness and Meditation** – Take time to slow down, breathe deeply, and be present. Meditation, deep breathing, or simple mindful moments help reduce stress and improve focus.
- 7 Engage in Activities That Bring Joy** – Make time for hobbies, whether it’s reading, painting, gardening, or listening to music. Doing things you love is essential for mental well-being.
- 8 Stay Connected** – Build and maintain meaningful relationships with friends, family, or support groups. Social connection fosters emotional support and reduces feelings of isolation.
- 9 Pamper Yourself** – Indulge in self-care rituals like skincare routines, taking a relaxing bath, getting a massage, or treating yourself to a spa day at home.
- 10 Limit Screen Time and Social Media** – Unplug from technology when needed to avoid digital burnout. Taking breaks from screens from everyday work on the computer can improve mental clarity and emotional well-being.
- 11 Seek Professional Support When Needed** – Therapy, coaching, or counseling can be valuable tools for emotional and mental well-being. Check with an in-network provider with your insurance or come on down to the 2nd floor and talk with us or call 703.746.3535 and we’ll get you connected to CSB services or help you navigate other mental health resources in the area.
- 12 Last but not least- TAKE YOUR ANNUAL LEAVE & VACATION- enough said.**  
For everyone who this may resonate with, self-care is not selfish—it’s essential. Making time for yourself allows you to show up more fully in all areas of your life. **Get your rest, however it looks like to you!**



# Harriet Tubman: Posthumously Recognized as a One-Star General

In November 2024, Harriet Tubman was posthumously awarded the honorary rank of one-star general by the Maryland National Guard and Governor Wes Moore. This was a historic recognition, announced on Veterans Day last year.

Known for her work as an abolitionist and conductor of the Underground Railroad, Ms. Tubman also played a significant role in the Union Army. After escaping slavery in Dorchester, Maryland, in 1849, where she was also born, she dedicated her life to leading others to freedom. However, her bravery extended beyond the Underground Railroad. She became an important military figure, serving as a spy, scout, nurse, and cook for the Union forces.

Did you know that Ms. Tubman is recognized as the first woman in U.S. history to lead a military expedition? In June 1863, she helped plan and lead the Combahee Ferry Raid in South Carolina, working with the Second South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, a regiment of Black soldiers. Using intelligence, which she already had from Confederate defenses, including the placement of underwater mines, Ms. Tubman guided Union troops in a courageous raid that resulted in the liberation of more than 700 enslaved people.



Photo Attribution

Despite her service and invaluable contributions, Ms. Tubman was never formally given a military rank, pension, or “flowers” she rightfully deserved for her work. Her recognition as a one-star general in 2024 was a long-overdue acknowledgment of her role in military history.

In celebrating Women’s History Month, we would like to honor Harriet Tubman, for not only as a freedom fighter but also as a military leader whose courage and strategic intelligence shaped American history.

**-Naisha Chinnery, Intake Coordinator, Nicol Jackson, SMVF Behavioral Health Coordinator and Kim Ragin, Supervisor-SDA, DCHS**

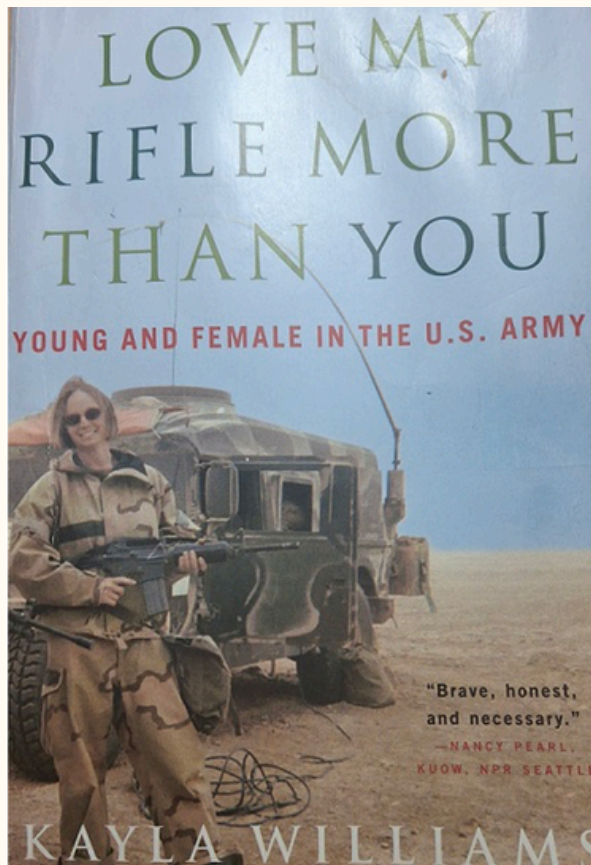
Citation: Osho-Williams, O. (2024, November 13). Harriet Tubman just became a one-star general, more than 150 years after serving with the Union Army. Smithsonian Magazine. [Link](#)

# How Have We Progressed? A Memoir of a Young Woman’s Active Duty Military Service Over Twenty Years Ago – Claire Wills

“Love my rifle more than you: Young and female in the U.S. Army”, by Kayla Williams, was first published in 2005. It is a highly personal, candid account of Ms. Williams’ experiences as an Army enlistee who fought in the Iraq war.

A gifted student with a turbulent family history, Williams graduated early from high school and completed college before joining the Army in her mid-twenties after a brief marriage. The financial security Army service offered was incentive; she would be financially stable, if not geographically stable. As someone who moved frequently during her childhood due to unconventional parenting, Williams did not mind the latter. Because of her advanced linguistic skills, she was assigned to learn Arabic at a highly specialized training center. She was deployed in 2003 as a member of the 2nd Prophet Team of 3rd Platoon, Delta Company, 311th Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion attached to 3rd Brigade in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), the famous "Screaming Eagles."

Full of highly subjective and irreverent observations communicated with down to earth, at times profane, language, the book was an education for people like me who may have had family members serving in the military but have very little understanding of the rigors of day-to-day life in the armed services, never mind during active combat. For example, I finally learned the order, from smallest to largest, of infantry units: team, squad, platoon, company, battalion, brigade, division, corps, Army.



As the subtitle to the book indicates, the focus of the book is on how women in the armed services, certainly at the time this book was written, which is now twenty years ago –faced sexism, discrimination and tension between teammates while co-located in a combat zone with male soldiers. Williams coped by using bravado and a tough as nails approach to her duties, determined to demonstrate that she was as fully committed a soldier as anyone on her team. It was surprising at times to read about her annoyance towards, and disrespect of, her female commanding officer.

Overall, this was a fascinating, if highly personalized memoir of military service. It was interesting for me to read this book and consider that when it was published, in 2005, only 15% of the U.S. Army was female, and that while 91 % of all Army career fields were open to women, there were no women in artillery, infantry, no women in special forces and no women allowed to drive tanks. It makes me wonder how things have progressed in the last twenty years, and if, and how quickly, they will regress in the next twenty.

**-Claire Wills, Senior Therapist, DCHS**

Citation: [Love my rifle more than you: Young and Female in the U.S. Army](#) by Kayla Williams, Michael E. Staub, published 2005 by W.W. Norton & Co., New York, NY.

## The City's Own History: Army Nurses in the City of Alexandria and the PBS Production, "Mercy Street" – Claudia Irigoyen

"Mercy Street" is a television series about Army nurses during the American Civil War of events that took place in Alexandria, Virginia. It was created by Lisa Q. Wolfinger and David Zabel and produced by PBS, which premiered on January 17, 2016 and last aired on March 5, 2017. The scenes were filmed in Central Virginia, such as Richmond and Petersburg. The cast also visited Carlyle House on 121 North Fairfax St. and other historic Alexandria landmarks. It is based on the memoir, *Adventures of an Army Nurse in Two Wars*, by Mary Phinney von Olnhhausen. (Sources 1, 3)

The series portrays the challenging experiences that doctors, nurses, wounded soldiers, and African Americans (free/enslaved/escaped enslaved) faced during the American Civil War in Alexandria, Virginia. There are two main characters, nurse Mary Phinney (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), a Baroness abolitionist from New England and Emma Green (Hannah James) a Confederate supporter, daughter of James Green, who both volunteered at the Mansion House Hospital and lived in Carlyle House in Alexandria. This Mansion was once The Green family's hotel, which was later turned into a Union Army Hospital.

One of the characters is also Dorthea Dix (Cherry Jones), a famous nurse, who served as the Superintendent of Army Nurses during the Civil War. (Source 1) Most of the characters, including Mary and Dorthea, were real people, who once worked at the Union Army Hospital.



Despite the strong opposition from surgeons and doctors, who did not want female nurses, they went above and beyond to care for the patients. In the series as well as in real life, these nurses provided more than just physical care, they offered emotional support, helped soldiers with writing and reading letters, prayed with them, and helped with operations in the hospital. (Source 2) The resilience, courage, and humanity that nurses displayed in this series during turbulent times was remarkable. These nurses definitely carved a path for other women in the medical profession.- **Claudia Irigoyen, Senior Therapist, DCHS**

Mansion House Hotel, Alexandria's largest Civil War era hotel, became its largest Union hospital. (Library of Congress) (Image Source 4)



Images Source: PBS

## Explore the Locations That Inspired Mercy Street in Alexandria

### Sources:

1. <https://www.pbs.org/mercy-street/about/index.html>
2. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/female-nurses-during-civil-war>
3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercy\\_Street\\_\(TV\\_series\)#:~:text=The%20show%20was%20filmed%20in,Petersburg%20Old%20Town%20Historic%20District.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercy_Street_(TV_series)#:~:text=The%20show%20was%20filmed%20in,Petersburg%20Old%20Town%20Historic%20District.)
4. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/historic-sites/mansion-house-hospital>

# Trailblazing Women in Military History: Honoring Courage & Service



In addition to Harriet Tubman, Kayla Williams, and the Army nurses depicted in Mercy Street, many women have played pivotal roles in military history, breaking barriers and serving with courage. Here are a few other notable figures whose contributions deserve recognition:

## 1 Cathay Williams (1844–1892) First Black Woman to Enlist in the U.S. Army

Disguising herself as a man, Cathay Williams enlisted in the Army under the name “William Cathay” during the Civil War, becoming the first known Black woman to serve. She worked as a Buffalo Soldier before being discharged due to illness.

## 2 Rosie the Riveter – Honored March 21

Though not a real person, Rosie the Riveter symbolizes the millions of women who worked in factories and shipyards during World War II, taking on roles traditionally held by men. Many of these women later joined the military or continued breaking barriers in defense work. March 21 is a day to honor their contributions.

## 3 Brigadier General Hazel Johnson-Brown (1927–2011) First Black Woman General in the U.S. Army

Hazel Johnson-Brown became the first Black woman to achieve the rank of general in the U.S. Army and served as the Army Nurse Corps Chief, leading efforts to modernize military nursing programs.

## 4 Lieutenant General Nadja West (b. 1961) – First Black Woman Army Surgeon General

Lt. Gen. West was the first Black woman to serve as the U.S. Army Surgeon General and the highest-ranking Black woman in the military’s history. She led major medical operations and modernized military healthcare.

Honoring contributions of women in military history, our Same Day Access Team hopes you all take time to reflect on the importance of rest, well-being, and self-care, not just this month, but daily. Whether through the legacy of Harriet Tubman, the sacrifices of Army nurses, or the voices of women like Kayla Williams, this month’s stories are a reminder of strength and perseverance that we have as pillars in our communities. Celebrate, learn, and take care of yourself. Support those who have served. Stay informed, stay engaged, and take a few moments for **rest**.

## CONTACT US!

SAME DAY ACCESS TEAM

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