



United States Army
Warrant Officers Association

The Quiet Professionals®
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Dear Esteemed Member

March is **Women's History Month** and an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary contributions women have made to American society and institutions—including the United States Army. From the earliest days of military service to modern multi-domain operations, women have helped shape the Army's effectiveness, culture, and leadership. Among these trailblazers are **female Army Warrant Officers**, a group of highly skilled technical experts and leaders whose accomplishments have often occurred behind the scenes, but whose impact has been profound.

Although opportunities for women in the Army were limited during the early 20th century, their contributions steadily expanded. In 1926, Army female field clerks *Jen Doble*, on duty at IX Corps Area Headquarters in San Francisco, California and *Olive Hoskins*, on duty at the VII Corps Area headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska became the first Army female warrant officers. Both women had about 20 years of service at the time of their appointments and once they retired, the Army was without female warrants until 1944.

During World War II and the Vietnam War, women serving in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) and other specialized units demonstrated that technical proficiency, leadership, and operational expertise were not limited by gender. Their performance helped lay the groundwork for the gradual integration of women into more military occupational specialties (MOS) and leadership positions. In December 1946 as the WAC was demobilized, the total number of WACs was 9,655 of which only 5 were warrant officers. The WAC as a branch was disbanded on 20 October 1978 and women serving as WACs converted to the branch of whichever MOS they worked.

One notable example of this pioneering spirit was **CW3 Ann M. McDonough** who joined the WAC in 1949. Initially trained as an intelligence analyst, in 1952 she broke the gender barrier by being the first female admitted to the Counterintelligence (CI) Corps Special Agent Course at Fort Holabird, Maryland, where she graduated with honors. A French, German and later Vietnamese linguist and after years of intelligence work, including assignments in Germany during the Cold War, she was promoted to warrant officer in 1963. She was the first woman to attend polygraph school, becoming a certified polygraph examiner and her career achievements earned her induction into the Military Intelligence Hall of Fame in 1988.

In the decades that followed, female warrant officers continued to expand the boundaries of service, particularly in the field of Army aviation. One of the most influential pioneers in this field was **CW5 Mary Cara Smalley**, a trailblazing Army aviator who helped open doors for women in military aviation. Smalley enlisted in the Army in the 1970s and in 1976, became the 13th woman to graduate from Army flight

school and the first woman aviator in the 6th Air Cavalry Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas. She went on to become the first female pilot rated in the AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter. Despite institutional barriers that initially prevented women from being assigned to attack helicopter units, Smalley continued to excel as an aviator and instructor pilot. She was promoted to CW4 and was the first female regular Army warrant officer to achieve the rank of CW5.

And this month, USAWOA Life Member **CW5 Candis Martin** joins other great female Army warrant officers when she is inducted into the Army Women's Foundation Hall of Fame. Enlisting in the WAC in 1975, she achieved the rank of Master Sergeant before her appointment as a warrant officer in 1991. She retired in 2013 after 38 years of dedicated Army service. <https://www.awfdn.org/hall-of-fame-and-special-recognition-awards/us-army-womens-hall-of-fame-inductees/>

Women's History Month reminds us that progress in the military has never occurred overnight. Each milestone—from the appointment of the first female warrant officers in the 1920s to the promotion of women to CW5—was made possible by women who demonstrated excellence despite institutional barriers. Today's female Army warrant officers stand on the shoulders of these and many other pioneers. Whether flying combat missions, maintaining cutting-edge equipment, or advising commanders in complex operational environments, they embody the technical expertise and leadership that define the Army warrant officer.

As the Army continues to evolve to meet future challenges, the contributions of female warrant officers—past, present, and future—remain an essential part of its success. Women's History Month offers not only a time to celebrate their achievements, but also a reminder that the strength of the Army lies in the diverse talents and dedication of all who serve.

USAWOA: Warrant Officers Moving Forward - Together

Sincerely,



CW5(Ret) Michael Dye

National President