

AMERICA'S & Heroes & Heroines

Honoring Women In The Military

(NAPSA)—The female experience is a vital part of America's military experience, and the Veterans History Project created a new initiative to honor their contributions.

Women make up 15 percent of those in active military service and by 2010 will comprise 10 percent of all living American veterans. They have one-of-a-kind experiences to share, and the Library of Congress is one place their stories can be told.

The Veterans History Project (VHP) at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center was created by the U.S. Congress in 2000 to collect, safeguard and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans.

The Veterans History Project (VHP) has grown to be the largest oral history program in American history, having collected nearly 60,000 firsthand recollections—approximately 3,500 of them from female war veterans.

Visitors to the Project's Web site, www.loc.gov/vets, can see and hear from women like Violet Hill Gordon, a young African American who, at the height of segregation, joined the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and went on to become a commanding officer in the Central Postal Directory during World War II.

Rhona Marie Prescott, a chief nurse in a remote hospital in An Khe during the height of the war in Vietnam, tells another compelling story. With Army doctors in short supply, Prescott was called to perform surgeries in makeshift tents in nonsterile environments and decide who might be saved.

Another military history maker was Darlene Iskra, who enlisted



Photo courtesy of Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1942.

The Veterans History Project is a rich and growing collection of close to 60,000 individual personal accounts of wartime experience.

in the Navy in 1979 and went on to become one of the first females to graduate from dive school. Her tenacity and talent won her a loyal following in the higher echelons of the Navy, and in December 1990 she became the first woman to take command of a U.S. Navy ship, aptly named the *Opportune*.

You can become a volunteer historian and record stories for this important program. Go to the VHP Web site and learn step by step how to get involved.

There is a timely need for interviews from veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. In addition, VHP seeks interviews from female veterans from all conflicts, veterans representing all minority communities, as well as Merchant Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve veterans.

Visit VHP at www.loc.gov/vets, e-mail vohp@loc.gov or call 888-371-5848.