



**18th Military Police Brigade
United States Army
CMR 418
APO AE 09058**

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE: 20090402-01

April 02, 2009

Female noncommissioned officers honored during Women's History Month event

**By Spc. Adrienne Killingsworth
18th Military Police Brigade, Public Affairs Office**

MANNHEIM, Germany— In keeping with the Army's dedication of this year as the year of the noncommissioned officer, the 28th Transportation Battalion held an event Friday at Coleman Chapel on Coleman Annex for Women's History Month highlighting the advances and accomplishments of female noncommissioned officers in the Army.

Command Sgt. Maj. Brenda Curfman, command sergeant major, 18th Military Police Brigade, is the highest ranking enlisted Soldier within the brigade and spoke at the event about both her experiences as a woman in the military and as a noncommissioned officer.

It was, as Chaplain (Cpt) Robert Crawford said, "An opportunity to gather and celebrate the accomplishments, the abilities, the past and the future that we share in the United States Army."

This celebration of women in the Army began with a look at the past, a look at how it all began. A slide show presentation gave the Soldiers in the audience a chance to see how the women who came before paved the way for women like Curfman to have the opportunity to be so successful as Soldiers.

The history of women in the Army is as long as the history of the Army itself. But, even though women have served in every United States conflict throughout history, it was not until 1942 that an official organization for women was established within the Army.

The process began in May of 1941 when Congresswoman Edith Rogers of Massachusetts introduced into legislation that a women's auxiliary to the United States Army should be instituted based upon the premise that the addition of women's labor would free a man for combat.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the need for additional Soldiers in the Pacific theater prompted President Roosevelt to sign a public law establishing the Women's Army Corps—the first step in women's official participation in the United States Army.

But, it would still be a few decades before President Carter signed the bill, on October 20, 1978 (fiscal year 1979), that disbanded the Women's Army Corps and fully integrated the Army.

After 30 years of gender integration in the Army, women have made—and continue to make—generous strides.

Curfman is the first female command sergeant major of the 18th Military Police Brigade and knows firsthand the challenges of rising so far in the ranks as a female in the Army.

Curfman joined the Army 25 years ago, when gender integration was still in its infancy in the Army. As a military police officer, Curfman had to fight to make her way through the ranks in a male-dominated field.

But, her determination and dedication to her job were stronger than the barriers she faced. “They couldn't make me quit,” she said.

But, to go along with the determination and dedication that it takes to succeed as a woman in the Army, Curfman's biggest piece of advice to female Soldiers was, “to respect

yourself first. If you have some self-respect and do your best and do your job every single day, your fellow soldiers—your fellow male soldiers and your fellow female soldiers—will respect you.”

Curfman noted that giving your best may not make you the best, but that is no reason to quit. “There is always going to be someone that’s faster, stronger or better at something than you,” she said. “But, you just give it your best every day. It’s worked for me for 25 years.”

And, not being one to show a bias, Curfman also had words of wisdom for the male Soldiers in the audience. Noting the numerous obstacles she has had to face in a male-dominated field, Curfman told the male Soldiers that she has learned to put her foot down when it comes to being treated unfairly.

“We’re here. Get over it. We’re not going anywhere,” she said, while also noting that the men in the Army have a role in the progress of women because, “The success of women in the military has as much to do with the acceptance by the males as it does with [our] accomplishments.”

Overall, Curfman endorsed a working relationship of respect and support between Soldiers.

Mentorship and setting a good example for the young Soldiers in the Army is the responsibility of the noncommissioned officers, and will ensure a future of continued success and progress for the Army, she said.

But, equally important to the future success of women in the Army is the continuation of events like the one at Coleman Chapel on Friday, said Curfman.

“We have to tell our story. We have women in the Army who do great things every day.”



20090402-A-0597K-001

Command Sgt. Maj. Brenda Curfman, command sergeant major, 18th Military Police Brigade, speaks to the Soldiers of the 18th MP Brigade about her experiences as a woman in the Army during the 28th Transportation Battalion's Year of the NCO, Women's History Event. The event took place Friday at Coleman Chapel on Coleman Barracks in Mannheim, Germany and spotlighted the history and the successes of women in the Army.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Adrienne Killingsworth, 18th Military Police Bde., PAO)



20090402-A-0597K-002

Sgt. Lori Klassen, 28th Transportation Battalion, stands by while a slide show is played exhibiting the historic strides of women in the Army. Sgt. Klassen provided the audience of 18th Military Police Brigade Soldiers with a history of women in the Army before guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Brenda Curfman, command sergeant major, 18th MP Brigade, spoke at the 28th Trans. Bn Year of the NCO, Women's History Event Friday at Coleman Chapel on Coleman Barracks in Mannheim, Germany. The event spotlighted the history and the successes of women in the Army.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Adrienne Killingsworth, 18th Military Police Bde., PAO)



20090402-A-0597K-003

Ebo Shakoor, a community musician, performs a musical selection at the 28th Transportation Battalion's Year of the NCO, Women's History Event. The event took place Friday at Coleman Chapel on Coleman Barracks in Mannheim, Germany and spotlighted the history and the successes of women in the Army.

(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Adrienne Killingsworth, 18th Military Police Bde., PAO)