

74th Ohio Inf

PATRIOTS
IN
DISGUISE

Women Warriors
of the Civil War

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PARAGON HOUSE
New York

regiment, whereupon "she donned the male attire, passed examination, and joined the company with him." She had been with the regiment nearly a year, participating in four battles, and no one had suspected anything right up to the moment of birth.

A Michigan soldier, Private James Greenalch, wrote home to his wife, Fidelia, April 20, 1863, about another shocking circumstance:

The boys told me to knight [sic] that a regiment that is camp't [sic] near us, the 34th Ohio, that an orderly Sergeant in that regiment has got a child, that the sergeant turns out to be a woman with mens cloths [sic] on and has ben [sic] in the regement [sic] twenty months.

Major General William S. Rosecrans, commander of the Army of the Cumberland, was so offended by this event that he directed his staff to issue an order on April 17, 1863, terming it a "flagrant outrage" and directing his subordinates to "deal with the offending party or parties according to law." The delivery of a baby by an orderly sergeant was "in violation of all military law and of the army regulations. . . . You will apply the proper punishment in this case, and a remedy to prevent a repetition of the act."

Authorities at Johnson's Island Federal prison camp on Lake Erie must have been equally shocked when one of the Confederate prisoners, an officer, suddenly had a baby late in 1864. The newspaper story on the event said that the soldier had produced a "bouncing boy." The reporter, with tongue in cheek, said "This is the first instance of the father giving birth to a child that we have heard of. . . it is [also] the first case of a woman in rebel service that we have heard of."

Another "bouncing boy" was delivered by a sergeant of the 10th New York Heavy Artillery, and it was another case of a female soldier who might otherwise have gone undetected. The sergeant was taken sick on the picket line and carried to the hospital, where "he" gave birth early on the morning of March 6, 1865. "For the first three or four days the event created [a] great question among the two regiments as to its parental relations."

Determined to Fight

Some women were so determined to remain in the army that when they were caught (or feared that they might be), they reenlisted in another regiment, sometimes from a different state. The male

names they used are seldom known, and some may well have used more than one.

The unnamed female Union soldier at Chickamauga who was sent across the lines under a flag of truce, after being wounded and captured by Confederate forces, told an interviewer that she wanted to stay in the army and planned to reenlist. Also, the female soldier known as "Nellie A.K.," after being discovered and discharged, reportedly tried to reenlist. Who knows how many actually succeeded in reenlisting, and returned to camp life and combat?

The apparent record holder for persistence was Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Compton who is reported to have enlisted at age 14 and served in seven different regiments. "Detected as a woman in each organization, she immediately went elsewhere and reenlisted in a new unit," according to author John W. Heisey. "Her last service was in the 11th Kentucky Cavalry, from which she apparently went back to her home in Ontario, Canada." Since she is said to have served for eighteen months (one source has her serving over a year in the 125th Michigan Cavalry), her disguise must have worked for periods of time. Mary Elizabeth Massey reports that Compton's story only came out after she was wounded in action and forced to quit.

Another major "repeater" was Frances Hook who served as "Frank Miller" in the 66th Illinois Home Guards and 90th Illinois Infantry, and later as "Frank Martin" in the 8th Michigan Infantry (see Chapter 2). She also served in the 2nd East Tennessee Cavalry. According to C. Kay Larson, "she joined a new regiment each time she was discovered in the previous one and discharged. She was also taken prisoner by Confederate forces."

Fanny (or Fannie) Wilson served for two years in the 24th New Jersey Infantry before her sex was discovered during the Vicksburg campaign, and she was discharged. She was sent to Cairo, Illinois, and there killed some time dancing in the local ballet before reenlisting in the 3rd Illinois Cavalry. Once again she was found out and sent home.

Another example of persistence was more humorous than successful. A Cincinnati, Ohio, newspaper in 1864 presented a story taken from the Cleveland *Herald*, about a young woman who said she had lost three brothers in the war, and was determined to enlist and avenge their deaths. The story is excerpted here:

Massachusetts

Lizzie Jones served as a daughter of the regiment in 6th Massachusetts Infantry.
Mary Ann Murphy served as "Samuel Hill" in 53rd Massachusetts Infantry.

Michigan

Bridget Deavers served as battlefield nurse in 1st Michigan Cavalry.
Sarah Emma Edmonds served as soldier, spy, and nurse in 2nd Michigan Infantry.
Jane Hinsdale served as nurse in 2nd Michigan Infantry, once captured by enemy.
Anna Etheridge served as a daughter of the regiment and battlefield nurse in the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Michigan infantries.
Mary Burns enlisted (as "John") in 7th Michigan Cavalry, but was discovered in about two weeks.
Frances Hook served in the 8th Michigan Infantry.
Anny Lillybridge served in the 21st Michigan Infantry.
Elizabeth Compton served in the 125th Michigan Cavalry.

Minnesota

Unidentified Minnesota girl claimed two years of service before being wounded.
Mrs. Frances Clayton wounded in action with a Minnesota regiment at Stone's River, Tennessee.

Missouri

Frances Clalin allegedly served in a Missouri militia cavalry regiment in Federal service.
"John Williams," Company M, 17th Missouri Infantry, was discovered to be a woman.

New Jersey

Female soldier in a New Jersey regiment who had been in four battles with her husband was discovered when she gave birth, and was sent home.
Fannie Wilson, from New Jersey, served eighteen months before being discovered during Vicksburg campaign.
Mrs. Elizabeth A. Niles, who served with her husband in 4th New Jersey Infantry, died in 1920 at age 92.

New York

Drummer boy "Edward O. Hamilton" in 18th New York Infantry was a girl who had preferred to act as a male since childhood.
The 39th New York Infantry ("Garibaldi Guard") had at least six *vivandieres* who dressed in red, blue, and black costumes.
The 40th New York Infantry reportedly had a female lieutenant colonel (source: Ida Tarbell letter in National Archives).
Arabella G. Barlow served with her officer husband in the 61st New York Infantry during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, at Gettysburg, and in the siege of Petersburg, also acting as a nurse on and near the battlefield.
A female soldier identified only as "Nellie A.K." enlisted with her brother in the

102nd New York Infantry, until discovered and discharged near Chattanooga, Tennessee.

North Carolina

Lucy Matilda Thompson served as "Bill Thompson" in 18th North Carolina Infantry.
Malinda Blaylock posed as "Samuel" to serve with her husband in the 26th North Carolina Infantry.

Ohio

Mary McCreary served in Company H, 21st Ohio Infantry.
Mary Smith enlisted in 41st Ohio Infantry to avenge only brother's death at 1st Bull Run. Sex discovered at Camp Wood, Ohio, September, 1861 by female mannerisms.
Mary Y. Seaberry served as "Charles Freeman" in Company F, 52nd Ohio Infantry.
Two women served three years in 59th Ohio Infantry.
Charlotte ("Charley") Anderson served in 60th Ohio Infantry. Discovered to be female and sent home to Cleveland by provost marshal of Army of Potomac.
Female sergeant in 74th Ohio Infantry gave birth, after twenty months of service.

Pennsylvania

Female using name "Charles Martin" served as drummer boy in a Pennsylvania regiment. Was in five battles.
Mary Owen Jenkins served in 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry.
Marie Tebe served in 27th and 114th Pennsylvania Infantry regiments.
"Charles D. Fuller" (female name not known) served in 46th Pennsylvania Infantry.
Frances Day ("Frank Mayne") served in 126th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Rhode Island

Kady Brownell served with husband, Robert, in 1st Rhode Island Infantry as color bearer at 1st Bull Run, and in 5th Rhode Island as a daughter of the regiment.

Tennessee

Tennessee teamster with Sheridan in Shenandoah Valley discovered to be a woman when she got drunk and fell in a river.
Sarah Taylor served as a daughter of the regiment in 1st Tennessee Infantry.
Frances Hook served in 2nd East Tennessee Cavalry (Union).
Anna Clark served as "Richard Anderson" in Confederate 11th Tennessee Infantry. (See Amy Clarke.)

Virginia

Mary and Molly Bell ("Tom Parker" and "Bob Martin"). Confederate soldiers from Virginia arrested by Federals in the fall of 1864 after two years of service.
Nancy Hart served as a cavalry scout for "Stonewall" Jackson.
Lucy Ann Cox served as a *vivandiere* in 13th Virginia Infantry.