

2nd TN Cov (USA)

PATRIOTS
IN
DISGUISE

Women Warriors
of the Civil War

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see you?" " Another time Cashier had climbed a tall tree to put back a Union flag that had been shot down by the enemy. "Al did all the regular duties," Ives recalled. "Not knowing that she was a girl, I assigned her to picket duty and to carry water just as all the men did."

The doctors and nurses at Watertown took special care of Hodgers. She died there on October 10, 1915 at age 71. The Saunemin post of the Grand Army of the Republic arranged for her burial with full military honors, wearing her Union uniform, and she was buried in a flag-draped casket. The inscription on her tombstone in Saunemin Cemetery reads: ALBERT D. J. CASHIER, CO. G, 95 ILL. INF.

At the time of her death, "Albert Cashier's" pension payments had built up to about five hundred dollars in savings, which amply covered funeral and burial costs, leaving almost three hundred dollars in her estate. Within two months after her death, members of an Irish family named Rooney, some resident in the United States, filed claims in county court to be heirs to the estate. In the papers they claimed to be nieces and nephews of Jennie Hodgers. Michael Rooney, in Dundalk, Ireland, maintained that Jennie Hodgers was his mother's half-sister. The claims apparently could not be validated, and in 1914 the estate was turned over to the county treasurer.

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Another female campaigner was temporarily "exposed" late in 1862 in Tennessee. At the end of December, Union General William S. Rosecrans opposed Confederate General Braxton Bragg in the contest for Tennessee. The two armies clashed on December 31st at Stone's River, near Murfreesboro, in a bloody conflict that dragged on for three days. The result was essentially a stalemate, but Bragg retreated and Rosecrans, holding the field, declared it a Union victory. When the smoke cleared, the casualties were staggering. The Union army had 1,730 dead and 7,802 wounded (with another 3,717 missing). The Confederate army had 1,294 dead and 7,945 wounded (with 1,027 missing). These numbers are only about 10 percent less than the casualties at Antietam, which is called the "bloodiest single day in the Civil War."

At the conclusion of the battle, a severely wounded soldier by the name of "Frank Martin," with the 2nd East Tennessee Cavalry

Regiment (Union), was found to be a woman, and she was mustered out, notwithstanding her "entreatings earnestly with tears in her eyes to be continued in service." Her real name apparently was ~~Frances Hook~~. Frances was one of a number of female soldiers who, when their sex was detected (or they feared it would be), migrated from regiment to regiment.

After recuperating from her wound, Frances reenlisted in the 8th Michigan Infantry (known as the "Wandering Regiment") where she was serving in 1863. At Louisville, Kentucky, that spring, the 25th Michigan Infantry was serving provost and guard duty. One day a captain, accompanied by a young soldier of about 17, arrived in charge of some Confederate prisoners. The engaging youth attracted the attention of the post commander "by his intelligence and sprightly appearance." He was detailed for garrison duty with the 25th Michigan, and soon became popular and liked by all. His name was "Frank Martin."

Before long "the startling secret was disclosed, and whispering went thick and fast, the young soldier was a *lady*; the fact was reported and established by a soldier who was raised in the same town with her [Alleghany City, Pennsylvania] and knew her parents." Confronted by the truth, "Frank" refused to give her proper name and begged to be allowed to stay in service, saying that she had already served for ten months. She was allowed to continue on duty in the hospital. She said that she had been born in New Bristol, Connecticut, raised in Pennsylvania, and sent to a convent in Wheeling, West Virginia, at age twelve, where she remained until the outbreak of the war. She then left the convent and enlisted in the East Tennessee Cavalry.

The 25th Michigan regimental history records that, "Frank was quite small, a beautiful figure, auburn hair, large blue eyes beaming with brightness and intelligence; her complexion naturally very fair, though bronzed by exposure. She was exceedingly pretty and very amiable. She was very patriotic and determined to see the war out." When the 25th left Louisville to join General W. T. Sherman's forces in the Atlanta campaign the following spring, "Frank" remained behind. That was the last that members of the regiment knew or heard about her. She is also reported to have served in the 90th Illinois Infantry Regiment later in the war.

Another female combatant who was wounded at Stone's River was Mrs. Frances Louisa Clayton, who had enlisted in a Minnesota regiment as a private to be with her husband. While serving in

Tennessee under General William S. Rosecrans, the regiment was engaged at Stone's River. During a charge on the enemy, her husband was hit and killed instantly barely five paces in front of her in the front rank. "She charged over his body with the rear line, driving the rebels with the bayonet," according to a newspaper account, "but was soon struck with a ball in the hip, and conveyed to the hospital, where her sex was of course discovered." To add insult to injury, after she was discharged on January 2, 1863, while riding on a train between Nashville and Louisville it was attacked by guerillas, who robbed her of her money and papers.

According to the newspaper, "While in the army, the better to conceal her sex, she learned to drink, smoke, chew and swear with the best, or worst, of the soldiers. She stood guard, went on picket duty, in rain and storm, and fought on the field with the rest, and was considered a good fighting *man*." She was described as a very tall, masculine looking woman, bronzed by exposure to the weather.

One of the most perplexing cases of long-term service is that of Bridget Deavers (sometimes given as Deaver or Divers, among several variations). Her story so far has defied historical research, and it is not even certain what unit she served in, though she usually is linked with the 1st Michigan Cavalry Regiment. Deavers is sometimes described as a "laundress" or as a *vivandiere*, and sometimes as a "half-soldier heroine." Perhaps there was more than one "Bridget" (or "Biddy") and their stories have melded into one. Yet, the existence of at least one Bridget is reported in numerous contemporary sources as having been in the field during the 1864-1865 campaigns in Virginia.

A report by the Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission from 1963, titled *Michigan Women in the Civil War* notes that Deavers was said to have gone to war with her husband "but there was no one of the same name in any Michigan regiment. Nor can any evidence of her residence in Michigan be found." Other references to her are included in an encyclopedia (as "Deaver"), in Mary Livermore's memoirs (as "Devens"), and in a book about the United States Sanitary Commission (as "Devan"). Despite this confusion, there is strong documentation of her existence and activities.

An apocryphal story has "Irish Biddy" at the Battle of Fair Oaks (Seven Pines) during McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, May 31-June 1, 1862. She appears on the scene in a critical moment, sup-

porting her wounded husband ("who had a ball through his leg") and urging the 7th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment to charge the enemy and revenge him. Her urgings to "go in, boys, and bate the bloody spalpeens, and revinge me husband" supposedly had an electric effect, and the 7th joined the 10th Massachusetts and other troops in a successful charge on the enemy. The only trouble with this story is that the 1st Michigan Cavalry was not at the battle of Fair Oaks (though the 7th and 10th Massachusetts Regiments were).

The most detailed information about Deavers comes from the 1864-1865 campaigns in Virginia, in which the 1st Michigan Cavalry *was* active. Various diaries and letters from that period sketch an intriguing portrait of her. Mrs. Charlotte E. McKay, a prominent Civil War nurse who kept a detailed hospital diary, noted in her entry for March 28, 1865 at City Point, Virginia:

Visited, in company with Miss Bridget Deavers, two large camps of dismounted cavalymen lying along the James River. . . . Bridget—or as the men call her, Biddy—has probably seen more of hardship and danger than any other woman during the war. She has been with the cavalry all the time, going out with them on their cavalry raids—always ready to succor the wounded on the field—often getting men off who, but for her, would be left to die, and, fearless of shell or bullet, among the last to leave.

Protected by officers and respected by privates, with her little sunburnt face, she makes her home in the saddle or the shelter-tent; often, indeed, sleeping in the open air without a tent, and by her courage and devotion "winning golden opinions from all sorts or people." She is an Irish woman, has been in the country sixteen years, and is now twenty-six years of age.

McKay then recounts the following exchange of dialogue with Bridget:

"Where is the nice little horse you had with you at the hospital last summer [1864], Bridget?"

"Oh, Moseby captured that from me. He came in while I was asleep on the ground, and took my horse and orderly. I jumped up and ran away."

She and Bridget visited a camp containing men just returned from General Phil Sheridan's last raid in the Shenandoah Valley.

We found them lying under their shelter-tents or sitting on the ground in front of them, boiling coffee over their camp-fires and

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 74 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 ~~Fanny 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:

CLAYTON, Mrs. Frances Louisa (w). Enlisted in a Minnesota regiment to be with husband. She was wounded and her husband killed in the battle of Stone's River, Tennessee.

COLLINS, Sarah. Wisconsin soldier, enlisted with brother but detected by her mannerisms and sent home.

COMPTON, Lizzie (Elizabeth) (w). 125th Michigan Cavalry. When wounded and sex detected, claimed to have enlisted at 14 and served eighteen months in seven different regiments, "leaving one and enrolling in another when fearing detection."

COX, Lucy Ann. *Vivandiere* for 13th Virginia Regiment.

DAY, Frances (k). (Sergeant "Frank Mayne") served in 126th Pennsylvania Infantry. Later mortally wounded in a battle while serving with a different regiment in the western theater.

DEMING, Mrs. L. L. daughter of regiment, 10th Michigan Infantry.

DEAVERS (DIVERS/DEVAN), Bridget. Served in 1864-1865 Virginia campaigns, allegedly with 1st Michigan Cavalry.

EDMONDS, Sarah Emma ("Franklin Thompson"). Served for two years in 2nd Michigan Infantry as soldier, spy, and nurse.

ETHERIDGE, Anna. Served as daughter of the regiment with 2nd Michigan Infantry in Army of Potomac, and later with 3rd and 5th Michigan regiments, for a total of three years.

EWBANK, Hannah. Served as daughter of the regiment with the 7th Wisconsin Infantry.

GOODRIDGE, Ellen (w). Served with boyfriend James Hendrick in an early Wisconsin regiment. Went on skirmishes and raids, and was wounded in action.

HART, Nancy. Virginia. Served as guide for Jackson's cavalry. Once captured, escaped by shooting captor.

HENRY, Margaret. Captured by Federals near end of war with another female soldier in Confederate uniform, and imprisoned at Nashville.

HINSDALE, Jane. Regimental nurse in 2nd Michigan Infantry. Enlisted with husband Hiram H. Taken prisoner after 1st Bull run while helping the wounded and searching for missing husband. Escaped and took information on Confederate movements to authorities in Washington, D.C.

HODGERS, Jennie ("Albert Cashier"). 95th Illinois Infantry. Only woman known to have served complete three-year term of enlistment disguised as man, maintaining male disguise well after the war.

[REDACTED] (w). ("Frank Martin"). Served in 90th Illinois, 2nd East Tennessee Cavalry, 8th Michigan. Joined a new regiment each time discovered in previous one. Once taken prisoner.

JENKINS, Mary Owen. Served in 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

JONES, Annie. Alleged consort of Custer and other officers in D.C. area camps. Said to have served as scout and spy.

JONES, Lizzie. Served as daughter of the regiment in 6th Massachusetts Infantry.

KIRBY, Mrs. William. Husband and son in Confederate army. She smuggled weapons through Federal lines at Baton Rouge, Louisiana; caught, convicted as spy, imprisoned on Ship Island. Died there near end of war. Son killed at Gettysburg, husband survived.

LILLYBRIDGE, Annie (w). Detroit. Served in 21st Michigan Infantry. After Battle of Pea Ridge found shot in arm, taken to Hospital in Louisville. Swapped discharge with Joseph Henderson to reenlist.

MARCUM, Julia. Female soldier from Kentucky. (No other details known. Source: Ida Tarbell letter in National Archives.)

MCCREARY, Mary (Mrs.). Served as private with husband in Company H, 21st Ohio, but after several months "found herself in a delicate condition," obtained leave from the colonel, went home, and never returned.

MILLER, Charley. Served in 18th New York Regiment as "drummer boy" using name "Edward O. Hamilton." Preferred to live as male since childhood.

MOORE, Madeline. Joined army to be with boyfriend, was elected lieutenant and served in West Virginia under General George B. McClellan, and later at Bull Run.

MURPHY, Mary Ann. Served as "Samuel Hill" in Company B, 53rd Massachusetts, with brother Tom.

NILES, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Fought in Civil War beside her husband in 4th New Jersey. Died October 4, 1920 at age 92.

OWEN(s), Mary (w). From Huntingdon (or Montour) County, Pennsylvania. Served eighteen months, fought in three battles and wounded twice. When she returned home she claimed to have been married to the man with whom she had enlisted. He was killed and she wounded in same battle.

PETERMAN, Georgianne. From Ellenboro, served two years as a "drummer boy" with 7th Wisconsin.

PETERSON, Belle. Young country girl who lived near Ellenboro. Enlisted in a Wisconsin regiment probably late in 1862 and "served in the army for some time."

PHILIPS, Bettie Taylor (Mrs. W. D.). When with her husband in 4th Kentucky Infantry (Confederate), cared for wounded on battlefield, part of famous "Orphan Brigade." Arrested, held as spy at Nashville.

REYNOLDS, Mrs. Belle. Served with her husband, a lieutenant in 17th Illinois Infantry. Traveled with regiment, saw combat while under fire at Shiloh.

ROONEY, Rose (Mrs.). Served with 15th Louisiana Infantry. Braved battlefield shot and shell in order to care for the wounded. Later a hospital matron in New Orleans for soldiers' home.

SEABERRY, Mary Y. From Columbus, Ohio, served in Company F, 52nd Ohio as "Charles Freeman" until "sexual incompatibility" was admitted, November 10, 1862.

SMITH, Mary. Enlisted in 41st Ohio Infantry, McClellan *Zouaves*, to avenge death of only brother at Bull Run. At Camp Wood, Ohio, found out to be a woman by her mannerisms.

SULLIVAN, Betsy (Mrs.). Battlefield nurse with Company K, 1st Tennessee Infantry (Confederate). Served with husband, John Sullivan, and shared the hardships of army life with the regiment.

TAYLOR, Sarah. Served as daughter of the regiment with the 1st Tennessee Regiment.

TEBE, Marie (w). "French Mary" served in 27th Pennsylvania Infantry ("Washington Brigade") which was at 1st Bull Run, and the 114th Pennsylvania Infantry as *vivandiere*. Frequently under fire as battlefield nurse, wounded in action, awarded medal for gallantry.

THOMPSON, Ellen P. L. Served in 139th Illinois Infantry Regiment.

THOMPSON, Lucy Matilda (w). ("Bill Thompson"). At 49, followed her husband, Bryant Gauss, into the Bladen Light Infantry (Bladen County, North Carolina), 18th North Carolina Regiment. Wounded at 1st (or 2nd) Bull Run and again