



PROUDLY SHE SERVED

Honoring Military Women Who Exemplify Courage, Strength & Selfless Service

Overview

The [*Proudly She Served Portrait Series*](#) offers a beautiful and powerful testimony and celebration of military and veteran women, who exemplify courage, strength, and selfless service ~ everyday heroes who have made an impact through their service to our country and inspire the generations following in their footsteps. The series is a combination of well-known women veterans and lesser well-known heroes. Through its beautiful portraits and captivating stories, the portrait series offers a glimpse into why these women chose to serve in the military and why they are proud of their military service. Each woman's perspective is uniquely different, but together they tell a bigger story and passes on a lasting legacy to inspire future generations to reach for their dreams.



The project includes a series of twelve 36x30 inch oil paintings and captivating stories highlighted in a beautiful coffee table book. The project's executive director is New York based artist, [Steve Alpert](#). Steve's paintings are included in the Pentagon, the Women in Military Service for America Museum at Arlington National Cemetery, the Naval War College Museum and the National Museum of the Marine Corps. His work has been exhibited by fine art galleries across the U.S. as well. A beautiful coffee table book featuring photographs of the portraits and biographical vignettes will accompany the portrait series. The stories highlight the women's experiences during their military careers including challenges and successes. The women also share the mantras they live by and who inspired them along their journey. Each

woman's story and perspective is uniquely different, but together weave a beautiful tapestry that tells a bigger story of a common bond of service and passes on a lasting legacy to inspire future generations to reach for their dreams.

Mission

The Mission of *Proudly She Served* is to highlight women who served or who have served in the U.S. military ~ their service and sacrifice, raise awareness of the challenges many face when transitioning to life outside of the military, and to offer transition support and a helping hand as they define their post military career goals and next steps.



Project Vision & Timeline



Phase 1 - Portrait Unveiling & Book Launch Event

The Portrait Unveiling & Book Launch will recognize the women highlighted in the series and also with a gala event planned on Aug 3, 2022 at the Military Women’s Memorial in Arlington, VA. The gala will be an evening event, with food, drinks and live music. The (12) original paintings (and coffee table book) will be unveiled to approximately 300 attendees. All the women depicted in the portraits will be present. There will be opening remarks from well-known Southwest Airline Captain, Tammie Shults, former Navy pilot who safely landed the Southwest flight from New York when an engine exploded. It is expected that a couple of the large sponsors will offer remarks and if available, Senator Tammy Duckworth, one of the portrait participants, will speak as well. The Proudly She Served project is considering offering a financial scholarship to a selected young woman veteran entrepreneur with the goal is to offer the scholarship annually along with a portrait from artist – Steve Alpert.

Phase 2 - Exhibition Tour

Phase 2 of the project will involve a traveling exhibition tour. The paintings will travel to a selected number of schools, colleges, universities and museums to inspire young women to follow their dreams and break their own glass ceilings. The vision is to set up a one-day event at each traveling site and host a special event for high school and college girls. One of the portrait veterans could attend the event to share their own story and inspire and encourage the young women. Books could also be offered during the exhibition tour (or purchased by sponsors and provided to the attendees).

The Portrait Participants

Imagine twelve large paintings of women who have served in the military or are still on active duty - women who have proven themselves in combat and non-combat duty and who have continued to give back and offer themselves as mentors to those who follow. These amazing women have been leaders at all levels, both in the military and in the corporate ranks, and have overcome obstacles not known by the

average public. Many have first-hand accounts of military operations and tell real-life captivating stories. The amazing cadre of 12 women veterans who are highlighted in the [Proudly She Served](#) series include the following active duty/veteran military women:

Sen Tammy Duckworth - U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth is an Iraq War Veteran, Purple Heart recipient and former Assistant Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. She was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2016 after representing Illinois's Eighth Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives for two terms.



Nicole Cimino – Coast Guard Senior Chief - Nurse – Retired Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Nicole Knowles Cimino works as a Medical Cardiac ICU nurse and has been part of the Covid-19 care staff, caring for critically ill patients from the Washington State area.

Arabia Essence-Shanklin – Naval Academy graduate and collegiate track & field athlete, Naval Officer, and entrepreneur, Arabia Essence-Shanklin, is the face of our young military personnel serving today. Surface Warfare Office and dual military spouse with husband, Marine Corps Officer, Gerrico.

Bernice "Bee" Falk Haydu - (born December 15, 1920) was an American aviator and Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) in World War II. Bee remained active in aviation and as an advocate for women pilots into her 90s and was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal

Kim Brooks – Koyukon Athabascan, Caribou Clan Native American, Marine Corps veteran & Combat Engineer

Kirstie Ennis – Former Marine Corps helicopter door gunner and airframes mechanic, Wounded Warrior, Ironman, Stuntwoman, Fitness Model, Summit Adventurer, Entrepreneur

Dawn Halfaker – Retired Captain, U.S. Army, West Point graduate, Wounded Warrior, Chief Executive Officer of Halfaker and Associates, an award-winning professional services and technology solutions firm. Dawn remains active supporting numerous civic, cultural and business organizations and is a staunch advocate for Veterans and Wounded Warriors.

Miyoko Hikiji – Former Army soldier, Iowa Army National Guardsman, award winning author of “All I Could Be: The Story of a Woman Warrior in Iraq,” model, professional speaker, and former Iowa Congressional candidate

Angel Hughes – Haitian immigrant, Coast Guard pilot, Founder & CEO of Sisters of the Skies, a nonprofit organization that cultivates and promotes minority women in the aviation industry through scholarships and mentorship.

Nicole Malachowski – Retired U.S. Air Force Colonel, F-15E Strike Eagle pilot and first woman selected to fly as part of the USAF Air Demonstration Squadron- Thunderbirds and inductee into the Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame, White House Fellow and adviser, fighter squadron commander, Professional Speaker

COL Karen Meeker - Chaplain, U.S. Army, United Methodist ordained elder, currently serving as the Landstuhl Regional (Germany) Medical Center command chaplain. Karen has served multiple combat tours throughout her career and is an avid speaker, counselor, and mentor who encourages all levels of Army leaders and personnel to “Dream Big.”

1LT Louise Rand – Army Flight Nurse Lieutenant Louise Rand, graduated from the Ruth Brandt School of Nursing and the U.S. Air Force School of Aviation Medicine in June 1945, and served in WWII in the Army's 830th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron with one of her primary jobs as caring for the wounded on flights out of Karachi to Cairo in the Pacific Theater of World War II. She was a favorite among the soldiers and the pilots. “She was in high demand because of her fudge, which she made on a little stove on the plane.” Louise died at age 93 in Bay Shore, N.Y. and was not originally authorized to be buried at Arlington Cemetery but her daughters fought to get Rand her own marker given her service. They prevailed, and Rand was buried at Arlington with a full honors ceremony on May 27, 2015.

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Artist Completes 12th Portrait in *Proudly She Served* Series Highlighting Women in U.S. Armed Forces & Veterans

*First-of-its-Kind Portrait Group Honors Courage, Strength and Selfless Service of
Women in Active Duty Military & Veterans*

New York City (March 22, 2021) – Artist **Steve Alpert** recently added the finishing brush strokes to the 12th oil painting in the [*Proudly She Served*](#) Portrait Series paying homage to women in the United States military and veterans. The series features large-scale portraits of extraordinary women military officers and enlisted personnel from each branch of the service. The portraits convey a message about each woman’s courage, strength, resilience and selflessness while serving in the military and in their lives as civilians.

The 36-inch-by-30-inch portraits present images of the generations of women in the American military from World War II to today’s conflicts. These everyday heroes have made significant contributions to their country through their service. The series of compelling portraits and their captivating stories are certain to inspire generations of women to follow in their footsteps. In announcing the completion of the portrait series during *Women’s History Month*, Alpert, executive director of the project, said “I began this project to tell the story that women in uniform are just as courageous and capable of leadership as men in uniform. Simple as that. I wanted to contribute to telling their success stories through portrait paintings in oil.” Alpert reinvented himself as a professional landscape and later portrait artist after working nearly three decades in the TV news industry. He has created many artworks with military themes.

Proudly She Served project director and former military aviator **Linda Maloney**, currently an author and business owner, said the portraits “present a very positive message about these pioneering women who achieved significant careers in our country’s military. The women are very resourceful, innovative and deeply caring advocates for military veterans, especially those men and women who are transitioning to civilian life. They are also amazing role models for women who are focused on serving their country, families, or communities while engaged in meaningful careers.”

Portraits were painted of a diverse group of active-duty U.S. military and veteran women from the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy and Women Airforce Service Pilots listed below.

- Kim Brooks, born in Portland, Ore., U.S. Marine Corps, Separated - Sergeant
- Nicole Cimino, born in San Diego, Calif., U.S. Coast Guard, Retired - Chief Petty Officer.
- U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth, representing Illinois, U.S. Army, Retired – Lieutenant Colonel
- Kirstie Ennis, raised in Milton, FL., U.S. Marine Corp, Retired – Sergeant
- Dawn Halfaker, raised in San Diego, CA, U.S. Army, Retired – Captain
- Bernice “Bee” Falk Haydu, of Montclair, NJ, U.S. Women Airforce Service Pilot (deceased)
- Miyoko Hikiji, of Cedar Rapids, IA, U.S. Army, Separated - Specialist
- Angel Hughes, raised in East Orange, NJ, U.S. Coast Guard, Separated - Lieutenant Commander
- Nicole Malachowski, of Las Vegas, NV, U.S. Air Force, Retired – Colonel
- Chaplain Karen Meeker, raised in Huntington Mills, PA., U.S. Army, Active Duty - Colonel
- Louise Rand, of Martins Ferry, OH, U.S. Air Force – 1st Lieutenant (deceased)
- Arabia Shanklin, of Steubenville, OH, U.S. Navy, Active Duty - Lieutenant

About *Proudly She Served* Portrait Series

The *Proudly She Served Portrait* series highlights the valor, bravery and dedication of women in the United States military and veterans. The 12 large-scale portraits convey a positive message about the strength, courage and selfless service of women in the American military and veterans. The paintings and women’s compelling stories will inspire generations to follow in their footsteps. For more information visit the [Proudly She Served](https://www.proudlysheserved.com/) website:

<https://www.proudlysheserved.com/>