Feature Article:
American Servicewomen in the Global War on Terror

American Servicewomen in the Global War on Terror, a special exhibit paying tribute to America’s servicewomen serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, is on display at the Women’s Memorial for an indefinite period. The exhibit offers a brief glimpse of some of the women who have been part of America’s response to the War on Terror, deploying to the wars zones as part of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Serving in nearly every rank and unit of the force and filling critical leadership and warfighting positions, women were among the first to deploy; and today, comprise nearly 10 percent of deployed personnel. American Service Women in the Global War on Terror is but a brief chapter in the ongoing story of these women warriors.

Autobiographical in nature, the exhibit is a snapshot of the daily lives and work of today’s military women serving in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. Painting a picture of the “War on Terror” as experienced by them, the array of artifacts is as diverse as the women themselves. They tell the story of MPs, truck drivers, construction engineers, medics, civil affairs specialists, pilots, cooks and chaplains, among others—they tell the story of today’s military women.
★ THE EXHIBIT: DAILY LIFE, WORK & COMBAT ★
Located in exhibit alcoves on each side of the Great Niche, a combination of information panels, images and excerpts from oral histories, along with uniform displays and table-top exhibits that house some of the many unique artifacts received, make this powerful exhibit come to life for visitors.

Focusing on three primary areas—daily life, work and combat—visitors learn about individual servicewomen’s experiences in theater, including women like Army SGT Valerie Dorsey. Recounting her time in Iraq, SGT Dorsey said, “I am a female paratrooper, a noncommissioned officer, a leader of soldiers. My main mission is to train and lead soldiers into combat, not just on the battlefield, but in their daily lives as well. I am the mother, the sister and mentor to my soldiers.”

★ THE ARTIFACTS: BIBLES, CAMPAIGN MEDALS, GOGGLES AND MORE ★
Artifacts used in the exhibit range from military-issue Bibles to campaign medals and polarized goggles to a deck of cards featuring photos of insurgents used for quick identification by US security troops.

Also, numerous items representing the local culture have been donated, including an Afghani prayer rug and keepsakes from local bazaars. Other items highlight some of the new roles of women in war, including combat flight. Standing against a backdrop of mosquito netting used in the region is an American flag that was carried by women pilots on board US aircraft during three separate combat missions, in honor of all women of the US Armed Forces.

★ THE BAGHDAD DIARIES ★
Also, “The Baghdad Diaries” shows how 21st century technology keeps America's troops in touch with loved ones as they serve their country from half
a world away. This display features copies of e-mails sent by USMC MGySgt Rosemarie Weber telling her family and friends about her daily life during her deployment in 2003.

★ TRIBUTE TO THE FALLEN★
A special section of the exhibit pays tribute to the women casualties of today’s war. This section is located in the Memorial’s Hall of Honor, a solemn place of honor and recognition for women who died in service, were POWs or were recipients of our nation’s highest awards for service and bravery. Flanked by uniforms of fallen Army soldiers SPC Lori Piestewa and PFC Sam Huff, is a book containing Women’s Memorial registration printouts of the servicewomen who have died since the war began.

Servicewomen, their families or friends who wish to donate artifacts to the Women’s Memorial Collection from Operations Enduring or Iraqi Freedom, or any other service era should contact Britta Granrud, Curator of Collections, at 703-533-1155, 800-222-2294 or curators@womensmemorial.org.