

..... PARTING SHOT .....



Associate Press

## They Served

**A**s we commemorate Women's History Month in March, we salute the more than 250,000 American women who served in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War, including the 10,000-15,000 who served in-country.

Hundreds of women served in the WACS and WAVES in Vietnam during the war. About 90 percent of the women in-country worked as Army, Navy and Air Force nurses at evac, field, and surgical hospitals, and aboard hospital ships.

As was the case with all troops in Vietnam, the women placed themselves in harm's way 24 hours a day. Seven American women, all of them nurses, lost their lives in the Vietnam War in plane and helicopter crashes and due to serious illnesses:

Army Capt. Eleanor Grace Alexander, Army 2nd Lt. Pamela Dorothy Donovan, Army 2nd Lt. Carol Ann Drazba, Army Lt. Col. Annie Ruth Graham, Army 2nd Lt. Elizabeth Ann Jones, Air Force Capt. Mary Therese Klinker, and Army 1st Lt. Hedwig Diane Orłowski. Their names are engraved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

As is Army 1st Lt. Sharon Ann Lane, who was killed in action by a rocket explosion on June 8, 1969, at the 312th Evacuation Hospital in Chu Lai.

In the photo above, taken on January 7, 1965, U.S. Navy nurses Lts. Barbara J. Wooster, Ruth A. Mason, and Ann Darby Reynolds, are receiving Purple Hearts—the first American women to be awarded the medal during the Vietnam War. The nurses

were wounded on Christmas Eve 1964, when two Viet Cong operatives dressed in South Vietnamese Army uniforms detonated a huge bomb at the Brink Hotel, which served as a BOQ in Saigon. Two U.S. officers were killed and several dozen were injured in the explosion.

Despite their wounds, Lts. Wooster, Mason, and Reynolds refused medical attention until after they tended to the wounded American military personnel and South Vietnamese civilians. A fourth Navy nurse at the scene, Lt. Francis L. Crumpton, who was evacuated for treatment at Clark Air Base in the Philippines, also received a Purple Heart.

— Marc Leepson ♦