

# history theatre

Play Guide



## **Lonely Soldiers: Women at War in Iraq**

A regional premiere by Helen Benedict

**March 16 – April 6, 2014**



**History Theatre**  
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\*Material provided by Laura Weber.

Play Guide to accompany *Lonely Soldiers: Women at War in Iraq* published by History Theatre ©2014

# Summary of the Play

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The play *Lonely Soldiers: Women at War in Iraq* is based on interviews conducted by author, playwright, and professor of journalism Helen Benedict for her 2009 book *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women in Iraq*.

The play's monologues are combinations of the interviews and letters the soldiers wrote by e-mail. None of the content is fictionalized. The names of the soldiers and their families and friends, along with some identifying details, have been changed to protect their privacy.

The seven characters of *Lonely Soldiers* served in Iraq (or in one case, Afghanistan) in the period 2003 to 2006. The women range in age from 19 to 45 and represent a variety of ethnic groups, social classes, and regions of origin. Most served in the Army as either specialists or sergeants. The women vividly bring to life their struggles and challenges by tracing their lives from their childhood through enlistment, training, active duty in Iraq and home again.

In this way, the complex issues of war and misogyny, class, race, homophobia, and post-traumatic stress disorder are illuminated. Each of the stories is unique, yet collectively they add up to a heartbreaking picture of the sacrifices women soldiers are making for this country.

## About the Author: Helen Benedict

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Helen Benedict [www.helenbenedict.com] was born in London, England, to Anthropologist parents that informed her journalism and novels. She grew up in London and California. She attended University in England and the U.S. In 1981, she moved to New York to be a freelance writer. Helen is a professor of journalism at Columbia University and the author of six novels and five nonfiction books. In 2011, she published the novel *Sand Queen* (Soho Press), about two women fighting on opposite sides of the Iraq War. She published the nonfiction book on which this play is based, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq*, in 2009.

Benedict has testified twice to Congress on behalf of women soldiers. Her work on women soldiers inspired a class action lawsuit in 2011 against the Pentagon and U.S. Secretaries of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates on behalf of members of the military who were sexually assaulted while serving. Her work has also inspired several documentaries and many television programs and articles for the international press, including the award-winning 2012 documentary film, *The Invisible War*. (See above.)

Her writings on the Iraq War have won for Benedict the Exceptional Merit in Media Award from the National Women's Caucus, the Ken Book Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Award. Her novels have received citations for Best Book of the Year from the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago and New York public libraries.

Benedict's essays and book reviews have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *The Washington Post*, *Salon*, *The Huffington Post*, *Ms. Magazine*, *In These Times*, PBS, The Women's Review of Books, *The Daily Beast*, and elsewhere.

Listen to an interview with Helen Benedict:

<http://wamc.org/post/helen-benedict-understanding-and-stopping-crisis-sexual-violence-us-military>

# The World of the Play: Military Ranks and Organization

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## Enlisted Ranks

An enlisted soldier joins the army without going to ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) or officer school. **E** stands for "enlisted"; the number denotes pay scale.

The ranks are:

- Private E-1
- Private E-2
- Private First Class E-3
- Specialist or Corporal E-4

Promotions through these four ranks are automatic, unless a soldier gets into trouble. To be promoted to a noncommissioned officer (NCO), one must pass a review board and an interview.

The NCO ranks are:

- Sergeant E-5
- Staff Sergeant E-6
- Sergeant First Class E-7
- First Sergeant or Master Sergeant E-8
- Sergeant Major or Command Sergeant Major E-9 +

## Officer Ranks

Officers must graduate from ROTC or officer school.

The ranks are:

- Second Lieutenant
- First Lieutenant
- Captain, Major
- Lieutenant Colonel
- Colonel
- Brigadier General
- Major General
- Lieutenant General
- General.

## Organization

Each level contains groups of the level below. A squad, for example, will contain two or three teams; a platoon, several squads and a unit several platoons.

- Team: 2-5 soldiers
- Squad: 6-10 soldiers
- Platoon: 30-60 soldiers
- Company or Unit: 60-300 soldiers
- Battalion: 300-1,000 soldiers
- Brigade: 3,000-5,000 soldiers
- Division: 10,000-15,000 soldiers
- Corps: 25,000-45,000 soldiers

Excerpt from Appendix A *Lonely Soldier The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* by Helen Benedict

# The World of the Play: Women in the Military

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In the United States, women have served in every war since the Revolutionary War, mostly as nurses and in other support roles. Not until 1948 were women made a permanent part of the U. S. military services. In 1976, the first group of women was admitted into a U.S military academy.

The role of women in the military, particularly in combat, generates a variety of opinions. It is only recently that women have begun to be given a more prominent role in contemporary armed forces.

Today, women make up roughly 14.5 percent—or 207,308 members—of the more than 1.4 million U. S. active duty Armed Forces, according to the Department of Defense.

As of the end of 2013 women are not allowed to apply for combat positions in the United States Armed Forces, though in the twenty-first century wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, women have definitely been on the front lines, as *Lonely Soldiers* shows.



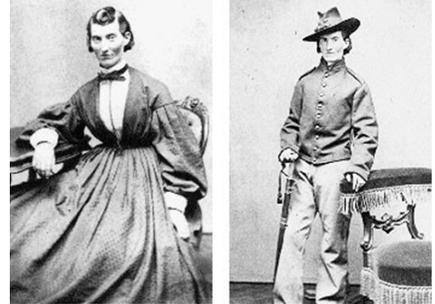
# The World of the Play: Timeline of Women in the U.S. Military

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**1775-1783, Revolutionary War** – Women follow their husbands to war; they serve as laundresses, cooks, and nurses. They were only able to remain if the commanding officer found them helpful.

**1812, War of 1812** – Two women, Mary Marshall and Mary Allen, serve as nurses aboard USS United States.

**1846-1848, Mexican War** – Elizabeth Newcom enlists herself as Bill Newcom in the Missouri Infantry. She marches 600 miles to winter camp in Colorado before she is discovered and discharged.



**1861-1865, American Civil War** – Women serve as matrons of hospitals, nurses, and cooks for both the Union and Confederate battlefield hospitals. Dr. Mary Walker is the only woman to receive the nation's highest military honor, "The Medal of Honor." Women also serve as spies and disguise themselves as men so they can be soldiers.

**1898, Spanish-American War** – Dr. Anita McGee is Acting Assistant Surgeon Guard, the first woman to hold that position. She suggests that DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) should choose qualified nurses who to work in the Army hospitals. 1,500 civilian women serve as nurses, and hundreds more serve as support staff, spies, and disguise themselves as men so they could be soldiers. The Army was so impressed with Dr. McGee that they had her write legislation to create a permanent Corps of Nurses.

**1901** – Army Nurse Corps established.

**1908** – Navy Nurse Corps established.

**1917-1918, WWI** – During the last two years of the war, women were allowed to join the military. 33,000 women served as nurses and support staff. More than 400 nurses died in the line of duty.

**1920** – Army Reorganization Act grants military nurses the status of officers from second lieutenant to major "relative rank" (not full privileges).

**1941-1945, WWII** – More than 400,000 women serve at home and abroad. Their jobs range from mechanics, drivers, pilots, nurses and administrators. 88 women are captured and held as POWs.

**1942-1943** – **Army:** Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (1942) is changed to the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in 1943. More than 150,000 women are sent to Europe and Pacific theaters.



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**1942 – Air Force:** Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) 1,074 women flew stateside missions and ferries, test pilots and anti-aircraft artillery trainers. (WASPs were given Veteran status in 1977 and in 2009, the Congressional Gold Medal.)

**Navy:** 14,000 nurses serve stateside, overseas on ships and as flight nurses. The Navy's reserve program Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES) 80,000 women were serving by the end of the war in medical, administration, intelligence, and supply.

**Coast Guard:** Women's Reserve called SPARS is named after the motto Semper Paratus, meaning "always ready;" they worked as storekeepers, clerks, and photographers.

**1943 – Marines:** Marine Corps Women's Reserve serving as clerks, cooks, and mechanics.

**1947 –** The Army/Navy Nurse Act is passed, entitling the women's medical Corps to be a part of the Regular Army Commission Officer status.

**1948 –** Congress passes the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which granted women permanent status in the military, and veteran's benefits.

**1949 –** Airforce Nurse Corps Established.

**1950-1953, Korean War –** 50,000 women serve stateside and abroad, 500 nurses serve in combat zones and many of the Navy nurses serve on hospital ships.

**1962-1972, Vietnam War –** 7,000+ women serve mostly as nurses in all five divisions of the military. All were volunteers.

**1967 –** The legal arrangement was repealed from the 2% cap on the number of women serving in the military and the ceiling of the highest grade a woman could receive.

**1969 –** Air Force Reserve Training Corp is open to women.

**1971 – Air Force:** first woman to complete the Aircraft Maintenance Officers School and become an officer.

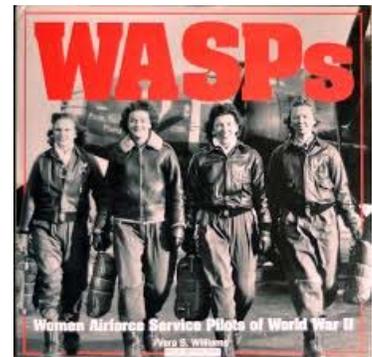
**1972 –** Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is open to Army and Navy Women.

**1973 –** Military draft, which was only for males, ends; the military becomes all-volunteer which creates opportunities for women.

**1975 –** Department of Defense (DoD) reverses the policy that requires women to be discharged upon pregnancy or adoption of children; this was changed to the option of electing to be discharged.

**1976 –** First women are being admitted to West Point and Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy to be trained in military science.

**1978 – Navy and Marines:** women allowed to serve on non-combat ships as technicians, nurses, and officers.



Continued >>

**1991-1992, Persian Gulf War** – More than 40,000 women are deployed to combat zone. Two are taken captive.

**1991** – Congress authorizes women to fly in combat missions.

**1993** – Congress authorizes women to serve on combat ships.

**1998** – Women fighter pilots fly combat missions of an aircraft carrier in Operation Desert Fox, Iraq.

**2000 – Navy:** Captain Kathleen McGrath becomes the first woman to command a U.S. Navy Warship. The vessel was assigned in the Persian Gulf.

**2003-2013, Iraq War** – Three Army women become prisoners of war in the first days of the invasion.

**2004 – Air Force:** Colonel Linda McTague is the first woman commander of a fighter squadron.

**2005** – “War on Terror” Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester is the first woman to be awarded the Silver Star for combat action.

**2008** – 16,000 women serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, Bosnia, and Japan

**2009 – Marines:** First all-female mission in Southern Afghanistan.

**Coast Guard:** Lt Felicia Thomas becomes the first female African-American commander.

**2010 – Navy:** Women are assigned to serve on submarines. Nora Tyson is the first female commander for a carrier strike troupe.

**Coast Guard:** Lt j.g. La’Shonda Holmes is the first female African-American helicopter pilot.

**2011 – Coast Guard:** Sandra Stosz becomes the Academy’s first female superintendent; she is the first to lead any military academy.

**2012** – Civil Affairs Hall of Fame: inducts first woman, Connie R. Alumeti.

**2013** – Former Defense Secretary Lon Panetta lifts the barriers that have prevented military women from participating in direct combat roles.



Information compiled: [womensmemorial.org/educational/timeline](http://womensmemorial.org/educational/timeline), The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and the DoD website under Women’s History.

# Sexual Assault in the Military

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In addition to external enemies, another battle that women (and men) in the armed forces confront is sexual assault -- in military jargon referred to as MSA, or Military Sexual Assault.

More American service women have died in Iraq than in any war since World War II, yet a woman serving in Iraq or Afghanistan is more likely to be raped by a fellow service member than to be killed in the line of fire. One in three military women has been sexually assaulted, compared with one in six civilian women, according to the Department of Defense. Deployed women who underwent "combat-like" experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan are much more likely to report sexual harassment and sexual assault compared with other deployed women, according to a study published by *Women's Health Issues* in August 2013.

Over the course of the Iraq War, only one in ten soldiers was a woman, and she often served in a unit with few other women or none at all. This isolation, along with the military's deep-seated ambivalence, even hostility, toward women causes problems that many female soldiers find as hard to cope with as war itself: sexual persecution by their comrades and loneliness, instead of the camaraderie that every soldier depends on for comfort and survival. As one female soldier said, "I ended up waging my own war against an enemy dressed in the same uniform as mine."

## Efforts to address the issue

While the Department of Defense has established a "Zero Tolerance Policy," the numbers of sexual assaults within the U.S. military have continued to rise. Furthermore, more than 86 percent of service members do not report their assault. Less than five percent of all sexual assaults are put forward for prosecution, and less than a third of those cases result in imprisonment.

This has led to an increased focus on MSA by advocacy groups, journalists, and member of Congress, which in turn has put pressure on the branches of the military to respond. The story of the documentary *The Invisible War* (2012), [<http://www.notinvisible.org>] inspired by Helen Benedict's book *The Lonely Soldier*, is an excellent example of the confluence of all these activities.

Directed by Kirby Dick, *The Invisible War* focuses on sexual assault in the United States military. It premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, where it received the U.S. Documentary Audience Award. The film was nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the 85th Academy Awards (2013).

Following its release, *The Invisible War* was heralded for exposing a culture of widespread sexual harassment and sexual assault at Marine Barracks, Washington. In March 2012, eight women, including two who appeared in the film, filed suit against military leaders for maintaining an environment that tolerated rapists while silencing survivors.

*The Invisible War* was screened at the Library of Congress last February, being viewed by many legislators and leaders in the Department of Defense. Since then, the movie has also been viewed by an estimated 235,000 service members. According to *The New York Times*, the film "has been credited with both persuading more women to come forward to report abuse and with forcing the military to deal more openly with the problem."

In January 2012, Representatives Michael Turner (R-Ohio) and Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.) created the bipartisan Military Sexual Assault Prevention Caucus with the intent of educating members of Congress on the serious problem of sexual assault in the military. In the Senate, Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Kristin Gillibrand (D-NY) make up another bipartisan duo fighting to stop sexual violence in the military. Under current law, the decision whether to prosecute serious crimes in the military rests solely with the commanding officer, who also has the unreviewable authority to dismiss court-martial decisions. This leaves victims of MSA open to fear of reprisal and a general tendency by the military to avoid investigating the complaints.

Some, like Gillibrand and Cruz, are pushing to replace this system with one where “an independent military prosecutor” evaluates allegations of MSA, rather than a soldier's commanding officer. Other advocates say this is insufficient, and that the military is incapable of providing justice internally. In 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta ordered all sexual assault cases be handled by senior officers at the rank of colonel or higher, which effectively ended the practice of commanders adjudicating these cases from within their own units. Panetta later told one of the film's producers that watching *The Invisible War* contributed to his decision to revise this policy. In November 2012, Air Force Chief of Staff General Mark Welsh met with all active wing commanders to screen the film and discuss the problem of rape in the military.

On January 4, 2013, President Barack Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013. This law included many improvements to the military's handling of sexual assault cases, such as granting victims the right to a base transfer, the right to legal counsel, the right to confidentiality when seeking assistance from an advocate, and mandating greater training for sexual assault prevention at every level of the Armed Services. It also bars individuals with felony sex abuse convictions from receiving enlistment waivers, forms special victims units to investigate and prosecute sexual assault cases, and installs new policies to prevent professional retaliation against assault survivors.

## **Invisible No More**

The makers of *The Invisible War* established Invisible No More, a non-partisan coalition working to end sexual assault within the U.S. military and to help survivors of military sexual assault heal.

The Invisible No More coalition works to ensure that the theatrical release of the film *The Invisible War* serves as a catalyst to create a movement for lasting change in how the military handles sexual assault. The coalition works with advocacy organizations, key policymakers, military leaders, and other stakeholders to raise public awareness, coordinate policy, and energize the grassroots to change military policy and behavior.

# Activities

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# Small Group Discussion: Sexual Assault – Military vs. Civilian

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## Instructions:

1) Have your students read both articles from the New York Times

“Reports of Military Sexual Assault Rise Sharply”

*New York Times*, November 7, 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/07/us/reports-of-military-sexual-assault-rise-sharply.html>

“Nearly 1 in 5 Women in U.S. Survey Say They Have Been Sexually Assaulted”

*New York Times*, December 41, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/15/health/nearly-1-in-5-women-in-us-survey-report-sexual-assault.html>

2) Divide your students into groups of 2-4 and have them answer the following questions:

1. What were the similarities in the two articles?
2. What were the differences in the two articles?
3. As students how they can be advocates for the people around them?
4. Do you feel enough is being done to prevent sexual assault to civilian women and women in the military?
5. What are your ideas to help stop sexual assault?

## Classroom Discussion: Women in the Military

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The role of U.S. women has shifted drastically in the military from working as nurses, cooks, and laundress to being in combat on the front lines.

1. How do you think the U.S.A. compares to other countries?
2. Do changes in the military simply reflect society at large, or do they help to affect change in society? Is it the same for every issue?
3. How do you feel about the move toward more gender equality, specifically in the military, that has come from the hard work of past generations?
4. How do you feel about the practice of automatically registering men for the draft at age 18 but not women?

# What is Sexual Harassment?

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Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

- The victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.
- The harasser's conduct must be unwelcome.

It is helpful for the victim to inform the harasser directly that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. The victim should use any employer complaint mechanism or grievance system available.

When investigating allegations of sexual harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) looks at the whole record: the circumstances, such as the nature of the sexual advances, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. A determination on the allegations is made from the facts on a case-by-case basis.

Prevention is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace. Employers are encouraged to take steps necessary to prevent sexual harassment from occurring. They should clearly communicate to employees that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. They can do so by providing sexual harassment training to their employees and by establishing an effective complaint or grievance process and taking immediate and appropriate action when an employee complains.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on sex or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII.

# Sexual Harassment

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**Objective:** Students will 1) Define the term “sexual harassment;” 2) Identify examples of sexual harassment; and 3) Consider appropriate responses to sexual harassment.

**Materials Needed:**

- \* Black/whiteboard or overhead projector
- \* Newsprint and markers
- \* Computer (optional)

**Procedure:**

Write the phrase SEXUAL HARASSMENT on the board and ask students if they know what it means. Write down their ideas.

Help them understand that sexual harassment is any unwanted physical or verbal advances that have sexual overtones.

**Sexual Harassment** is defined as any unwelcome, unwanted pressure, verbal, visual, or physical contact of a sexual nature. It is any repeated or deliberate action or behavior that is hostile, offensive, or degrading to the recipient.

Share with students the kind of behavior that is usually considered a form of sexual harassment:

- Sexual jokes
- Touching in an inappropriate way
- Inappropriate gestures
- Spreading rumors about another person's sexual behavior

Through the activity students should understand that sexual harassment is judged based on *how it is perceived by the person being harassed*, not by the intent (aggression or just joking) of the person doing the harassing.

To better understand what sexual harassment is and what students can do about it, tell students that they are going to work in small groups to brainstorm examples of sexual harassment. Then they will write a script for a scenario dramatizing the incident, how the students responded to it, and what they can do to prevent such an incident from happening again.

If students are having trouble getting started, you may want to suggest a few of the following incidents as examples of sexual harassment:

- a. touching someone inappropriately
- b. bra snapping
- c. drawing sexually explicit pictures and passing them around
- d. telling sexual jokes
- e. calling other students names with sexual connotations
- f. spreading rumors about a person's sexual behavior

Give students time to work on their scenarios in class. Tell them to be prepared to hand in a complete, written script. During the next class period, ask if any groups would like to present their scenario to the class. Give as many groups that are interested an opportunity to present their scenarios. All students must turn in a complete, written script.

To conclude the lesson, give students time to write down their personal responses to having worked on this activity. Were they familiar with sexual harassment beforehand? Have they ever experienced sexual harassment? If so, were they aware of it at the time? Tell students that they do not have to share their thoughts with anyone, and let students know that there are resources available to help people who have personal experiences with sexual harassment, assault, or abuse – teachers, school counselors, etc. Writing about these experiences may be one way to bring closure to any personal experiences the lesson may have brought up, but it may also bring things to the surface, and that it is okay (and encouraged) to seek additional help to cope with such events.

**Discussion Questions:**

Imagine that a friend confides in you that he or she has been a victim of sexual harassment. What would you say to your friend? What would you tell your friend to do about the harassment?

Suppose a boy repeatedly tells a girl, in public, that she has a great figure. While at first the girl is flattered, when he keeps talking about her figure publicly, she becomes increasingly uncomfortable. Do you think she has reason to feel uncomfortable? Is this an example of sexual harassment or positive attention?

# Flirting vs. Sexual Harassment

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**Objective:** Help participants distinguish between sexual harassment and flirting (positive attention).

**Procedure:**

1. Divide participants into groups of three or four people.
2. Give each group 1 to 3 scenarios to use for discussion.  
Remind them that sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual attention and it is defined by the person it happens to – so pay attention to how the characters respond in each scenario. If both people are okay with it, it is flirting. Flirting is okay – it’s fun, it’s funny, it’s healthy.
3. Instruct each group to discuss the scenario(s), decide whether it is harassment or flirting. Be prepared to explain why they have chosen their answer.  
In some of these scenarios there is a “what if” option, the opportunity to change the scenario to show how it could go from flirting to sexual harassment or vice versa. Ask them to be prepared to discuss that too.  
Give each group 5-10 minutes to discuss and organize their responses.
4. Bring participants back together and have each smaller group share their scenario, responses, and why they chose their answers.
5. Ask participants to discuss potential responses from the person who is sexually harassed and possible outcomes to those responses in each situation.

**Scenarios:**

1. Keisha is on the co-ed cross country team at her school. She has had a crush on one of her teammates, Andre, since the beginning of the season. They tease each other back and forth constantly during practice. One day, Andre says “Keisha, since we have a big meet at the end of the week, I’d like to take you out to dinner Thursday night.” Keisha agrees.
2. Tommy is a lifeguard at a public pool near his neighborhood. One day Krista, the prettiest girl in Tommy’s school, comes to the pool to pick up her little brother. Tommy gathers up some courage and walks over to her to say hi. Krista turns and looks at him and says, “Tommy, you look really good with a tan.” Tommy smiles and says “Thanks, you look nice yourself.”  
—OR—  
What if: Krista turns and looks him up and down and says “Tommy, you look really hot with a tan. What do you look like without the trunks?” with a wink. Tommy mumbles “thanks” and walks away.
3. Riana sits next to a boy in her history class that she doesn’t really know. He is one of the more popular guys at school, and Riana thinks he is absolutely gorgeous. One day in the hall, the boy recognizes Riana with a smile and a smack on the butt. Riana hurries to her next class, hoping nobody saw what happened.

—OR—

What if: the boy recognizes Riana with a smile and a wink and Riana winks back.

4. Jaylin and Marisol are taking an art class together. They have plenty of time to chat while they are drawing, so they always tell jokes and laugh with each other, but they have never hung out outside of class. One day in class, Jaylin turns to the girl next to Marisol and comments, "Did you know Marisol and I hook up every day after school" while winking at Marisol. Marisol is shocked and moves to another table.

—OR—

What if: Jaylin turns to the girl next to Marisol and comments, "Did you know Marisol is a work of art" with a wink. Marisol smiles and says "You can draw me anytime."

5. Melissa really likes Donny. He drives a nice car, he always smells good, and his locker is right next to hers. She gathers up the nerve to ask him out. He turns her down, saying "I just got out of a serious relationship and I'm not ready to date right now." Melissa is not sure what he means by "not ready" but she is not willing to let him slip away. So she makes a habit of telling him how hot he is and asking him out a few times a week.

—OR—

What if: Melissa says "I understand that is tough. You know where to find me when you are ready."

6. When Caprice walks into the homecoming dance dressed up in her new blue strapless dress, she feels good and knows she looks good. She notices right away that the hot boy that sits behind her in science is checking her out. Confidently, she walks up to him and asks him to dance. When they are on the dance floor, he looks at her and says "Girl you are looking good tonight." She smiles and responds, "You don't look so bad yourself."
7. Jon is leaving the football field when one of the cheerleaders blows him a kiss. A little embarrassed but encouraged, he walks over to her and they start talking.
8. Every time Stacy glances over at Cameron in class, she catches her looking at her before she quickly turns her head. One day Stacy approaches Cameron and asks what her problem is. She tells her she doesn't have a problem but she would like to get to know her better. Stacy says, "Why didn't you just say so?" and they continue walking down the hall talking.
9. Misha is a popular girl who always seems to have a following of other girls around her. She teases Jason in a lot of little ways, and he just smiles and doesn't say anything.
10. Steven has a very popular underground newsletter at school which graphically talks about female classmates in a sexual nature. When confronted by Susan about it, Steven claims that he was just doing it for fun, and that it was his way of letting girls know he liked them. Susan told him that she and the other girls didn't like it.
11. Bobby walks toward his locker to get books for his next class. A group of girls begins whistling and making comments about his body. Instead of stopping at his locker, Bobby keeps on walking.

# For Further Research and Suggested Reading

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## Articles

Brunswick, Mark, "Military Affairs Beat: Needs of Women Soldiers Surveyed," *Star Tribune*, January 29, 2014

<http://www.startribune.com/local/242500241.html>

A national survey of women veterans points to a greater need for access to community-based medical care and a need to integrate traditional veterans services with primary care, reproductive care and mental health care

"Gillibrand & Cruz: stop sexual violence in the military," *USA Today*, November. 20, 2013

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2013/11/20/cruz-gillibrand-military-sexual-assault-rape-column/3645127/>

Matthews, Michael F. "The Untold Story of Military Sexual Assault," *New York Times*, November 24, 2013

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/25/opinion/the-untold-story-of-military-sexual-assault.html>

Men are also victims of sexual assault in the military. Matthews writes of his own experience with assault, and goes on to report, "According to the Department of Defense's Military Sexual Assault Report for 2012, an estimated 26,000 members of the United States military, both men and women, were sexually assaulted in that year. The Pentagon survey almost certainly underreports the scale of the issue. Of those sexual assaults, 53 percent (approximately 14,000 in 2012) were attacks on men. A vast majority of perpetrators are men who identify themselves as heterosexual." Matthews also created the documentary *Justice Denied*, a documentary on male military sexual assault.

McVeigh, Karen, "Reports of military sexual assault rise sharply, Pentagon figures show," *The Guardian*, Nov. 7, 2013.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/07/military-sexual-assaults-rise-reports-pentagon>

Newton-Small, Jay "Senate Women Tackle Sexual Assault in the Military," *Time*, Nov. 19, 2013.

<http://swampland.time.com/2013/11/19/senate-women-tackle-sexual-assault-in-the-military/>

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*Lonely Soldier's* 2010 production in New York City

<http://www.lonelysoldierplay.com>

Continued >>

## Other Items of Interest

**The Doonesbury** comic strip (<http://doonesbury.slate.com/>) has a recurring character, Mel (Melissa), a woman soldier in Afghanistan who has been sexually attacked. Through this storyline, we see Mel in therapy at the VA and dealing with the aftermath of her attack, especially in light of her decision to stay in the military.

Though it's not easy to find a complete compilation of strips about Mel in one place on the Doonesbury website, here are two:

“Purple Heart,” Sunday comic, in therapy, 2009

<http://www.gocomics.com/doonesbury/2009/01/11#.UtwHRHl6gtV>

Mel in early 2014

<http://doonesbury.slate.com/strip/archive/2014/01/11>

In addition, the Doonesbury website has a blog called “Blowback” where readers can comment on the strip. In early January 2014, Mel was featured. The story line dealt with the issue of how people back in the U.S. and those still serving view the purpose of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars.

Here's a sample from the blog.

MY GIRL MEL

Seven | Alexandria, VA | January 10, 2014

Thrilled to see my girl Mel back! As a Veteran I can empathize with her feelings of "abandonment," though the war was a bad idea from the start and why are we still there? Much of the military joined after Iraq and A-stan began, so they knew the job sucked when they signed up! However, when I go to college online and 25% of my class is deployed to A-stan and they go out to eat at TGI Fridays I have little sympathy for them.

Finally, the Doonesbury site links to a blog called “The Sandbox,” where people serving in the military, their families, and caregivers can comment.

[http://gocomics.typepad.com/the\\_sandbox/](http://gocomics.typepad.com/the_sandbox/)

# Help Lines, Websites, and Resources

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Make the Connection: Shared experiences and support for veterans

<http://maketheconnection.net/conditions/military-sexual-trauma>

Safe Helpline: Sexual Assault Support for the DoD [Department of Defense] Community

<https://safehelpline.org>

Service Women's Action Network

<http://servicewomen.org/military-sexual-violence/>

The Resources section of *The Invisible War* website includes links to policy, healing, help lines, and advocacy organizations.

<http://www.notinvisible.org/resources>

## Resources for Veterans

### Women Veterans Initiative

Advocacy-Networking-Outreach  
550 Rice Street, St. Paul MN 55103  
612-747-2696

Facebook: Women Veterans Initiative

### Wounded Warrior Project

A Decade of Service. A Lifetime of Commitment.  
904-718-1646 | 1-888-WWP-ALUM (997.2586)  
resourcenter@woundedwarriorproject.org

### Minnesota Link Vet

Customer Service for Veterans and Families  
Phone: 1-888-LinkVet (546-5838) | International:  
651-556-0896  
TTY: 1-800-627-3529

### Veteran Crisis Line

Confidential help for Veterans and their families  
1-800-273-8255

### Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center

3301 Seventh Avenue North, Anoka, MN 55303  
651-431-5000

### Minnesota VA Health Care System

One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55417  
Phone: 612-725-2000 or 612-725-2000

### Mental Health Association of Minnesota

475 Cleveland Avenue N, Suite 222, St. Paul, MN  
55104  
Phone: 651-493-6634 or 800-862-1799