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16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade  
Public Affairs Office**

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## **Sustainment Soldiers observe Women's History month**

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CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Soldiers here learned a little about the history of women in the Armed Forces during a Women's History Month observance at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation base complex here March 28.

“We need to make people more aware of the contributions women make in the Army,” said Master Sgt. Ruby Alexander, battle non-commissioned officer, 16th Sust. Bde., and guest speaker at the observance.

In the 1940s, women were beginning to join the armed forces when the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and Women Appointed for Volunteer Emergency Service came into effect.

The WACC and WAVES allowed women to contribute with medical aid to wounded Soldiers. Not until the draft in 1973 was over that women were allowed to join side by side with men.

As Operation Iraqi Freedom rolls into a new year, women serving in all armed forces continue to strive to the next level. It has been a rigorous battle for women to earn their respect in the armed forces.

The ceremony lead off with a rendition of the national anthem, performed by Master Sgt. Shawn Gibson, 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde.. Sgt. JoAnna Davis performed an original extemporaneous speech, “Credit to a Man: A Woman.”

“I had a point to make about how much women have accomplished, that we are no longer thought of as housewives or side-kicks of men, but as partners,” Davis said. “Together we can manage the house and the work.”

Sgt. Tiffany Franklin and Spc. Jocelyn Clary sang “Count On Me,” from the duet by Whitney Houston and CeCeWinans.

Next, Spc. Tanisha Coleman spoke about the history of women, Spc. Chad Henson played the saxophone, and Sgt. Jolonda Terry and Staff Sgt. Erica Perkins read poetry.

Alexander wrapped up the evening with a speech that garnered her a standing ovation.

“The glass ceiling is gone, broken by outstanding women,” said Alexander. “Back in the day, when it was still called PLDC (Primary Leadership Development Course, now known as Warrior Leader Course), there was only one female besides me in my class. Were we treated equally? No. Fairly? No. Do you think we cared? No. We had a mission. We knew we had to graduate in order to become NCOs.”

Alexander has been selected to attend the U.S. Sergeants Major Academy this fall.

“For those of you striving, please don’t give up,” Alexander said. “It has taken a while, but I stand here as proof a woman can do great things in the U.S. Army.”



Sgt. Tiffany Franklin, medic, 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, and native of Martinsville, Va., and Spc. Jocelynn Clary, supply specialist, 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde, and native of Woodbridge, Va., sing the duet “Count On Me,” by Whitney Houston and CeCe Winans, during a Women’s History Month observance at Contingency Operating Base Q-West March 28. (Photos by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)



Command Sgt. Maj. Johnny Godbee, command sergeant major, thanks Master Sgt. Ruby Alexander, battle non-commissioned officer, 16th Sust. Bde., for speaking at the Women's History Month observance at Contingency Operating Base Q-West March 28. Alexander has been selected to attend the U.S. Sergeants Major Academy this fall. "For those of you striving, please don't give up," Alexander said. "It has taken a while, but I stand here as proof a woman can do great things in the U.S. Army."