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## Central Area of The Links, Incorporated

### Honoring Our Sheroes



## WOMEN IN THE MILITARY INITIATIVE TOOLKIT

*Glenda Masingale Manson*

*19th Central Area Director*

# Introduction

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Our military service members represent only 1 percent of our population, but they carry the responsibility of protecting our entire Nation. These dedicated individuals often miss birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and so many of the important events that we spend with the people we love. They make incredible sacrifices on behalf of this nation.

Women have served in the military from the American Revolution to the present. Unfortunately, women have been historically underrepresented in being recognized for their accomplishments. Current statistics illustrate that women make up 15% of active duty and 18% of Guard/Reserves service members. Based on the upward trend, the number of women in the military and veteran women is expected to double in the next decade. To that end, the Central Area of The Links, Incorporated, is committed to ensuring that recognition and services for military women and women veterans are made accessible. Under the leadership of the 19<sup>th</sup> Central Area Director, Glenda Masingale Manson, the Central Area of The Links, Incorporated Programming Team has created and will launch “*Honoring Our Sherones: Women in the Military Initiative*” in 2016.

*Honoring Our Sheroes: Women in the Military Initiative* addresses the Central Area's commitment to addressing five major areas of support: (1) education; (2) employment; (3) housing/homelessness; (4) transitioning; and (5) wellness/domestic violence. Chapters in the Central Area are encouraged to be creative in assisting and supporting our military women and women veterans in one or more of the five project areas. The project goals will leave each military woman engaged, empowered and equipped to successfully handle life post military experience.

# Central Area Team

## Central Area of The Links, Incorporated Leadership

**Glenda Masingale Manson**

Central Area Director

**Karen Patricia Williams, Ph.D.**

Program Coordinator

## National Trends and Services Committee

**Janice Garnett, Ed.D.**

**Omaha (NE) Chapter**

Chair, National Trends and Services

**Teresa Bingman**

**Lansing/East Lansing (MI) Chapter**

Black Lives Matter

**Stefania Greene**

**Frankfurt/Lexington (KY) Chapter**

Legislative Issues and Affairs

**Veronica Marable Johnson**

**Hendersonville (TN) Chapter**

Young Women Empowerment Institute (YWEI)

## Background

Research states that African American women have played a major role in every war in United States history. However many of their contributions were unrecognized and unrewarded. Despite the challenges of military life, these women built and sustained family and community existence. Throughout history, their networking and institution-building skills and their commitment to caring and sharing found expression in educational and health care efforts, campaigns to support the troops, and protests against many forms of discrimination (Lemke-Santangelo, 2003).

According to a 2005 report, black women see the military as providing greater opportunities and benefits than the civilian labor market. A total of 16% of female officers and 34% of enlisted women are black compared with 9% of male officers and 20% of enlisted men. In the Army, close to one-fourth of women officers and nearly one-half of enlisted women are black. In addition, black women are better represented than white women among noncommissioned officers which reflects their longer stay in the service (America's military population, 2005).

One of the most celebrated “sheroes” in American history, Harriet Tubman is best known for guiding slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad in the 1850s. Tubman, who escaped slavery in 1849, set up a vast espionage ring for the Union during the Civil War. She was the first woman in American history to lead a military expedition.

Women Veterans were the best-kept secret for many years. Onset of the 1980's activities were initiated to increase public awareness about services for women in the military and women Veterans. In 2011, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden launched Joining Forces, a nationwide initiative calling all Americans to rally around service members, veterans and their families and support them through wellness, education and employment.

“...Everybody can do something. Every American. Every business. Every profession. Every school. Every community. Every state. All of us, as one American team. That's how we will truly honor our veterans. That's how we will truly say thank you. That's how we will uphold the sacred trust with all who've served in our name.”

*President Obama, August 26, 2014*

Therefore, the Central Area of the Links, Incorporated has decided to launch an Area initiative creating a laser beam focus on our women in the military. This initiative will focus on Sheroes, women in the military who are making a difference in our states, nation and world.