



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

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This We'll Defend: NU Women in the U.S. Army



Donna Rix '79

When Norwich University opened its doors to women in the Corps of Cadets in 1974, it also created a path for them to commission into the United States Armed Forces. In 1979, **Donna Rix** was the first woman to commission into the United States Army. Upon receiving her gold 2LT bars, she was stationed in Germany as a member of the Adjutant General Branch.

And so began a legacy of Norwich alumnae achieving distinction in the US Army.

In the small town of Amesbury, MA, **Katherine "Katie" Hathaway '12** dreamed of serving her country. She chose Norwich as the gateway to gain the necessary experience, preparation, and guidance for a successful military career.



CPT Katherine "Katie" Hathaway, USA '12

Katie joined the NU Women's Rugby Team. The team's dedication and unity were a source of inspiration for her, and their success, winning two national championships, further fueled her determination. These formative years instilled in Katie a sense of discipline and a passion for service that would shape her future.

Upon graduating, Katie was commissioned a 2LT Quartermaster Officer in the US Army Quartermaster Corps. In 2016, when the Department of Defense lifted the ban on women serving in combat arms military occupational specialties, Katie volunteered to transfer to the Armor Branch. After several months of training, she was assigned to 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX. In 2018, she was among the first woman in US history to command a Tank Company, blazing the trail for women in combat arms.

"Norwich in general, the Corps of Cadets and women's rugby have been the most defining things in my life," Katie says. "They helped me embrace challenges, instilled discipline and bolstered my passion to serve others."



CPT Pamela (Dubey) Donais,
USA '14 & M'17

Pamela (Dubey) Donais' decision to attend Norwich was driven by her interest in the military and testing to see if it would be the right fit. Being around like-minded and motivated classmates challenged Pam to better herself in every aspect, from the Corps to academics and sports. Pam played varsity softball and served as a team captain. She made lifelong friends and built the foundation of her values and beliefs. "I loved being challenged and I graduated as a strong, confident leader."

Pam commissioned as a Military Police Officer but sought a more fulfilling and challenging career path. Like Katie, with the opening of combat arms branches to women, she applied and was among

the first accepted into the Armor Branch. She was deployed to Iraq and was among the first female combat arms officer to lead troops in a combat zone. And at Fort Benning, Pam was the first female armor officer to serve as a Troop Commander in Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB).

In 2017 Pam completed her master's degree in leadership from Norwich. She currently serves as Troop Commander in 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, KY.

Now a Captain in the US Army, Pam says the best thing about Norwich was meeting her husband, SSG Daniel Donais '12, USA. She hopes their 2-year-old daughter, Jordan, will attend Norwich University one day. In the meantime, Pam is balancing life as a mother, a dual military spouse, and a career as a Troop Commander responsible for more than 100 soldiers. She says, "Norwich teaches you how you fit into a bigger picture and how teamwork is an integral part. I attribute a lot of my success to my time spent on The Hill...and coffee!"

Donna Rix, Katie Hathaway and Pam Donais are among hundreds of Norwich alumnae who have served in today's Army. Their stories are a testament to the strength and determination fostered at Norwich and the continuing legacy of women breaking barriers in military service.

Records documenting women's history and experience at Norwich are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>



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