



Flourishing As an Army Officer *"It's a Soldier's Army Now"*

by Libby Carty **McNamee**

Captain Kelly Nocks has prevailed through many challenges during her eight years in the U.S. Army, successfully working her way up the ranks to a well-esteemed captain awarded the Purple Heart Medal. Currently stationed at Fort Lee, she belongs to the Quartermaster Corps, known for general supply functions, food services, petroleum and water, and the provision of basic field services.

"When I first came in, I wasn't sure I was going to stay in for a career," Captain Nocks comments. "Now I know I'm staying. It fits me. I'm a planner, and I like guidelines and structure and making sure that things operate efficiently."

Back in April 2003, one month after the Iraq war officially started, Captain Nocks deployed to Baghdad in a leadership position. As Supply Platoon Leader, she thrived in her mission to transport and distribute vital food and water to fellow troops while supervising 30 soldiers, ranging in age from 18 to 21.

"It's a soldier's army now," she stresses, noting that gender is not an issue for her. "Whoever has the drive and will to succeed will prevail." She continues, "In Iraq everything functions in a big circle, and everyone

is part of that circle, working together."

A week after the capture of Saddam Hussein and eight months into her deployment, a roadside bomb seriously injured Captain Nocks. She spent the following five months in the hospital where she had 18 surgeries. A year and a half after the accident, she was finally able to walk again. Despite the loss of bone mass and the use of a foot brace, she refused to give up on her military career. She passed the Army's Medical Board declaring her fit for service and retained her commission.

When Captain Nocks comes into contact with young recruits at Fort Lee, many headed to Iraq, she tries to prepare them so they can avoid her mistakes. "I don't want them to go through what I did. We all need to learn from each other to move forward. If I can be a good example, I'll be it." And so she is. ▼

Libby Carty McNamee is a local freelance writer and former Army JAG Officer, currently teaching her toddler to say, "My mother used to wear army boots."