

Trans Resilience and Military Service: Notable Transgender and Non-Binary Veterans

Transgender people have served in all branches of the military and are a rich part of the U.S. military's history. Some notable trans Veterans include:

- **Kristin Beck:** Beck served 20 years in the U.S. Navy Seals where she was a member of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group and the special counter-terrorism unit SEAL Team Six. For her service, Beck was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Service, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and the Purple Heart. She co-wrote the book *Warrior Princess*, and was the subject of the documentary *Lady Valor*.
- **Allyson Robinson:** Robinson graduated West Point with a degree in physics in 1994. She served in the U.S. Army until 1999, after which she became an ordained Baptist minister. She has held prominent leadership positions in the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and OutServe-SLDN.
- **Monica Helms:** Helms served in the U.S. Navy from 1970-1978. She is the creator of the Transgender Pride Flag, and is the founder of the Transgender American Veterans Association (TAVA). In 2004, she was elected as a delegate in the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston Massachusetts, making her the first trans person from Georgia to be elected to a DNC Convention.
- **Shane Ortega:** Ortega served in both the U.S. Army and U.S. Marines. He is often credited as the first openly transgender service member. He served in 3 hostile fire combat tours, and executed over 400 combat missions.
- **Jamie Shupe:** Shupe served in the U.S. Army as a tank mechanic. Shupe, who in the press has stated a preference for they/them pronouns, was the first person in the U.S. to win the right to list a non-binary gender on their driver's license, obtained through the state of Oregon.
- **Christine Jorgensen:** Jorgensen served in the U.S. Army and is credited as being the first person in the U.S. to become widely known for having gender affirming surgery. She worked as an actress and nightclub singer, and remained a spokesperson for transgender people throughout much of her life.
- **Renée Richards:** Richards served in the U.S. Navy after completing a degree at Yale University and earning a medical degree from the Rochester School of Medicine. While in the Navy, Richards won both the singles and doubles at the All Navy Championship. After transition, Richards famously won a case against the United States Tennis Association, which was found to have discriminated against her by not allowing her to play in the US Open as a woman. Richards went on to have a successful tennis career before retiring to return to medical practice.
- **Fallon Fox:** Fox served in the U.S. Navy as an operations specialist on the USS Enterprise. She later became a mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter, and after two professional fights, came out publicly as transgender in 2013. In coming out, she became the first openly transgender athlete in MMA history.
- **Janae Kroc:** Janae served in the U.S. Marines from 1991-1995 during which she was selected for Presidential Security duty under President Bill Clinton. She provided security for some of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and officers at the Pentagon from 1992-1994. From 2004-2005, she was assigned to the security force at the Presidential retreat at Camp David. Kroc began power lifting in 1991 after joining the Marines, and went on to win a world championship and become a world record holder in powerlifting.

- **Amanda Simpson:** Simpson served at the Pentagon as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy. While Simpson is a civilian employee, her position in the Pentagon equate to that of a two-star general. Simpson was the first openly transgender person to hold a leadership role in the Pentagon.