



# Sista Soldier



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK MILITARY WOMEN NYC 3/2024**

## HOT TOPICS

### BLACK HISTORY FACTS

#### Women's History Month

**Bessie Coleman by Tracee Y. Millard, Esq., J.D., LL.M.**



“*The air is the only place free from prejudices.*” When you ask someone about famous women from the early days of aviation, they will likely mention Amelia Earhart—but rarely Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to earn a pilot certificate, two years before Amelia Earhart, and a renowned barnstormer.

Known for performing flying tricks, Bessie Coleman’s nicknames were “Brave Bessie,” “Queen Bess,” and “The Only Race Aviatix in the World.” Her goal was to encourage women and African Americans to reach their dreams – and this became her legacy.

Bessie was born on January 26, 1893, in Atlanta, Texas, the 10th of 13 children, to Susan and George Coleman. George, who had Native American grandparents, would eventually return to the Cherokee Nation, leaving Susan to raise Bessie and her 12 siblings alone.

In 1920, 27-year-old Bessie, now living in segregated Chicago, was at a personal crossroads. She sought a life beyond her job of manicurist in beauty salons. When her brother, a World War I veteran, taunted her about her future with stories of French women flyers she replied, “That’s it... You just called it for me!” She was determined to become a pilot. But in the United States, Black men were not welcome in aviation, let alone Black women.

Unfazed after white pilots refused to give her instruction, Bessie sought advice from Robert Abbot, publisher of the influential Black newspaper the Chicago Defender, and a constant advocate for the inclusion of Black people in American society. Sensing her commitment, and the resulting publicity if she succeeded, Abbot advised Bessie to learn French and seek training in France where Black people experienced more respect and opportunity than they

## VET NEWS

### HAPPY BDAY

*Pisces (Fish): Aries (Fire)*

**PRAYER CALL- MONTHLY MARCH 1 @ 7PM ,  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MTG –MARCH 5 @ 7 PM  
NYC CHAPTER MTGS – MARCH 15, 7PM**

Congratulations to **Major (Ret) Tracee Y Millard Esq., JD., L.L.M** who was selected as an honoree for the **Caribbean Impact Awards on March 20, 2024**, hosted by Caribbean Life.

**NYC Chapter JOURNAL for 23<sup>rd</sup> Convention 2024. Tracee Milliard & Michael Tobius Simmons, POC deadline March 22, 2024**

**2024 Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration - Saturday, March 23, 2024 @ Vietnam Veterans Plaza: 55 Water Street**

**SAVE THE DATE** February Workshop  
Topic: Mind Bladder  
**When: March 29 , 2024**  
**Time: 6PM**

**NYC chapter Get together Celebration**  
**Location:** VFW 483, 240-08 135  
Rosedale, Queens, NY 11422  
Dates: TBD LTC(Ret) Bernice Simmons POC

**Unequal Treatment of Black, Minority Veterans** Triggers New VA Plan to Weed Out Disparities Military. Com

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/02/14/va-issues-road-map-address-inequities-health-care-and-benefits-minority-vets.html>

**See Your 2024 VA Disability Pay Rates**  
<https://www.military.com/benefits/veterans-health-care/va-disability-pay-rates.html>

did in the United States. On June 15, 1921, Coleman achieved her goal—making history as the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license.

Bessie then began a career as a barnstormer, a pilot who flew around the country often in surplus WWI aircraft, such as the Curtiss JN-4, known as the Jenny. Barnstorming involved doing aerobatics often over a farmer's field or at a racetrack where people paid to see aviators risk their lives.

Bessie would only perform in exhibitions if the crowds were desegregated. This was a gutsy move on her part, as segregation was the law of the land. Her career as a barnstormer and her life were cut short on April 30, 1926, when she and her mechanic took to the air before an upcoming performance. The aircraft had been having engine trouble. During the flight, it went into a nosedive, throwing her out of the cockpit. Bessie Coleman died when she hit the ground, and the mechanic was also killed in the crash. She was 34.

In Illinois, streets have been named for her, and on the anniversary of her death, Bessie's grave in Chicago earns a flyover from pilots who drop flowers.

In 1995, the United States Postal Service put Bessie Coleman on a postage stamp. Other tributes include numerous books, a quarter with her image, and a doll from Mattel, the makers of Barbie, with her in a pilot's uniform.

**ABENY 2024 scholarships** for graduating HS seniors, living in the Five Boroughs and information about our Service Awards for students to be nominated **in grades K-12**; The applications are time sensitive with a deadline date of **April 2024**

### **National Association of Black Military Women**

2023 Biennial Convention Invisible Warriors Living The Dream

When: **September 18-22, 2024**

Where: Chicago, IL

Please go to the website to register [NABMW.org](http://NABMW.org)

**As of April 2024:** VA will no longer send veterans' benefits to multiple bank accounts.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2024/02/22/va-will-no-longer-send-veterans-benefits-to-multiple-bank-accounts>

## **INNER PEACE** Service

### Divine Order

I am in harmony with divine order.

Some days I feel energized and move forward with organization and precision—items ticked off my to-do list, chores completed, goals reached, and surroundings easily tidied with everything in its right and proper place. In appreciation for this routine, I might believe days that don't go this way are not what they should be or I am doing something wrong.

Divine order reminds me there is a natural ebb and flow to life. There are days for organized accomplishment and days to let go, relax, and simply bless the mess. Divine order is present during the high energy as well as the low energy days. Each is part of a full and well-lived life.

I go with the flow rather than fighting the current. My life and all life is in divine order, and I feel grateful as I rest in that assurance.

*What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?—Romans 8:31*