

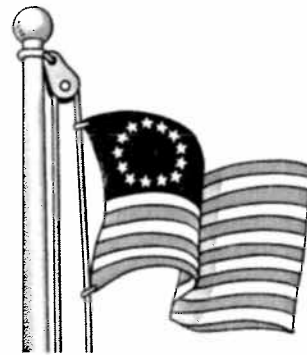
## Deborah Samson, Secret Soldier

Deborah stared at the poster nailed to the wall of the town meeting hall. It said, "To every able-bodied man and boy—protect your freedom and preserve your liberty! Join the army today!" Deborah wanted to fight in the revolution as much as any man or boy—maybe even more so. She had been on her own ever since her father had died in the French and Indian War. Deborah remembered her father's passionate belief in a free, self-governing America. She wanted to fight for the country she loved, but she knew that the recruiters would never let a girl join the army. Feeling dejected, she turned away from the poster and trudged home.

By the time Deborah arrived at the boarding house where she lived, she had thought of an ingenious plan. In the privacy of her room, Deborah contemplated her reflection in the mirror. She grabbed a pair of scissors and cut her long, glossy hair. Next, Deborah dragged the old trunk of her father's belongings from under her bed and rummaged around in it for suitable clothing. She put on her father's shirt and pants. They were ridiculously large for her, but Deborah used the scissors to trim the pants and a belt to cinch them tight. She stared in the mirror again. "Not too bad," she thought. Then she hurried to the recruiting station. Would her disguise work?

"Hello, young man. Are you here to sign up?" the officer behind the table asked. Deborah nodded, wondering if he could hear her heart pounding in her chest. "Well, son, what's your name?" Deborah responded automatically, "Er...R-r-r-robot. Yes, Robert, um...Shirtliffe." She hoped she sounded convincing. "Well, Robert Shirtliffe, welcome to the army!" The officer smiled.

Deborah could hardly believe it. Her plan had worked. No one knew the army's newest recruit was a girl!



### MONDAY

Choose the definition that matches the bold word in the sentence.

- Deborah used a belt to **cinch** her pants around her waist.
  - to make something easy
  - to fasten tightly
- Her **ingenious** plan was to pretend to be a boy.
  - very clever
  - magical
- She **rummaged** through old clothing, looking for pants and a shirt.
  - sold for a low price
  - moved things around in search of something
- As Deborah **contemplated** the poster on the wall, she thought about her father.
  - viewed carefully
  - painted
- Deborah **trudged** down the road to the boarding house.
  - cried
  - walked slowly and heavily
- Feeling **dejected**, she walked home sadly.
  - depressed
  - unloved

# TUESDAY

Circle the genre of this passage. Give details to support your answer.

fantasy

historical fiction

mystery

fable

science fiction

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# WEDNESDAY

Draw a line to identify each story element.

Main Character

- Deborah wants to join the army, but girls are not allowed.

Supporting Character

- Deborah disguises herself as a boy.

Setting

- army recruiting officer

Problem

- America at the start of the Revolutionary War

Solution

- Deborah Samson

# THURSDAY

Put the events in order. Write 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 next to each one.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Deborah thinks of a plan that might get her into the army.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Deborah's father dies in the French and Indian War.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Deborah's disguise fools the recruiting officer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Deborah reads a recruiting poster in the town meeting hall.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Deborah cuts her hair and puts on her dad's old clothes.

# FRIDAY

For much of American history, women were not allowed to serve in combat (fighting) roles in the military. Do you think this was a good policy? Why or why not?

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