

TAMMY SMITH

b. 1963

U.S. GENERAL

“Anyone who has ever busted through a glass ceiling got cut a little.”

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Tammy Smith is the first out lesbian general in the U.S. Army. She was named a brigadier general in 2012 and formally promoted during a ceremony at the Women’s Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery. She became the commanding general of the 98th Training Division.

Born in Oakland, Oregon, Smith began her military career when she received a four-year Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship. She graduated from the University of Oregon in 1986 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps.

During her 30-year military career, Smith has served as a platoon leader in Panama, a logistic support detachment commander in Costa Rica and a company commander in South Carolina. She was stationed in Afghanistan, where she was chief of Army Reserve

affairs during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Smith holds a Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership from the University of Phoenix and received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Lincoln University. She has been decorated with numerous medals and awards and is in the ROTC’s Hall of Fame.

Smith married Tracey Hepner in 2012. The ceremony, held at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, was officiated by a military chaplain just two years after same-sex marriage was legalized in the nation’s capital.

“For me it’s really been transitional,” Smith said in an interview, “to go from being 100 percent in the closet to being globally gay.” She continued, “She [Tracey] has been so wonderful in helping me cut loose the shackles of those 26 years in the military, of having to hide a part of myself. I don’t live a double life anymore.”

Hepner founded the Military Partners and Families Coalition, a national military advocacy organization that provides support, education and resources for LGBT military members and their families. Smith has become active in LGBT events and advocacy and has been honored by many LGBT organizations and publications. She served as grand marshal of the 2013 Gay Pride Parade in Washington.

