

'People will be shocked'

Murfreesboro author pens book about woman who fights in Civil War

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The year is 1861. Women do not have the right to vote, or attend college.

Yet Eloise, a hard-working, intelligent and independent thinker from a small town in Massachusetts, is determined to fight for the Union Army in the Civil War, blatantly ignoring government regulations that forbid women from enlisting.

After her father dies and her brother subsequently refuses to fight, Eloise decides to fight in his place. So she assumes his identity, a journey that takes her from the frontlines to the Union's war office, working side-by-side with U.S. President Abraham Lincoln.

Courageous and cunning, Eloise's journey from fierce patriot to wary and scarred veteran is one of triumph, highlighting innumerable obstacles facing American women in the 19th century – decades before the women's suffrage movement.

The character of Eloise was created by Randy O'Brien, a retired Murfreesboro radio journalist and the author of *Gettysburg by Morning*, now available for purchase.

Her story, however, is anything but fiction.

It is estimated that at least 250 women pretended to be men so they could fight in the Civil War, according to the



Author Randy O'Brien shows his book at Fortress Rosecrans on Wednesday in Murfreesboro. This area was a battle site during the Battle of Stones River during the Civil War and an important setting in O'Brien's new book "Gettysburg by Morning" about a women fighting in the infantry during the Civil War.

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