

**NAME**

Jessica Lynch

BIRTH DATE

April 26, 1983
(age 35)

PLACE OF BIRTH

Palestine, West
Virginia

ZODIAC SIGN

Taurus

Jessica Lynch Biography

(1983–)

Former Army soldier Jessica Lynch was held captive by Iraqi soldiers at Saddam Hospital in Nasiriya then rescued by U.S. troops. A media firestorm followed.

Synopsis

Jessica Lynch was born on April 26, 1983, in Palestine, West Virginia. On March 23, 2003, Lynch's company ran into trouble in enemy territory, resulting in her capture. For the next week, she was held captive by Iraqi soldiers at Saddam Hospital in Nasiriya. She was rescued soon after by U.S. troops, which was followed by a media firestorm. In recent years, Lynch has left the Army and published her biography.

Early Life

Jessica Dawn Lynch was born on April 26, 1983, in Palestine, West Virginia. For Lynch, the Army had always represented a chance to see the world. Even at a young age, Jessica knew she wanted to see as much of what lay beyond her home state as she could. "I wanted to improve my life and not just be there in Palestine forever," she later said. "I wanted to get out and do something." According to her father, Gregory, a self-employed trucker, Lynch was also a stubborn child. "If someone told her she couldn't do something, she'd do it just to show them," he once recalled.

After graduating from Wirt County High School in 2001, Lynch, along with her brother, Gregory Jr., joined the Army. She left for South Carolina to start basic training on September 19, 2001, less than two weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 11. Even in the wake of the tragedy, Lynch didn't figure on seeing combat. Instead, after basic training, she saw her time at Fort Bliss, where she was stationed as a supply clerk, as a good way to gain some practical business experience. As Lynch saw it, she'd be in the Army for a few years, get out, return to school and follow her dream of becoming a kindergarten teacher.

Captive

But as it did for thousands of others in the military, the start of the war in Iraq changed everything. By March 2003, with the war fully started, Lynch was in Iraq with the 507th Maintenance Company. On March 23, 2003, the war was just a few weeks old. Lynch's company, which was staked out near the end of an 8,000-vehicle convoy, ran into trouble in the city of Nasiriya. Faulty navigational equipment had led them right into enemy territory, resulting in a 90-minute-long fire fight that resulted in the death of 11 American soldiers and the capture of an injured Lynch. For the next week, Lynch was held captive by Iraqi soldiers at Saddam Hospital in Nasiriya. She was rescued soon after by U.S. troops who stormed the facility.

Media Firestorm

Her story, and her seemingly dramatic rescue, riveted news watchers. The video of the military operation, and a clearly hurting-but-relieved Lynch flashing a smile for cameras, spread quickly through news outlets and thrust the young soldier into the limelight. The stories of her heroism included accounts of a severely injured Lynch firing her gun at Iraqi soldiers until she ran out of ammunition. A Private First Class member of the U.S. Army, the fresh-faced Lynch was suddenly the face of American forces in Iraq.

But later reports cast everything in a different light. According to some accounts, there weren't actually any Iraqi soldiers present when a team of Special Operations forces raided the hospital. Further reports indicated that Iraqi hospital officials even tried to return the injured Lynch back to the Americans prior to the raid on their facility.

Setting the Record Straight

Lynch showed her exasperation at the media buzz built up around her. When she was able, she quickly went on the record to say she hadn't fired a single round during the firefight in Nasiriya. Her gun had jammed, she told reporters. As for her injuries, they came not from enemy soldiers, she said, but the crashing of her Humvee. In addition, Lynch was irate at the military for using her to trumpet the overall war. "It does [bother me] that they used me as a way to symbolize all this stuff," she told reporters. "It's wrong."

Following her rescue, Lynch was eventually transported to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where she was treated for injuries, which included multiple fractures of her arms and legs. Upon her release from the hospital, Lynch, who was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Prisoner of War medals, published her biography, *I am a Soldier, Too: The Jessica Lynch Story*.

In recent years, Lynch has left the Army. She became engaged to Wes Robinson, and welcomed a daughter, Dakota Ann, who was born in January 2007. She named her daughter after one of the soldiers killed in the ambush in Nasiriya. Lynch also has since earned a bachelor's and a master's degree and has gone to a teaching career in her West Virginia community.

Citation Information

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