

# Women Veterans in History

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At Thomson-Hood Veterans Center

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It is a pleasure and always an honor to come and spend time with you ladies. I cannot begin to express my gratitude for the hard work, dedication and sacrifices each of you made during your time in service; because of your service I am able to do be in the position I am today as Kentucky's women veteran coordinator and can proudly say that I am a female veteran.

Today, women serve in the US military in unprecedented numbers – 12 percent of those who have served since September 11 are women. Women are the fastest growing population within the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. Women have the honor of wearing the uniform – something that only 10 percent of the entire U.S. population can claim – because of the women who served before us and broke down barriers.

Women have always constituted a minority presence in the military. Many may not know that the law limited our participation to 2% for decades. It increased to roughly 15% of the total force by the early 1990s, and continue to increase since. Today, we make up just under 10% of the total population of Veterans. Unfortunately, our presence in military histories is even smaller; we are largely omitted from many narratives.

For instance, from 1941-1945 during World War II, 88 women were held as prisoners of war.

From 1962-1972 Navy Commander Elizabeth Barrett was the first women to command in a combat zone.

Today, women serve multiple rotations performing security patrols in war zones even though the ban on combat has not officially been lifted. They fly jets, serve aboard ships, gather our intelligence, provide security, patrol dangerous environments, and execute their military duties flawlessly. During more recent times.....

In 2015 Shayne Haver, Kristen Griest, and Lisa Jaster were the first 3 women to complete U.S Army Ranger School

And in 2017 DAV elects the first female national commander Mrs. Delphine Metcalf-Foster.

Capturing and sharing the tales of women who have served our nation ensures that they are not erased from history and do not become invisible.

At the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, we honor the service of all Veterans -- all 300,000 veterans living in Kentucky. We honor their families who support them throughout

their service, and we honor their survivors who make unimaginable sacrifices every day in the absence of their loved ones.

In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, “This is not a time when women should be patient,”. Generations of military women have heard that call and taken it to heart. I am proud of their legacy and I am proud to be a part of it. I am honored to serve all female Veterans and their families. I am a Veteran!

Thank you for your service and Happy Women history month!