

Women have served their country through all periods of U.S. history, whether disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution, as nurses in World War II, or as helicopter pilots in Afghanistan. Yet too often, the contributions of women in uniform have been overlooked, even by the women themselves.

At least 28 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have enacted legislation to establish a female veteran program, designate a commemorative day or month, or provide for special license plates. A number of other states are considering bills in the current legislative session.

Today, women are the fastest-growing demographic in the U.S. military, making up one out of every 10 veterans and serving in all military branches and divisions. There are now over 2 million female veterans in the country and women are projected to make up 18% of all U.S. veterans by 2040, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In Colorado specifically, Brigadier General Laura Clellan is The 44th Adjutant General of Colorado. Appointed by the Governor of Colorado, General Clellan serves as the Executive Director of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and is a member of the Governor's Cabinet.

This bill is supported by the Women's Veterans of Colorado located in Lakewood.

**Below is a list of achievements and changes related to female veterans.**

- On April 16, 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 80-36, the Army-Navy Nurses Act of 1947. This law established the Women's Medical Specialist Corps and the Army Nurse Corps as part of the Army, and also provided permanent commissioned officer status to military nurses.
- On Nov. 8, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Public Law 90-130. This law removed promotion and retirement restrictions on women officers in the armed forces, and eliminated the 2% limitation on WAC numbers. This made it possible for more than

one woman in each service to hold the rank of colonel and for women to achieve general or flag officer rank, and for WACs to serve in the Army National Guard.

- In 1971, women who were not previously service members were permitted to enlist in the National Guard.
- In August 1972, Secretary of the Army Robert F. Froehlke approved both a major expansion of WAC enlistment and opened all military occupational specialties, (exclusive of combat training or duty), to women. The ban on women commanders for units that included men was lifted.
- On April 9, 1971, Army regulations were changed so women could request waivers for retention on active duty if married and pregnant.
- In 1971, the Army Chief of Staff authorized WACs' entry into NCO academy programs and male drill sergeant schools.
- In December 1988, the Secretary of Defense issued the Standard Risk Rule to standardize services assignment of women to hostile areas.
- In 2010, the Navy officially lifted its ban on women serving aboard submarines. Shortly afterward, a group of female officers began to serve aboard submarines.
- In 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta lifted the Defense Department ban on women in direct ground combat roles.
- Beginning in January 2016, all military occupations and positions were opened to women, including combat. In May of that year;
  - A group of enlisted female sailors boarded a submarine for the first time.
  - The first female soldiers became infantry officers.
- In 2016, Air Force General Lori Robinson took command of U.S. Northern Command, and became both the first female service member to lead a unified combatant command and the highest ranking woman in U.S. military history.
- January 2017, the first female Marines graduated from infantry school.