

## Time Line: Women in the U.S. Military

- 1775–1783** During the Revolutionary War, women follow their husbands to war out of necessity. Many serve in military camps as laundresses, cooks, and nurses but only with permission from the commanding officers and only if they proved they were helpful.
- 1782–1783** Deborah Sampson serves for over a year in General Washington’s army disguised as a man. After being wounded, her gender is discovered and she is honorably discharged. Later, she receives a military pension from the Continental Congress.
- 1812** During the War of 1812, two women, Mary Marshall and Mary Allen, serve as nurses for several months aboard the USS *United States* at the request of Commodore Stephen Decatur.
- 1846–1848** During the Mexican War, Elizabeth Newcom enlists in the Missouri Volunteer Infantry as Bill Newcom and marches 600 miles to winter camp in Colorado before being discovered and discharged.
- 1861–1865** During the American Civil War, women serve as matrons (administrators) of hospitals as well as nurses and cooks in both Union and Confederate battlefield hospitals. Wealthy women help fund permanent hospitals. Dr. Mary Walker becomes the only woman to receive the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest military honor. Women also serve as spies and some, disguised as men, serve as soldiers.
- 1898** During the Spanish-American War, 1,500 civilian women serve as nurses assigned to Army hospitals in the U.S. Hundreds more serve as support staff, spies, and a few disguise themselves as men to serve in the military.
- 1917–1918** During last two years of World War I, women are allowed to join the military. 33,000 women serve as nurses and support staff officially in the military and more than 400 nurses die in the line of duty.
- 1941–1945** During World War II, more than 400,000 women serve at home and abroad as mechanics, ambulance drivers, pilots, administrators, nurses, and in other non-combat roles. Eighty-eight women are captured and held as POWs (prisoners of war).
- 1948** Congress passes the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act granting women permanent status in the military subject to military authority and regulations and entitled to veterans benefits.
- 1950–1953** During the Korean War, over 50,000 women serve at home and abroad. 500 Army nurses serve in combat zones and many Navy nurses serve on hospital ships.

- 1962–1972** During the Vietnam War, over 7,000 women serve, mostly as nurses in all five divisions of the military, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. All were volunteers.
- 1973** The military draft (only for males) ends and an all-volunteer military is formed creating opportunities for women.
- 1976** The first females are admitted to the service academies, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy to be trained in military science.
- 1978** Women in the Navy and Marines are allowed to serve on non-combat ships as technicians, nurses, and officers.
- 1991–1992** During the Persian Gulf War, more than 41,000 women are deployed to the combat zone. Two are taken captive.
- 1991** Congress authorizes women to fly in combat missions.
- 1993** Congress authorizes women to serve on combat ships.
- 1998** For the first time, women fighter pilots fly combat missions off aircraft carrier in Operation Desert Fox, Iraq.
- 2000** Captain Kathleen McGrath becomes the first woman to command a U.S. Navy warship. The vessel is assigned to the Persian Gulf.
- 2003** During the War in Iraq, three Army women become prisoners of war in the first days of the invasion.
- 2004** Colonel Linda McTague becomes the first woman commander of a fighter squadron in U.S. Air Force history.
- 2005** During the “War on Terror,” Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester becomes the first woman awarded the Silver Star for combat action.
- 2008** 16,000 women are serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Germany, Japan, and other related areas.