

PROCLAMATION

California's woman veterans are part of a long and proud legacy of military service. Throughout the years, women went to great lengths to serve alongside their male counterparts. Historically, many disguised themselves by dressing as men, leaving behind their homes and families to pledge their lives and allegiance to this nation. Women sacrificed so much to serve their country, yet far too often, they have done so without the recognition and gratitude they deserve.

From the American Revolution to World War II, history recognizes that women traditionally served in low-level positions, in covert operations and as nurses. At the time of their service, many women went unrecognized, including those who served on the front lines. It is our privilege and honor to recognize the legacy of pioneering women, like Deborah Sampson and secret operative Agent 355 during the Revolutionary War; Harriet Tubman and Cathay Williams, who worked with the Union Army in various capacities during the Civil War; the women fighter pilots who flew combat missions in 1998; General Ann Dunwoody, the first woman in history to achieve four-star officer rank; and Brigadier General Susie Kulan, the first woman to command the "Iron Man" Division, Reserve Infantry Army unit.

In 2013, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta rescinded the military's exclusion policy and officially recognized women in combat. In 2016, the Department of Defense opened all combat positions to women, with no exceptions. Women are now finally afforded the opportunity for not just recognition, but for equity in military careers and rank, achieving and excelling as commanders, elite operatives and military personnel.

Women veterans are the fastest growing cohort of the veteran community, with over 163,000 women veterans living in California. This week, we salute our women veterans for their courage and significant contributions to our nation's Armed Forces, and recognize that we owe all military women and men our deepest appreciation and respect.

NOW THEREFORE I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim March 15-21, 2021, as "Women's Military History Week."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 12th day of March 2021.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.
Secretary of State