

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1988

To amend title 36, United States Code, to direct the President to issue an annual proclamation establishing Women’s Military History Day.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 17, 2021

Ms. STEFANIK (for herself and Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

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## A BILL

To amend title 36, United States Code, to direct the President to issue an annual proclamation establishing Women’s Military History Day.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Women’s Military His-

5       tory Day Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

7       (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-

8       ings:

9               (1) On March 21, 1917, Loretta Perfectus

10       Walsh became the first woman in United States his-

1 tory to officially enlist in any military service when  
2 she joined the United States Navy in the month that  
3 would later be designated Women's History Month.

4 (2) Women have served in the United States  
5 Armed Forces since the Revolutionary War, initially  
6 serving in support roles as nurses, seamstresses, and  
7 cooks for troops.

8 (3) Valiant women have served selflessly along-  
9 side men during every conflict involving the United  
10 States, and have suffered the same hardships, often  
11 without the benefit of military rank or compensa-  
12 tion.

13 (4) Pioneering women have served as trail-  
14 blazers, inspiring generations of American women to  
15 follow in their footsteps by answering the call to  
16 serve.

17 (5) On January 21, 1918, Myrtle Hazard be-  
18 came the first woman to officially take the oath of  
19 enlistment for the United States Coast Guard, join-  
20 ing twin sisters, Genevieve and Lucille Baker.

21 (6) On August 13, 1918, Opha May Johnson  
22 joined the United States Marine Corps before she, or  
23 any woman, was permitted to vote.

24 (7) On July 8, 1948, Esther McGowin Blake,  
25 having already joined the Army Air Forces in 1944,

1 enlisted in the active duty United States Air Force,  
2 and served beside her two sons.

3 (8) Deborah Sampson was, by scholarly con-  
4 sensus, the first woman to serve in the United  
5 States Army, when she disguised herself as a man  
6 to join the Continental Army, in which she served  
7 until 1783.

8 (9) In 2015, Department of Defense formally  
9 announced women could serve in direct combat roles  
10 and join combat arms professions.

11 (10) Army Captains Shaye Haver and Kristen  
12 Griest were the first females to graduate the United  
13 States Army's Ranger School, and Sergeant First  
14 Class Amanda Kelley was the first enlisted female to  
15 do so.

16 (11) There are nearly 2,000,000 living female  
17 veterans of the United States Armed Forces who  
18 represent approximately 10 percent of the overall  
19 veteran population.

20 (12) The United States holds these iconic  
21 women, and every woman who has served in the  
22 United States military, in the highest regard for  
23 their courage and bravery.

1 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to en-  
 2 courage the nationwide observance of “Women’s Military  
 3 History Day” on a day in the month of March.

4 **SEC. 3. OBSERVANCE OF WOMEN’S MILITARY HISTORY DAY.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.— Chapter 1 of title 36, United  
 6 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-  
 7 lowing new section:

8 **“§ 146. Women’s military history day**

9 “The President shall issue each year a proclamation  
 10 calling on the people of the United States to—

11 “(1) celebrate the bold women who have served  
 12 in the United States military throughout history;

13 “(2) highlight trailblazing women in the mili-  
 14 tary and their achievements;

15 “(3) commemorate the selfless service of women  
 16 in every American military conflict; and

17 “(4) observe such Women’s Military History  
 18 Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.”.

19 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
 20 at the beginning of chapter 1 of such title is amended by  
 21 adding after the item relating to section 145 the following  
 22 new item:

“146. Women’s military history day.”.

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