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Women's History Month Message

Each year as part of Women's History Month, we honor the many trailblazers whose courage and conviction have enabled women everywhere to attain new heights in workplace equality and social advancement.

This year's celebration carries a special significance with Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter's recent announcement allowing women the same military job opportunities as men. As implementation takes place across the force, women who choose to serve in combat roles will be able to show first-hand what they bring to the fight.

While this major shift in policy is new, American women have served our country in combat with distinction for years. Leading the way for female Service Members everywhere was true patriot and women's rights activist Deborah Sampson Gannett. In 1782 at the height of the Revolutionary War she disguised herself as her deceased brother Robert and enlisted in the Continental Army. Here in Korea, Captain Viola B. McConnell was the first U.S. Service Member decorated for action during the Korean War. As the only nurse on duty at the outset of the war, McConnell led more than 643 evacuees to safety in the frenzied aftermath of the North Korean invasion. Her actions earned her the Bronze Star Medal.

During just the past 15 years, as counterinsurgency operations blurred the lines of conflict, thousands of women have found themselves engaged in fights throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2001, nearly 200 women have paid the ultimate sacrifice in combat.

Today in Eighth Army more than 3,500 female Soldiers and Civilians serve with pride and distinction. Their efforts contribute greatly to our enduring legacy of service in the Republic of Korea and are a great source of strength within our ranks.

We encourage each of you to attend your local observance and immerse yourselves in the history of women who have served our nation with remarkable dedication and perseverance.

Eighth Army is Strong and Getting Stronger!

RICHARD E. MERRITT
CSM, USA
Command Sergeant Major

THOMAS S. VANDAL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding