

Celebrate WOMEN'S HISTORY

March 1-31



NYSUT celebrates Women's History Month with a new poster honoring women in the military. The 1948 Women's Armed Services Integration Act formally allowed women to serve in the military, but women have had an impact on the armed services for more than 200 years.

Initially relegated to civilian support roles, including laundresses, cooks and spies,

women gained entry in 1901 with the formation of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and later served as Yeoman in WWI. By WWII, all four branches of the military — Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard — enlisted women in their ranks. In fact, nearly 350,000 American women served in uniform during the war.

In 1975, women were allowed to be admitted into military colleges,

furthering their mobility within the ranks of the armed forces. And in 2015, a mere 10 years ago — one of the last remaining barriers was broken when women were allowed to serve in combat roles.

Even with their storied presence and impact on U.S. military successes, fewer than a dozen women have earned the rank of four-star general or admiral.* They include:

U.S. Army General Ann Dunwoody. On Nov. 14, 2008, Dunwoody became the first woman in U.S. military and uniformed service history to achieve a four-star officer rank.

U.S. Navy Admiral Michelle Howard. In 2014, Howard became the first African American woman to command a U.S. Navy ship and the first woman of any race to attain the rank of admiral. In the same year she also became the 38th Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

32nd Vice Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard Linda Lee Fagan. In 2021, Fagan became the 32nd vice commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard's first female four-star admiral. She served as commandant from June 2022 to January 2025.

U.S. Air Force General Janet Wolfenbarger. Wolfenbarger is the first woman to achieve the rank of four-star general in the USAF. She was nominated in 2012.

*Women have not yet reached the four-star status in either the U.S. Marine Corps or the Space Force.



NYSUT, a statewide union of professionals, is proud to honor the contributions of women throughout history.

Downloadable PDF versions and printed copies of this poster are free, in limited quantities, to NYSUT members. Download this poster and past Women's History Month posters at nysut.org/publications.

