

Alexandra Dimitrova

8th
Alta Sierra

Sheryl Milhouse

Academic Block 6/7

September 25 2020

Women in the Military

Veterans are many things, they are war heroes who have bravely fought for their country. But they are also family members, friends, colleagues, individuals with personal lives risking everything, mentally and physically, for people they don't even know. They do it for us, for our future, and for our freedom. In the past, men were only allowed to participate in the military, but women, who have been less acknowledged, are progressively to getting more and more involved as well. Throughout the 1800s women have slowly begun to progress and have more opportunity to be able to have the same ranks as men in the military. Women like Nancy Hart have made many contributions in the military, including in World War I and World War II, and deserve celebration and respect. Women's roles in the military have changed drastically over time and will continue to do so in the future.

Whether women served as nurses, administrators, architects, and telephone operators, or took control of critical army jobs, their service was proved invaluable in World War I and World War II. Before WWI most women were not allowed to participate in military combat or vote, however, during the war they had an opportunity to serve their country and gain more rights and independence. According to "Women in World War I" from theworldwar.org, "One observer wrote that American women "do anything they were given to do; that their hours are

long; that their task is hard; that for them there is small hope of medals and citations and glittering homecoming parades.” This quote shows that women persevered through the hardships, even knowing that it was unlikely for them to be rewarded or receive the same respect and recognition as men. Also, as a result of women’s participation in WWI helped move forward the 19th amendment to allow women to vote. Later on, during World War 2, many women participated in important military roles including cryptography, military intelligence, parachute rigging, maintenance and supply. “Women in the U.S. Army” from army.mil states, “Women stepped up to perform an array of critical Army jobs in order to free a man to fight.” Their service not only helped the military, but also freed men to fight and contribute to the U.S. army’s efforts, who would have been doing these jobs instead. Throughout the war, around 140,000 women participated in the U.S. Army and the Women's Army Corps.

During the course of American history, the role of women serving in the military has drastically changed, from nurses to women in front line combat, they have helped us during our hardships. The first forms of women serving in defense of America were around 220 years ago. According to “America’s Military Women” from womensmemorial.org, during the American Revolution, while women were prevented from enlisting in the army, but still accompanied their husbands and were useful in the camps serving as cooks, laundresses, seamstresses, and nurses. This evidence shows that even as early as 1775 in the American Revolution, women were already helping around the camps and as time progressed, women also started to get more involved in the military by disguising themselves as men to serve in the army. In the year 1948, President Harry Truman signed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act into law. “America’s Military Women” by womensmemorial.org says “President Harry Truman on June 12, 1948, gave women permanent status in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.” This law did however allow service secretaries to discharge women without any particular reason and

restricted women from flying aircraft or ships engaged in combat. Women didn't truly get full access to all military positions until 2016 when, according to "Women in the U.S. Army" from army.mil, "Women have the equal right to choose any military occupational specialty, including ground combat units, that were previously unauthorized." Women have come a long way since 1775 and their opportunities in the military will continue to change. As well as helping our nation, they also represent the equality and freedom of choice to pursue any position you want in the U.S.

Nancy Morgan Hart was one of the many women who influenced our military. Being one of the first women in the U.S. to take action she stood out and, following no other's example but her own, she bravely contributed her knowledge of the British defenses to the army. "Women in the U.S. Army" from army.mil states, "Dressed as a man, she would enter British camps pretending to be feeble-minded to gain information, which she handed off to the Patriots." As well as this, she was known for outsmarting Tory soldiers and participating in the revolution that would earn America's independence. She was very resourceful and would capture soldiers who were loyal to the British when they came by to check on the patriotic women. With Hart gaining intelligence on the British defense and engaging in the war, she proved to be a noble asset to the patriots during the American Revolution.

Women have done an honorable job in the military and have overcome many challenges to the point to where they are today. They have certainly proved their worth in the United State's time of need during World War I and World War II as well as in other battles, showing that they can do any job they are asked. Today, various restrictions have been removed and they are free to serve their country in any way they can. Women like Nancy Morgan Hart without the same opportunities would be proud to know how far women have come in the military and how they serve their country today.

Works Cited

America's Military Women. www.womensmemorial.org/americas-military-women.

Nancy Hart. www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/nancy-morgan-hart.

Women in the U.S. Army. www.army.mil/women/history/wac.html.

Women in World War I. www.theworldwar.org/learn/women.