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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, According to the Women in Military Service for America Memorial, 2.5 million American women have served or are serving in the United States Armed Forces since the American Revolution; and

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WHEREAS, According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, 55,000 women veterans reside in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, During the American Revolution, Margaret Corbin, dubbed "Captain Molly", became the first woman to receive a military pension; she was wounded during the defense of Ft. Washington when her husband, John Corbin, was killed and she assumed his cannon post; and

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WHEREAS, During the Civil War, women served in many roles supporting military forces; they organized public relief and sanitary commissions that gathered and distributed supplies to the troops; nurses and matrons staffed government and regimental hospitals; women disguised themselves as male soldiers to fight on the front, and also served as laundresses, cooks, and spies; and

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WHEREAS, During the Spanish-American War, over 1,500 women served as nurses with the Army in Hawaii, Cuba, the

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1 Philippines, Puerto Rico, on the hospital ship USS Relief, and
2 in stateside hospitals; and

3 WHEREAS, During World War I, 12,000 women served stateside,
4 freeing men to fight in Europe; overseas, Army and Navy nurses,
5 volunteers with the American Red Cross, the YMCA, the YWCA, the
6 Salvation Army, and the American Women's Hospital Service all
7 worked together caring for the "doughboys"; over 400 women died
8 as a result of their service; and

9 WHEREAS, During World War II, approximately 40,000
10 American military women served stateside and overseas; women
11 served in the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and as members
12 of the Women Airforce Service Pilots; women served in every
13 theater of the war and in many non-traditional roles; 88 women
14 military nurses were held prisoners of war and more than 460
15 women lost their lives; and

16 WHEREAS, The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of
17 1958, signed by President Truman on June 12, 1948, granted
18 women permanent status in the regular and reserve forces of the
19 Army, Navy, Marines, and the newly created Air Force; and

20 WHEREAS, During the Korean War era, over 50,000 women again
21 served both stateside and overseas; in Korea, Army nurses
22 served in Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH) and general

1 hospitals, while Air Force nurses supported air evacuation
2 missions, and Navy nurses served on nearby hospital ships; and

3 WHEREAS, During the Vietnam War, 7,000 women served in
4 Southeast Asia; the majority were nurses assigned to military
5 hospitals, air evacuation, hospital ships, and field units,
6 many of them were wounded; eight women who died are
7 memorialized on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington,
8 D.C.; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1970, the first woman was promoted to General
10 after an amendment to the United States Code removed
11 restrictions on the careers of female officers which had
12 previously kept women from the general and flag ranks; and

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Defense Appropriation
14 Authorization Act of 1976, signed by President Gerald Ford,
15 established the admission of women into United States military
16 academies; 119 women entered West Point, 81 entered the Naval
17 Academy, and 157 enrolled at the Air Force Academy; women also
18 enrolled in the Coast Guard Academy and the Merchant Marine
19 Academy; and

20 WHEREAS, Approximately 410,000 American women deployed for
21 Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, making it the single
22 largest deployment of military women in U.S. military history;

1 women served in all areas of the operations, with the exception
2 of direct combat; two women became prisoners of war, and five
3 were killed in action; and

4 WHEREAS, Women have participated in U.S. military
5 operations in Grenada, Panama, Honduras, Bosnia, Croatia,
6 Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti; laws banning women from flying in
7 combat were repealed in 1991, and those banning women from duty
8 on combat ships were revoked in 1993; and

9 WHEREAS, In March of 1996, Sergeant Heather Lynn Johnsen
10 became the first woman to be awarded the Guard, Unknown Soldier
11 Identification Badge, the second-least awarded badge in the
12 Army; that same year, the first women were promoted to military
13 three-star ranks when Navy Rear Admiral Patricia Tracey was
14 promoted to Vice Admiral, and Marine Major General Carol Mutter
15 was promoted to Lieutenant General; and

16 Whereas, Women serving in the military are deployed around
17 the world and have supported major missions including Operation
18 Able Sentry on the Serbian/Macedonia border, Operations Joint
19 Endeavor and Decisive Edge, NATO missions in Bosnia, and
20 Operations Southern Watch, Pacific Wave, and Provide Comfort,
21 which supported the no-fly zone established against Iraq and
22 offered humanitarian relief to Kurdish evacuees; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1998, for the first time, a woman fighter pilot
2 delivered a payload of missiles and laser-guided bombs in
3 combat; a year later, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Eileen
4 Collins became the first woman to command the space shuttle;
5 also in 1999, Navy Rear Admiral Evelyn Fields became the first
6 woman and first African American to command the National
7 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps. (NOAA); in 2000,
8 the Coast Guard promoted its first women to flag officer ranks;
9 in 2000, Navy Lieutenant Commander Darlene Iskra became the
10 first woman to command a Navy warship at sea; and

11 WHEREAS, Women were among the first troops deployed in
12 response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks; when
13 Operation Enduring Freedom was launched a month later, women
14 were again among the first deployed; on March 23, 2003, Army
15 PFC Lori Piestewa became the first servicewoman to be killed in
16 Operation Iraqi Freedom and the first Native American
17 servicewoman ever to die in battle; PFC Piestewa, PFC Jessica
18 Lynch, and SPC Shoshana Johnson became prisoners of war during
19 the early days of the operation; by the end of 2004, 19
20 servicewomen had been killed in Iraq as a result of hostile
21 action since the beginning of the war; and

22 WHEREAS, In 2005, Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester of the Kentucky
23 Air National Guard, became the first woman to be awarded the
24 Silver Star for combat action; she is one of 13 women to ever

1 be awarded the Silver Star and the only woman to receive the
2 award for combat action; the other 12 were nurses awarded for
3 valor in World War I and World War II; and

4 WHEREAS, Today, an estimated 344,500 women serve in the
5 U.S. Armed Forces on active duty, in the National Guard and
6 Reserves, at every enlisted rank, and within the officer corps;
7 therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
9 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
10 declare November 9, 2017 as "Illinois Women Veterans Day" to
11 commemorate the sacrifices endured and the valor displayed by
12 American Women veterans; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
14 presented to the Director of the Illinois Department of
15 Veterans' Affairs, Erica Jeffries.