Women Veterans Day is June 12

Though not an official holiday or day of remembrance, Women Veterans Day is observed by many states—New Mexico included—which annually pass proclamations officially marking its observance to honor our women veterans.

The date marks the anniversary of President Harry Truman signing the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act on June 12, 1948, allowing women to serve as permanent, “regular” members of the United States Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and the recently-formed Air Force.

Previously, women were relegated to serving in civilian support positions such as nursing, laundering, mending clothing and cooking. Despite this segregation, many served in war zones alongside their male compatriots, and some even dressed as men during the Civil War and fought on the front lines.

Here in New Mexico, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has issued a proclamation commemorating the day, which reads:

WHEREAS women have a long yet mostly unknown history of military service to our nation, dating back to their volunteer service in support of the Continental Army in the battle for our country’s independence; and

WHEREAS women were officially recognized as a part of the United States Armed Forces since the creation of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act, allowing women to serve as regular members of the military; and

WHEREAS more than 10% of our nation’s 19-million Armed Forces veterans are women. 16,600 live in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS women veterans in New Mexico excel in leadership and hard work, as they serve the state as doctors, engineers, educators, business leaders, and in many other important capacities; and

WHEREAS the state of New Mexico is grateful for our women veterans who, as with all veterans, selflessly served with dedication, honor, and bravery in service to our state and country.

NOW, THEREFORE I, Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor of New Mexico, now hereby declare June 12, 2022, as

Women Veterans Day

throughout the state of New Mexico.
To celebrate Women Veterans Day, DVS asked women veterans in New Mexico to submit photos of themselves from their service days. The department would like to thank all women for their service and sacrifice for our country. (photos listed alphabetically...after the first three, who are DVS staff)

DVS Cabinet Secretary
TSgt Sonya Smith
USAFR (1986-1999)

DVS Women Veterans
Program Manager
CAPT Robin Wilson
USN (1991-2010)

DVS Veterans
Service Officer
OS3 Danielle Thompson
USN (2007-2011)

PO1 Dezideria Amezcua
USN (2015-present)

Capt. Susan Bontly
USAF (1982-1987)

COL Sara Breceknridge
USA Nurse Corps (1988-2017)

CTR1 Jenny Brizal
USN (2000-2010)
Sgt Arianna Mendoza
USMC (2013-2019)

SGT Carolyn McClary
USA 2003-2012

LCpl Rosalie Moreno
USMC (1966-1968)

SMSgt Linda Mortensen
USAF (1983-2011)

Ssgt Lynn Mroz
USAF (1973-1982)

MM3 Kathy Natachu
USN (1989-1996)

SSgt Valeri Ogilvie
USAF 1982-1993

SrA Nicole Olonovich
USAF 2003-2008

1LT Solange Pihut
USA (2014-2022)

SGT Laura Reich
USAR 1982-1987

CAPT Claudia Risner
USN (1981-2019)

Sgt Iris Ruiz
(at left)
NMANG (2010-current)