



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: HB 167
Title: Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial
Hearing Date: January 18, 2022
Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 167 – Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial*. The bill would create a commission to develop a recommendation on the creation of a memorial to honor Maryland women who have served our state and nation as part of the military.

Women have served as part of our nation’s armed services in many roles, including combat roles in today’s military. Women first entered military services as nurses as early as the Revolutionary War period. In 2021, there were almost 30,000 nurses, both women and men, across all branches of the militaryⁱ. Highlights of the history of nursing in military service include:

- Dorothea Dix was appointed as the Superintendent of Nurses for the Union Army in June 1861.
- Clara Barton, a nurse, served during the Civil War and was known as the “Angel of the Battlefield”. Later, Barton founded the Red Cross.
- Nursing became a permanent part of the military with the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps in 1901ⁱⁱ;
- The Navy Nurse Corp was founded in 1908ⁱⁱⁱ. When the United States first entered World War 1, there were 403 Army nurses on active duty. This number grew to 21,460, with 10,000 serving overseas by November 1918.^{iv} Over 1,500 nurses served in the Navy during this time period.
- At the beginning of World War II in 1941, there were less than 7,000 nurses on active duty. The number grew to over 57,000 active-duty nurses by 1945. In the Navy, there were 12,000 active duty and reserve nurses during the war, including some nurses who became prisoners of war.^v
- During the Korean War, there were 540 Army nurses and 200 Navy nurses.^{vi}
- In the war in Vietnam, 11,000 women served with 90% of them being nurses.^{vii}

We support the Commission proposed in *House Bill 167* as an important in recognizing and honoring women, including nurses, who have served in the military.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.health.mil/News/Articles/2021/05/11/Military-nursing-highlighted-during-National-Nurses-Week>

ⁱⁱ <https://e-anca.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, United States Navy. "White Task Force: the story of the Nurse Corps, United States Navy." (NAVMED 939 1945),

^{iv} Ibid

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} <https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/86001/women-veterans-bravely-served-vietnam-war/>