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## **Tennessee National Guard unveils Women's History Wall**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** – The Tennessee National Guard hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the addition of a Women's History Wall in the lobby of Nashville's Joint Force Headquarters on March 28. The new memorial proudly honors the many significant achievements women have made in the Tennessee National Guard, and the prominent women who paved the way for generations of Soldiers and Airmen who followed.

Col. Linda Kieser, the Director of Human Resources for the Tennessee National Guard, developed the memorial to honor those women and the pivotal roles they played throughout history.

"We wanted to recognize all of the great female leaders in our organization," said Kieser. "We started doing research and put a plan together to honor some of these women who have done amazing things in the careers as Guardsmen."

The wall currently honors 23 different women from the Tennessee National Guard and is designed to add others. The first female brigade commander, the first female chief warrant officer, the first female helicopter pilot, and many others, are displayed prominently for all who pass through the lobby to see.

"It took a lot of digging through our past to determine who was first to do this and that," said Kieser. "I've been serving for 37 years, so I used my network and I spoke with many retirees and people I've served with to establish who deserved to be honored."

At the ceremony, Kieser was joined by 11 of the 23 women celebrated on the wall. One of the honorees, retired Maj. Gen. Jannette Young, spoke to the crowd, thanking everyone for the recognition. Tennessee's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Warner Ross, also attended the ceremony, speaking on the significance of the tribute.

"Since the Women's Armed Services Integration Act was signed on June 12, 1948, these women, and so many others, overcame insurmountable obstacles, and helped create a culture that values and rewards creative thinking, risk-taking, and mold breaking," said Ross. "By taking a look at the past, we can see opportunity in the future."

Ross presented each woman with his commander's coin, and thanked them for their countless contributions to the Tennessee National Guard.

March is celebrated as Women's History Month and the memorial is a reminder of the great women who rose to the top of their respective fields, and the sacrifices they made to get there.

"The women we are honoring here left a remarkable legacy and paved the way for countless women who follow in their footsteps," said Kieser. "These incredible women shattered the glass ceiling and emerged as true trailblazers, inspiring future generations for years to come, and we are so proud to honor their legacy."

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Current and former members of the Tennessee National Guard, who are featured on the new Women's History Wall, pose in front of the memorial, March 28, following a ribbon-cutting ceremony that took place at Nashville's Joint Force Headquarters. The wall features 23 women who were the first in their respective positions, such as first female Blackhawk pilot, and first female general officer of the Tennessee National Guard. (photo by Capt. Kealy Moriarty)



Members of the Tennessee National Guard check out the new Women's History Wall, March 28, at their Joint Force Headquarters, in Nashville. The wall features 23 women who paved the way by becoming the first females to achieve the respective positions in the Tennessee National Guard. (photo by Capt. Kealy Moriarty)

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