

Member McKEON for cosponsoring the resolution as well.

I am proud to say there are some things that rise above partisan politics. Supporting our troops, honoring those who defend us, and honoring the victims of September 11 is neither Democratic nor Republican; it is simply American. This resolution can be characterized the same way. I urge everyone to support it.

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I am once again urging all of my colleagues to support this wonderful resolution. I am proud that I can do so as well.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, again, I would like to thank the gentleman—one of the many gentle men and women from the State of New York—for introducing this resolution, and I encourage every Member to vote for it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 856.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. NADLER of New York. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING CURRENT AND FORMER FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 868) honoring and recognizing the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 868

Whereas women are and have historically been an important part of all United States war efforts, voluntarily serving in every military conflict in United States history since the Revolutionary War;

Whereas 34,000 women served in World War I, 400,000 served in World War II, 120,000 served in the Korean War, over 7,000 served in the Vietnam War, and more than 41,000 served in the first Gulf War;

Whereas more than 185,000 women have been deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other missions since 2001;

Whereas over 350 servicewomen have given their lives for the Nation in combat zones

since World War I, and more than 85 have been held as prisoners of war;

Whereas over 350,000 women serving in the Armed Forces make up approximately 15 percent of active duty personnel, 15 percent of Reserves, and 17 percent of the National Guard;

Whereas women are now playing an increasingly important role in America's military forces; and

Whereas the women of America's military, past and present, have served their Nation in times of peace and war, at great personal sacrifice for both themselves and their families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors and recognizes the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces;

(2) encourages all people in the United States to recognize the service and achievements of women in the military and female veterans on Memorial Day;

(3) encourages all people in the United States to learn about the history of service and achievements of women in the military; and

(4) supports groups that raise awareness about the service and achievements of women in the military and female veterans through exhibitions, museums, statues, and other programs and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days with which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, every time I visit military installations I am constantly impressed by the tremendous job our servicemembers are doing.

Today, I rise to pay special tribute to the women of America's military, past and present, who have served their Nation in peace and at war at great personal sacrifice for both themselves and their families.

With Veterans Day approaching, we should recognize that our servicewomen play an increasingly important role in America's modern military forces, and our country is the better for it.

As Chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel and co-Chair of the Women's Caucus Task Force on Women in the Military and Veterans, I am privileged to honor the legacy of servicewomen in the past, the courage with which women serve today, and the enthusiasm of the young women who dream of serving this great Nation in the future. Part of honoring them is asking

the tough questions about the expanding roles our servicewomen are taking on. We hear from women in the military, in person and through the media, about their contributions in combat zones and their willingness to risk their lives in defense of their fellow servicemembers, our country, and our families.

Last year, Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet a group of servicewomen that are an extraordinary example of what female servicemembers are capable of. Their mission is to provide culturally sensitive search and engagement activities for combat units deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are referred to as the Lionesses, and this is a very apt name. Like a lioness, their work demands a unique combination of sensitivity and strength on the ground, underlined by loyalty to their units and their country.

In my conversations with them, I was astounded by their work and their bravery. And yet, despite that dedication, these women have encountered difficulties in gaining proper recognition for their service, both within the services and in seeking assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

A recent article in the New York Times underscores this problem. Female veterans worry that their combat-related physical and psychological injuries will not be validated by a military system that defines combat as an all-male activity. Because the military and the VA have not adapted to the reality of women's roles, these veterans often have to work harder than they should to prove their eligibility for benefits and combat titles that they so greatly deserve. For example, servicewomen who volunteered to accompany units during the Battle of Fallujah in 2004 have had to rely on the support of an outside organization to get recognized for their work under fire so that they can receive health care and disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Yet, it's not just agencies that must catch up. Female veterans confront confusion and sometimes outright disbelief about their service from those of us on the homefront. This continuous demand for proof can be exasperating. They deserve better. One veteran explained that she no longer cared about getting money; she simply wanted a little more recognition. In her own words, "Just admit it happened."

Resolutions like this one today before the House help show support for women like the Lionesses and all of the other female servicemembers and veterans, but it is legislation like the National Defense Authorization Act that truly puts our congressional sentiments into action.

Last week, I had the chance to stand by the President as he signed the NDAA into law. Contained in the House report of that bill were provisions to better recognize the service of these courageous women by reviewing the way the additional duties some servicemembers perform are documented.

There were also provisions to ensure a systematic training program that takes into account the unique mission for which Lionesses have volunteered so that they feel just as equipped as their male counterparts when on active duty.

I will continue to work to ensure women in the military are treated equally and with respect, and that they receive all of the training, the support, and the services that they need. They certainly deserve nothing less.

The dedication of women in the Armed Forces and the insight they offer about it is invaluable, but they are adamant that they do not want to be treated differently. They do not seek special recognition, but their service is just as real as their counterparts'. This resolution recognizes the sacrifices our servicewomen and their families make to keep everyone's family safe.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to offer this resolution. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise, too, in support of House Resolution 868, which honors and recognizes the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces.

Throughout this great Nation's history, women have answered the call without hesitation to defend our democracy and freedom. Since colonial America, women have fought for our independence and have continued to serve with distinction in some capacity in every one of our Nation's conflicts. Before women were formally allowed to serve in the military, they served on the battlefields as nurses, water-bearers, cooks, and saboteurs.

Since 1901, when the Army Nurse Corps was established and formally granted women rank and military status, hundreds of thousands of women have served with honor in the Armed Forces. They have never shirked responsibility, shied away from tough jobs, or hesitated to go in harm's way; 34,000 women served in World War I, 400,000 in World War II, 120,000 in the Korean War, over 7,500 in Vietnam, and over 41,000 served in Desert Storm, the first Gulf War.

Today, over 350,000 women are serving in our Armed Forces. Over 190,000 have deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other unheard of troubled spots around the world to help rid the world of tyranny and terrorism. They serve on land, at sea, and in the air, performing the technically challenging and dangerous missions we hear of in the news, including pilots, military police, and convoy truck drivers.

These women, just like the men in our Armed Forces, are volunteers. They have always been volunteers. They have chosen to serve and chosen to make the sacrifices that are inher-

ent in military service. They endure long hours, long separations from loved ones, and the hardships and horrors of combat. These women have been wounded, imprisoned, and have paid the ultimate price for their devotion and duty to this great country.

It is without question that our military forces are unsurpassed. It is also undeniable that women have played a significant role in developing the extraordinarily capable military we are so proud of today.

□ 1545

Military women have been pioneers in computer science, space, undersea exploration, and medicine. Through their accomplishments, America has made great strides in technology, mathematics, and engineering.

Next week, as we take the time to remember our veterans, I ask that all Americans take a moment to thank the men and women who serve today and who have served our Armed Forces in the past. I strongly urge all Members to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding to me and for her great leadership on behalf of members of our Armed Forces and, in particular, the women.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 868, a resolution to honor women serving in our military and women veterans.

As co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, I am happy to be saluting the 350,000 hardworking, brave and dedicated women serving in our Armed Forces. I particularly want to say a special "thank you" to the 54,000 women veterans, living in my State of Illinois, for their commitment to our freedom.

Women have logged more than 170,000 tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan; 30,000 single mothers have served their country in those two wars. They have sacrificed time with their families, time from their careers here at home, and many have sacrificed their lives. It is only right that we recognize them in this Chamber today.

Year after year, we have seen the numbers of both women veterans and active duty members increase. Women are in leadership roles, and they have ascended to the highest ranks of our Armed Forces through hard work and often in the face of extreme opposition. We will continue to stand with them.

I am proud to stand in support of House Resolution 868. I urge my colleagues to support the thousands of women servicemembers and veterans by passing H. Res. 868.

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she might consume to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma (Ms. FALLIN). I want to say that she has been a welcomed and strong addition to the Armed Services Committee.

Ms. FALLIN. Madam Speaker, as a member of the Armed Services Committee and also as co-Chair of the Women's Congressional Caucus, I am very proud to support H. Res. 868, honoring the service and achievements of women in the Armed Forces and our female veterans.

With Veterans Day just around the corner, I know that many Americans will stop this week and will thank veterans in their families or in their communities. They may meet a young soldier back from a tour of duty in Iraq and will quietly thank God that they were born in a Nation where freedom is valued and where our ideals that we have fought for are still alive and well, or they may pause to remember a loved one who is no longer with us who proudly wore the uniform.

Today, it is becoming likely that a veteran may be a woman. While men still outnumber women in the Armed Forces, military service is no longer a career choice for men only. There are many to whom we must offer thanks who are women. We have had over 200,000 women in the military, serving in all five branches, in the National Guard and in the Reserves. These women are heroes and are role models for their willingness to step in harm's way. When women choose to serve their country, they prove that there is no profession and no honor out of the reach for women of America today.

As we have since the Revolution, women are playing a vital role in the defense of our Nation. Today, deployed in two different theaters and in every corner of the world, women have played a significant role in our victory and success; but as we remember their accomplishments, we must remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Since the United States went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, over 122 women in uniform have lost their lives in support of our ongoing operations. Their sacrifice and the sacrifice of their families is very painful, but it is a sacrifice of freedom.

When faced with such sadness, it is easy to feel only the loss. While it is our duty to mourn the fallen, it is also our duty to honor those who have served with dignity and who have returned to take their places back among society. Those women today have answered that call. They chose to serve in the military. They did so because they believed in America—in freedom and in the power of our American ideals—and they believed in the need to protect those ideals here and abroad.

Today, there are more women than ever choosing to serve our country. They are pilots; they are engineers; they are commanders of ships; they are military police; they are nurses. These transitions, by the way, have not come without controversy. We have, or are working through, many of them and are finding that women are bringing new and vital skill sets to today's modern military with courage and, certainly, with honor.

By supporting House Resolution 868, we can send a clear message to our women in the military and to our women veterans in all areas that your service is not forgotten, that we honor and respect you and that we appreciate your courage, your patriotism, and your sacrifice. Today, we recognize that service.

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, it has really been an honor to present this resolution today.

I was recalling the trip that we last made to Kandahar, Afghanistan. We had an opportunity to meet with about 40-plus, maybe 50, women there in all of the different services, just asking them about why they were there and about why they joined the service. The kind of work they were doing was truly inspiring; and, of course, they always wanted to tell us about their children, who were at home.

These women are providing a tremendous service to our country. We honor them, and I certainly encourage and know that all of my colleagues will be supporting this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my support for H. Res. 868 and to request that the following exchange of letters regarding this resolution be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, October 28, 2009.

Hon. IKE SKELTON,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, House
of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On October 23, 2009, H. Res. 868, "Honoring and recognizing the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces," was introduced in the House of Representatives. This measure was sequentially referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs recognizes the importance of H. Res. 868 and the need to move this resolution expeditiously in order to honor the current and former female members of the Armed Forces. Therefore, while we have valid jurisdictional claims to this resolution, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs will waive further consideration of H. Res. 868. The Committee does so with the understanding that by waiving further consideration of this resolution it does not waive any future jurisdictional claims over similar measures.

I would appreciate the inclusion of this letter and a copy of your response in the Congressional Record during consideration of H. Res. 868 on the House floor.

Sincerely,

BOB FILNER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, November 2, 2009.

Hon. BOB FILNER,
Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding House Resolution 868, "Honoring and recognizing the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces." This meas-

ure was referred to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

I agree that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has certain valid jurisdictional claims to this resolution, and I appreciate your decision to waive further consideration of H. Res. 868 in the interest of expediting consideration of this important measure. I agree that by agreeing to waive further consideration, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs is not waiving its jurisdictional claims over similar measures in the future.

During consideration of this measure on the House floor, I will ask that this exchange of letters be included in the Congressional Record.

Very truly yours,

IKE SKELTON,
Chairman.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today in support of H. Res. 868, "Honoring and recognizing the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces." I would like to thank my colleague, Representative DAVIS, for introducing this resolution.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues I think that it is important to recognize our sisters in uniform. Today over 350,000 women serving in the Armed Forces make up approximately 15 percent of active duty personnel, 15 percent of Reserves, and 17 percent of the National Guard. Women are often overlooked and underappreciated in the military even though women are and have historically been an important part of all United States war efforts, voluntarily serving in every military conflict in United States history since the Revolutionary War.

The first American woman soldier was Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts. She enlisted as a Continental Army soldier under the name of "Robert Shurtliff." She served for 3 years in the Revolutionary War and was wounded twice; she cut a musket ball out of her own thigh so no doctor would find out she was a woman. Finally, at the end of the hostilities her secret was discovered—even so, George Washington gave her an honorable discharge. She later lectured on her experiences and became a champion of women's rights.

The Woman's Army Auxiliary Corps was established in the United States in 1941. However, political pressures stalled the attempts to create more roles for women in the American Armed Forces. Women saw combat during World War II, first as nurses in the Pearl Harbor attacks on December 7, 1941. The Woman's Naval Reserve and Marine Corps Women's Reserve were also created during this conflict. In July 1943 a bill was signed removing "auxiliary" from the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, making it an official part of the regular army. In 1944 the Women's Army Corps, WAC, arrived in the Pacific and landed in Normandy on D-day. During the war, 67 Army nurses and 16 Navy nurses were captured and spent 3 years as Japanese prisoners of war. There were more than 350,000 American women who served during World War II and 16 were killed in action; in total, they gained over 1,500 medals, citations, and commendations.

Women are now playing an increasingly important role in America's military forces; more

than 185,000 women have been deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other missions since 2001.

Today, women can serve on American combat ships, including in command roles. Female enlisted members and officers can hold staff positions in every branch of the Army except infantry and armor, although they can in fact serve on the staffs of infantry and armor units at division level and above, and be members of Special Operations Forces. Women can fly military aircraft and make up 2 percent of all pilots in the U.S. military.

However, women are still limited solely due to gender. Women are not permitted to serve on submarines or to participate in Special Forces programs such as Navy SEALs. Women enlisted soldiers are barred from serving in Infantry, Special Forces, Artillery, Armor, and Air Defense Artillery. So far the positions closest to combat open to women in the U.S. Army are in the Military Police, where women operate machine-guns on armored Humvees, guarding truck convoys. Although Army regulations bar women from infantry assignments, some female MPs are detailed to accompany male infantry units to handle search and interrogation of Iraqi suspects.

I urge my colleagues and all Americans to honor and recognize the service and achievements of current and former female members of the Armed Forces. Over 350 servicewomen have given their lives for the Nation in combat zones since World War I, and more than 85 have been held as prisoners of war; 34,000 women served in World War I, 350,000 served in World War II, 120,000 served in the Korean war, over 7,000 served in the Vietnam war, and more than 41,000 served in the first gulf war.

Madam Speaker, the women of America's military, past and present, have served their Nation in times of peace and war, at great personal sacrifice for both themselves and their families. I hope that this Congress will recognize the service and achievements of women in the military.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 868.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

CONGRATULATING FIRST UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY GRADUATION CLASS ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution