

Public Law 117–357
117th Congress

An Act

To designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Anchorage, Alaska, as the “Colonel Mary Louise Rasmuson Campus of the Alaska VA Healthcare System”, and for other purposes.

Jan. 5, 2023
[S. 5016]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Colonel Mary Louise Rasmuson Campus of the Alaska VA Healthcare System Act of 2022”.

Colonel Mary
Louise Rasmuson
Campus of the
Alaska VA
Healthcare
System Act of
2022.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

- (1) Mary Louise (Milligan) Rasmuson was born April 11, 1911, in East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- (2) Mary Louise received a Bachelor of Science degree from the Carnegie Institute of Technology and a Master of Education degree from the University of Pittsburgh.
- (3) Mary Louise was one of the first two women to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Laws degree from the Carnegie Institute of Technology.
- (4) In 1942, Mary Louise joined the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps as a Private and was in the first graduating class.
- (5) Mary Louise worked up the ranks, and in 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower appointed Mary Louise as the Fifth Director of the Women’s Army Corps and she was reappointed to this position by President John F. Kennedy in 1961.
- (6) In 1962, Colonel Rasmuson retired from the Army.
- (7) Colonel Rasmuson was recognized for her outstanding service in the Women’s Army Corps with the Legion of Merit award with two Oak Leaf Clusters for her work in expanding the roles and duties of women in the Army, as well as her role in integrating Black women in the Women’s Army Corps.
- (8) Colonel Rasmuson became Director of the Women’s Army Corps during tumultuous times and is credited with enhancing the image and recruitment of women into the Women’s Army Corps during her years as the Director.
- (9) Colonel Rasmuson expanded opportunities for women to serve in assignments previously reserved only for men, starting with the assignments of 12 enlisted women into the First Missile Master Unit at Fort Meade, Maryland.
- (10) Colonel Rasmuson was instrumental in enabling women to be promoted above the grade of E–7 into the highest enlisted ranks of the Army, E–8 and E–9.

(11) During her time in the Women's Army Corps, Colonel Rasmuson was the guiding force behind the Army opening up the college enlistment option to women under the self-enhancement programs and witnessed the first female enlisted member attend college under those programs.

(12) The career of Colonel Rasmuson also laid the groundwork for women to be fully integrated into the United States Army when the Women's Army Corps was disbanded in 1978.

(13) In 1961, Mary Louise married a prominent leader in Alaska, Elmer E. Rasmuson, and she was the first Director of the Women's Army Corps to be married while serving in that position.

(14) After her retirement from military service in 1962, Mary Louise moved to Alaska where she continued her leadership as a veteran in her community in Alaska.

(15) Mary Louise served as First Lady of Anchorage after the devastating magnitude 9.2 earthquake in 1964, after her husband, Elmer, was elected as mayor, serving from 1964 to 1967.

(16) Mary Louise was an advocate of social justice, education, and the arts during her 45 years of work on the Board of the Rasmuson Foundation.

(17) Mary Louise served as the Honorary Chair and was a major founder to renovate the Anchorage Veterans Memorial on the Delaney Parkstrip in downtown Anchorage.

(18) Mary Louise also contributed to the Army Women's Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the National Museum of the United States Army.

(19) Mary Louise was the Chair of the Anchorage Museum Foundation and helped establish the museum in Anchorage, serving as its Chair for 21 years.

(20) On July 30, 2012, Mary Louise died at her home in Anchorage, at the age of 101, but her legacy of character and leadership will endure as an example to all who serve in the United States military.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF COLONEL MARY LOUISE RASMUSON CAMPUS OF THE ALASKA VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Anchorage, Alaska, shall, after the date of the enactment of this Act, be known and designated as the “Colonel Mary Louise Rasmuson Campus of the Alaska VA Healthcare System”.

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the medical center referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Colonel Mary Louise Rasmuson Campus of the Alaska VA Healthcare System.

Approved January 5, 2023.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 5016:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 168 (2022):

Dec. 6, considered and passed Senate.

Dec. 21, considered and passed House.

