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Mr. Shimkus: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary group of women whom I had the privilege to serve beside at the US Military Academy at West Point.

In 1976, the US Military Academy at West Point went through a remarkable transformation. For the first time, 119 women joined the men of the incoming class. Of these women, sixty-two - a little more than half - persevered to graduation in 1980 and were commissioned Lieutenants in the US Army. The women in that first class have upheld the high ideals of the Academy, advancing to become a Brigadier General training Afghanistan troops to take over their own security, a Senior Executive (general-officer equivalent) in the GSA, a Rhodes Scholar and co-founder of Casebook, or a breast cancer survivor and Masters World Record holder in cycling. The barriers broken by the Class of 1980 and the standards set by them are echoed in the success of women military leaders in Afghanistan and Iraq today.

Today the Army Women's Foundation inducts these proud women into their Hall of Fame. I join my colleagues in expressing our gratitude to the women of the 1980 graduating class at the US Military Academy at West Point for leading the way into a new, brighter era in military education.