

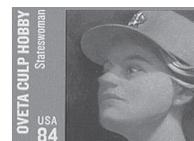
This Day in History... January 19, 1905

Birth of Oveta Culp Hobby

Oveta Culp Hobby was born on January 19, 1905, in Killeen, Texas.

Hobby's father was a lawyer and legislator who gave her an interest in politics and law from an early age. After graduating from high school, she attended Mary Hardin Baylor College for Women and took law classes at South Texas College of Law and Commerce and the University of Texas Law School. Hobby didn't complete any of these programs or earn a degree.

In 1925, Hobby was hired as a parliamentarian in the Texas House of Representatives. Over the next few years she also started working on her husband's Houston newspaper, *The Post*. Hobby even wrote a book about her experiences in the Texas legislature, *Mr. Chairman*.



This stamp was issued in the Distinguished Americans Series in 2011.

During World War II, Hobby became the director of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, created to remedy severe labor shortages caused by men serving in the war effort. Its members, who were the first women other than nurses to be in Army uniform, helped the US meet the industrial demands needed to win the war.



This 1952 stamp pictures women in the uniforms of the Marines, Army, Navy, and Air Corps.

Hobby's first priority was recruiting women to serve as clerical workers, teachers, stenographers, and telephone operators. Every woman she recruited would "free a man for combat." As Hobby explained, "The gaps our women will fill are in those noncombatant jobs where women's hands and women's hearts fit naturally.

WAACs will do the same type of work which women do in civilian life. They will bear the same relation to men of the Army that they bear to the men of the civilian organizations in which they work." Although she "never did learn to salute properly or master the 30-inch stride," Colonel Oveta Hobby became the first woman in the Army to receive the Distinguished Service Medal.



This stamp was issued for the opening of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in 1997.

After World War II, President Dwight Eisenhower made Hobby head of the Federal Security Agency. Then in 1953, he named Hobby the first secretary of the new Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. This marked the second time in her career that Hobby was responsible for organizing a new government agency. Among her notable achievements, Hobby personally made the decision to approve Jonas Salk's polio vaccine.



Salk's vaccine was declared safe for use in April 1955.

Hobby resigned her position in 1955 to care for her ailing husband. She returned to working as president and editor of the *Houston Post* and served on a variety of boards and advisory panels for civic and business organizations around the country. Hobby also received 17 honorary doctoral degrees from American universities. In 1960, she was one of the first women considered for a US presidential candidacy by an incumbent president – Dwight Eisenhower encouraged her to run, but she chose not to.

Hobby died on August 16, 1995. A library and dormitory in Texas are named after her, as well as an elementary school and a service award of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

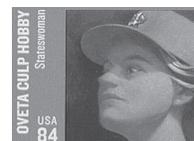
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