

Women's History Month President's Message



Dear Members of the Women in Defense Picatinny Chapter,

As we embrace the vibrant spirit of Women's History Month, it is with great honor and reverence that I extend my heartfelt greetings to each and every one of you. This month, we pay homage to the indomitable spirit and unwavering resolve of women who have tirelessly advocated for equity, diversity, and inclusion in every aspect of society.

The theme for this year's ***Women's History Month, "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion,"*** resonates profoundly with the core values that define Women in Defense (WID) and our chapter. It serves as a powerful reminder of the remarkable achievements and contributions made by women throughout history, who have championed the cause of equality and strived to create a more inclusive and just world for all.

In commemorating this theme, we honor the trailblazers who have paved the way for progress and inspires generations to come. From the courageous suffragists who fought tirelessly for women's right to vote, the fearless civil rights activists who challenged systemic discrimination and oppression, and the numerous scientists, technology, engineering and math (STEM) professionals that have always been at the forefront of transformational change.

When I joined the Army Research Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC) in the Fire Support Armament Center (FSAC) at Picatinny Arsenal many years ago as an Engineer in the Artillery Division, "there was no one there that looked like or had the same skills as me." Only one of the seven women in the Division was an Engineer or Technical professional. Many of may ask, Why Does this Matter? Highlighting the culture, differences, a uniqueness of an organization fosters innovation and creativity that can lead to a wide range of benefits that ultimately contributes to an organization's success. We valued diversity back then and enhanced

the potential outcomes of our mission and products before making informed decisions. We used diversity of thought, our knowledge and experience to maximize the opportunity that allowed our leadership team to see all sides of a situation before rushing to take action. Recognizing these qualities led to increased morale and engagement. And as a result, we developed some of the best munitions the Department has that continues to be used today. And you know what, that job was the most enjoyable one of my DoD career.

In our chapter, we are privileged to stand alongside some extraordinary women who embody the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in their everyday lives. From advocating for gender parity in the armed forces to promoting inclusive policies within our communities, each of you plays a pivotal role in advancing our shared mission of empowerment and equality.

From our administrative colleagues, to STEM professionals, the industry partners and the several managers and executives; we've listened and learned from each other to create an equitable workplace. We've embraced fresh, innovative perspectives in our organizations, from our teams and in those high-level meetings. A culture was created where everyone is appreciated, empowered, feels safe and welcome, and can bring their authentic selves to work.

This nation has made a lot of progress in the area of diversity and inclusion. And, we have a lot more work to do. Our journey continues. Women are speaking up! So, as we celebrate Women's History Month, let us recommit ourselves to the enduring the pursuit of not letting someone walk alone and embrace equality for all. Let us amplify the voices of all women; elevate diverse perspectives, and dismantle barriers that hinder progress and opportunity. Together, we have the power to create a more inclusive and equitable society where every woman and girl can thrive and succeed.

In the spirit of unity and solidarity, let us continue to march forward with courage, compassion, and conviction. Together, we can build a brighter future for generations of women in defense yet to come. I invite you to join me in acknowledging the significant contributions of women in our history and our chapter, celebrate the progress we've made by honoring the achievements of women in this era.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and commitment to our WID Picatinny mission and values. May this Women's History Month inspire us all to be catalysts for change and advocates of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dion Serben
President, Women in Defense Picatinny Chapter