

Valley District Conference 11/05/2022

## Opening

Good Morning Sisters, my name is Mari Page and I am your California State Chaplain and I am pleased to be with you this morning “*Stepping Into The Future*” with our State President Rosena Kruley.

Next week two important events occur. These events Veterans Day and Election Day are important because they remind us of the Freedom and Privileges we gain being Americans through the efforts and sacrifices of others.

As we are an organization of women, I want to spend a few moments talking about women in regards to these special days.

First, I will start with Election Day on November 8. We all know the struggles and facts of the women’s suffrage movement. The movement that resulted in getting women the right to vote. In 1920, the 19th Amendment was passed and women could vote for the first time in American history.

But, do you know the fact about why Election Day is on a Tuesday? Tuesday was chosen originally so voters could attend church services on Sunday. The next day on Monday they were then able to travel to the location of the polling place which was often at the county seat and could be a distance from where they lived. Voting could then be accomplished on Tuesday which gave the farmers time to take their products to market to sell on Wednesday. I imagine in those early days when the men went off to vote the responsibilities fell on the women to tend to the farms. Travel was slow in the early days of our country but, wanting to vote was important to many and worth traveling for even if it meant leaving their families behind.

When I was reading about Veterans Day I found some interesting facts about women veterans and women who served in wars.

Did you know that there have been over 2.2 million women veterans that have served in our country's military.

Throughout our country's history women have served in conflicts and wars even doing so at times when it was illegal for them to participate. Women enlisted in the military using men's names, volunteering and helping in any way that they could during the Revolutionary War. The first such woman, Deborah Simpson, joined the Continental Army in 1781. She disguising herself as Robert Shurtliff, a man. It wasn't until August 13, 1918 that the first recognized enlistee, Opha May Jacob was allowed to join the Marine Corps as World War I raged on. During that time women were given clerical roles so that the men could be sent overseas into combat.

Women joining the military became more acceptable during the passing years. During World War II over 500,000 women were in uniform. They acted in supportive roles to the men. Although not part of the military, Woman Air Service Pilots called WASP, flew all types of aircraft from fighters to bombers. They transported these critical aircraft to fighting positions as needed. After much controversy in the years after World War II in 1977, well after the WASP program was disbanded, they were recognized as veterans. During each succeeding war more and more women served in noncombat roles and became veterans. It wasn't until 2013, that women were allowed in combat positions. However, just being allowed into the military does not mean that the women were, or are, always accepted by their male counterparts or recognized for their achievements

Women veterans and their important service to our country is often overlooked by their communities and even by institutions created to support veterans. This Veterans Day we need to remember all veterans, male or female, who have given their time, energy and even their lives for our Freedom as Americans.

## Closing

Today at the Valley Conference we have enjoyed visiting, having a meal together, and listening to informative speakers. We have reconnected with our wonderful organization and our fellow sisters. As we leave today and “*Step Into The Future*” we will remember the privileges and freedom we have as Americans that many others in the world don’t have. We know as citizens the importance of voting in our elections but, It is also important for us to continue to remember the service and sacrifices that our Armed Forces and veterans have made and are continuing to make. This service allows us to have the freedom in our country we know and expect.