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DEFENSE HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY
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**MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS**

SUBJECT: 2021 Women's Equality Day

The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes August 26, 2021, as Women's Equality Day. On this day, we celebrate the ratification of women's suffrage in the U.S. as well as the heroes who faced violence and discrimination to propel the women's voting rights movement forward. It is a major milestone still celebrated in the women's rights movement today.

This year's theme is "*Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to be Silenced.*" DoD recognizes the 19th Amendment that serves as a reminder to continue pursuing gender equality. As an employer of choice, DoD is committed to ensure we create an environment for all women to serve freely and safely. We embrace diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and acknowledge our commitment to afford women the opportunities to represent our nation as role models, mentors, and lead at the highest levels within the Department.

Equality has not come easily for women. Many sacrificed and excelled, in spite of the barriers they experienced to become the first to receive the same recognition as their male counterparts. General (Retired) Ann E. Dunwoody, the first woman to serve as a four-star General in both the Army and the U.S. Armed Forces; Sgt. Danyell E. Wilson, the first black woman sentinel at the Tomb of the Unknowns; Army veteran Mitchelene BigMan (Apsáalooke [Crow]/Hidatsa), who served on the first all-female Native Color Guard; and Tech4 Carmen Contreras-Bozak, the first Hispanic American to serve in the Women's Army Corps, represent a small sampling of the best that the nation has to offer. Each of these women, and so many unnamed others, pushed against old, outdated, and gender-based barriers; earned honor and distinction; and have showcased their excellence as equal partners who earned their positions based on capability and character, not gender. We are a stronger force because of their service.

As we celebrate this year's Women's Equality Day, please make it a point to recognize the many women in uniform and civil servants who continue to lead the way. As one force, we must stand together and acknowledge that inequality and discrimination against our women colleagues is antithetical to our core values. For more information on Women's Equality Day, I encourage you to visit: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Human-Relations-Toolkit/Special-Observances/#womens-equality-day>.

Clarence A. Johnson
Director