SHE SERVED
MAGAZINE
Celebrating Women Veterans



11 WOMEN VETERANS SHARING THEIR STORIES FROM TEGA CAY

BREAKING BARRIERS: A HISTORICAL JOURNEY OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

BELONGING BEYOND SERVICE: TEGA CAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION FOSTERS CAMARADERIE, CONNECTION, AND CONTINUED PURPOSE
- BY ANGE KESKEY

TEGA CAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Fourth Issue Special Edition:

TEGA CAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION, JANUARY 2024



VA Resources for Women

DON'T WAIT ANOTHER DAY TO CALL AND ASK FOR HELP.



Women Veterans Call Center:
855-VA-WOMEN

Veteran Crisis Hotline:
988 (press 1)

Caregiver Support Line:
855-260-3274

VA Benefits Hotline:
1-800-827-1000

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Julie Miller helps Veteran Suzanne Jamison get ready for her photography session at Tega Cay.

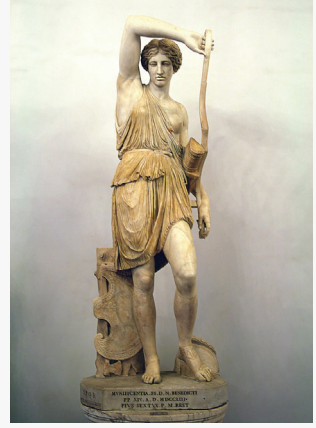
BREAKING BARRIERS: A HISTORICAL JOURNEY OF WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

Read the entire article by She Served Magazine Editor, Martina Schmidt on page 32. The links below are source references from the story.

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EDITORIAL STAFF

MANAGING EDITOR & PHOTOGRAPHER
Martina Schmidt

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Kimberly Mortson

EXECUTIVE EDITORS
Martina Schmidt, Bill Bean, Sheryl Binetti, Ange Keskey and Julie Miller

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR
Ange Keskey

CONNECT WITH US

WEBSITE
www.sheservedinitiative.org

EMAIL SUBMISSIONS
martina@sheservedinitiative.org

FACEBOOK
@SheServedcelebratingwomenveterans

INSTAGRAM
@She.served

HOST A VETERAN PHOTO SHOOT



To host a **She Served** event visit the website: www.sheservedinitiative.org.

General criteria: The space needs to be indoors, and approximately 20x20' in size, with at least an 8' ceiling height (preferably 10') with electrical outlets.

Photoshoot Details: Photoshoots are reserved for female veterans only. Each Veteran will get a 30-minute professional photoshoot. They can bring props or mementos to be used during the session.

As the host you should be aware that each Veteran that wants to participate will need to fill out an intake form of basic information, provide a short biography of their military career and post military life, and provide a clear photo of themselves in uniform (their official service photo is best, but other photos of them in uniform are acceptable if it is clear and in focus so that their face is recognizable). I can comfortably accommodate approximately 10 women a day if the timeslots are scheduled in advance.

Expenses: I do not charge the Veteran or the host a photoshoot fee. However, as you can imagine I do have expenses. I ask the host to provide suitable lodging, air fare and/or reimbursement for gas, and my meals during the photoshoot. Visit **https://sheservedinitiative.org/host-she-served** for all the details then contact us to be a host!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



The *She Served Initiative* marked the conclusion of 2023 with a photo shoot hosted by the Tega Cay Veterans Association (TCVA) in Tega Cay, South Carolina. As things go within the close-knit military community, a friend from my time in service connected me with **Ange Keske**, whom he had shared a chapter of his military time with as well. Ange, the secretaryt of the Tega Cay Veterans Association and I reached out to each other, and we immediately recognized our common interest of raising awareness for women veterans. With 100 percent support from the TCVA President Andrew "AC" Williams, a decision was quickly reached to put on a two-day photo shoot in conjunction with Tega Cay's Veterans celebration. The overarching objective was to "shake things up" and actively encourage more women to join the organization, fostering inclusivity and recognition within the Veteran community.

The team of the She Served Initiative had the privilege of meeting 11 remarkable women veterans representing the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy, each sharing their unique and inspiring stories. From dedicated stay-at-home moms to enterprising entrepreneurs and avid volunteers, the diverse range of women showcased that there is truly no stereotypical image of a female Veteran. As featured veteran Corey Greenfield expressed, "There is no stereotypical female service member image, such as the short military haircut that men often wear. We embody the kind grandmother, the soccer mom, the business professional, or the artist — we take on many forms."



Andrew "AC" Williams and Ange truly made our time in Tega Cay unforgettable. We felt honored to serve as guest speakers and had the opportunity to meet the dedicated Veterans of TCVA, as well as the supportive citizens within the Tega Cay Community.

As always, as you read the stories of these incredible women, we hope you'll find inspiration in their resilience, dedication, and enduring commitment to making as positive impact on the world.

Martina Schmidt

BEHIND THE LENS:

It takes a village, or a "squad" in this case to put together a magazine. We bring you a sneak peek of the work in progress. Thank you to everyone that supports our storytelling mission.









SISTERS IN SERVICE

Robin and Rebecca's remarkable friendship

Robin and Rebecca's friendship began at the VA in Columbia, South Carolina, in 2015, where they both worked as staff members – Robin as a Speech Language Pathologist and Rebecca as a newly hired Audiologist. United by their military backgrounds, shared experiences of navigating family challenges, and a myriad of other commonalities, they quickly formed a deep connection. They not only share a strong friendship but also a professional camaraderie, working together to serve veterans. Despite their seemingly different backgrounds as an Army officer and enlisted Marine, they've found a perfect balance, understanding and complementing each other's "brand of crazy."

Robin about Rebecca:

"What I love about Rebecca: She loves BIG and doesn't mind letting it show. She has true compassion for everyone. She is also hilarious and can be counted on to crack a silly joke or make a random comment to break the stress in any situation. She is also comfortable being vulnerable, which is a rare trait in leaders. No matter what we do, we have fun because she makes the best of every shenanigan we find ourselves in. One day, we will start that podcast she keeps talking about to share our wild work stories!"





Rebecca about Robin:

"What I love about Robin: she's never satisfied with status quo and is visionary in everything she does. She doesn't just show up to work or just show up for a social event - she's got a plan ready to roll out for everything. While this may seem intimidating, she manages to be one of the most thoughtful women anyone could hope to have in their lives. I really want to be like her when I grow up!

Robin Ledford (above left) and her partner in crime, Rebecca Wyrwas.

Robin

Robin Ledford initially joined the United States Marine Corps to play in the band, she quickly realized that her passion lay elsewhere. After requesting a change in her Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), she became a small arms repair specialist. Her primary duty was attached to a helicopter squadron at Marine Corps Air Station, New River, North Carolina, where she played a vital role in supporting combat readiness and training through weapons maintenance and repair.

Robin's military journey took a significant turn when she volunteered to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). During this deployment, she served at a forward detachment, conducting surveillance in preparation for the initial declaration of war in Iraq. Robin's exemplary performance led to her being awarded a Certificate of Commendation for deterring a potential threat to their perimeter and the Jordanian air base they were supporting.

Robin's military journey was not without its challenges. She faced a traumatic incident while deployed and struggled with depression upon her return to her home unit. Seeking help, she learned the importance of resiliency and self-advocacy. Prioritizing her well-being ultimately led to the decision to leave the military.

Today, Robin is happily married and the proud mother of four children, including two natural-born children and two bonus children. She is a supervisory speech-language pathologist at the VA, where she works with other veterans to address speech, language, cognition, voice, and swallowing issues.

In addition to her work at the VA, Robin is a licensed pyrotechnician. She volunteers her time and expertise to organizations like Fidelis Family Retreat, where she teaches a special class on sensitivity to fireworks and loud noises to help veterans and their families reconnect with fireworks.

Robin loves spending time outdoors, engaging in activities like hiking, camping, blackwater kayaking, and SCUBA diving. She also enjoys crochet, listening to podcasts, and reading books.

Robin emphasizes the growing presence of women veterans in the workforce and their unique qualities, such as resilience, adaptability, and leadership skills. Women Veterans, she says, put others first but never settle for mediocrity.

When offering wisdom to fellow women transitioning to civilian life, Robin emphasizes the importance of self-care and self-advocacy. She believes that by focusing on their own well-being and advocating for their needs, women Veterans ultimately support their families and themselves in the long run.





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me?"
~ Ayn Rand





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"Not all of us can do great things, but we can all do small things with great love."
~ Mother Teresa

Rebecca

Rebecca Wyrwas served in the United States Army for 13 years as an audiologist (hearing doctor), a profession that she practiced prior to enlisting. After she began her military career, the Army trained her to be a preventive medicine officer, educating Soldiers on how crucial their hearing and good communications are to successful operations, especially in battle. Stationed at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the Army's largest Initial Training Center Post, she conducted countless briefings and fitted thousands of earplugs, helping to safeguard soldiers' hearing during and after their military service. Her service was during the Global War on Terrorism, and she received multiple medals including the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Reserve Achievement Medal.

Rebecca's most significant takeaways from her service was that "every single job in the military is crucial to its success - every single one," and "success is taking care of brothers and sisters to your right and left, and leading from the front."

After her military career, she began working for the VA and is currently the VA's Chief of Audiology and Speech Pathology for the Columbia, South Carolina VA Health Care System. In this role, she oversees daily hospital operations and care delivery in community based outpatient clinics, leading a team of 16 healthcare providers and seven health technicians.

Beyond her professional life, Rebecca is married to Ray, a retired Army Combat Medic, and they have a blended family of five children, a son-in-law, and three grandchildren. She enjoys supporting her family's activities and describes herself as a "professional band mom, gymnastics mom, and softball grandma."

Time with her family is treasured and she and knows that her military background taught her to realize how precious and short that time is.

With respect to women Veterans, Rebecca asks the public to "please not forget about us. We each had our own reasons for volunteering, and we've all paid some price to have the title Veteran."

For her fellow women Veterans she offers this advice: instead of allowing the civilian world to shock or disappoint you, take pride in your service and appreciate the impact you've had on the it.





Angela

Angela Keskey served in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserve from August 1994 to November 2014 as an Air Force Public Affairs Officer (PAO) and United States Air Force Academy Admission Liaison Officer. As an Air Force PAO, she was essential in ensuring transparency, maintaining a positive public image, and effectively communicating the Air Force's mission and activities to various audiences.

As a United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) Admissions Officer, Angela was responsible for helping identify and recruit potential candidates for admission into the academy. She participated in operations: Desert Shield, Restore Hope, Uphold Democracy, Vigilant Warrior, Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Desert Thunder, Desert Fox, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Her most significant take away was the relationships and stories from people uniting as one to stand up for our nation. Every assignment, temporary duty and interaction she had introduced her to America's heroes.

Angela has been married to Justin for nearly 18 years. Together, they have explored three continents together while raising their two kids. Currently Angela is a full time mom and serves on both the Tega Cay Women's Club and the Tega Cay Veterans Association executive boards. She is a contributing member of both kids' school Ci3T teams and she assists the advancements team for BSA Troop 250.

Angela enjoys reading, making her house a home and experiencing new cultures. Most importantly she loves raising her children to love the Lord and to become good contributing members of the communities they live in.

To the uninformed public, Angela wants you to know that, "Women Veterans are all around you! We are leading companies, managing families, teaching others, serving you, feeding you, and assisting you. We are proud of our service but you'll probably have to ask us questions to learn about all we've seen and accomplished."

For her fellow Veterans, Angela wants you to recognize and celebrate your strength, resilience, and the unique experiences that being a woman Veteran has given you. Remember the challenges you have overcome and the valuable skills you have learned. These can be applied to various aspects of your life. Your service has equipped you with valuable skills that can contribute to your success in civilian life. Don't be afraid to share them with others! Our stories matter.







WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's dedication to a cause greater than oneself."

~ Viktor Frankl

WRITTEN BY ANGE KESKEY, TEGA CAY VETERANS ASSOCIATION SECRETARY
LIEUTENANT COLONEL UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, RETIRED



BELONGING BEYOND SERVICE: TCVA FOSTERS CAMARADERIE, CONNECTION AND PURPOSE

Change is hard, don't you agree? I remember telling people the thing I loved most about being an Air Force Public Affairs Officer was that I could have my entire day planned and a phone call at 0800 hrs could change it all! I'm sure many of you experienced similar experiences in everyday life both in and outside of your military service.



I was thinking about this edition of She Served Magazine and what the Tega Cay Veterans Association could offer a wider audience and I settled on the idea of how connection to others gives a sense of belonging. It's been found through research that when we feel like we belong somewhere, change can be easier to navigate. So I'd like to start by asking a question, where do you belong?

My family moved to Tega Cay a short two and a half years ago. When we settled on this place, I started contacting different social organizations to help us start "fitting in" not knowing that what I was searching for was a sense of having a place I belonged. One of those organizations was the Tega Cay Veterans Association.

Now, I don't know about you, but throughout my military career I became pretty comfortable being the youngest and usually the only female in the room. It's hard to feel like you belong in that situation however, I never let it stop me from doing my job. Today, my job is making our town, our family's home. I do that by belonging and impacting the city to the best of my ability through serving others, connecting with others and getting to know our neighbors.

There is a lot of research, like MIT's Professor Dr. Maithreyi Gopalan's, which proves that when we feel like we belong somewhere the impact of change is lessened and our experience is richer, a lot of the negative sides of transitions are dimmed. This opinion was supported by research Ph.D. Kelly-Ann Allen, a senior lecturer at Monash University, and Dr. Peggy Kern, an associate professor at the Centre for Positive Psychology at the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education. Allen and Kern concluded that human connections are important across our lifespans. They begin early, constantly evolve, and extend through old age. They are impacted internally through human development, externally through changing social landscapes, and are dynamically impacted by interactions with and responses from others.

If life in the military is anything, it is made up of the two things we're talking about today: change and the sense of belonging. Perhaps the biggest change service members experience is that between military and civilian life at the end of a term of service, or career. While transitions will always bring opportunities and challenges with them, I have found when there is a feeling of belonging to a group or place those changes are manageable and often welcomed.

For many veterans, the sense of camaraderie and shared experience that defined their time in the military becomes a cherished but elusive aspect of the past. Built in friendships like those in a military unit, often feel like a thing of the past. However, at the heart of this journey, veteran organizations specifically can emerge as beacons of connection, understanding, and support.

These organizations can become our story of belonging — a narrative woven by the mutual threads of service, sacrifice, and the profound bond that unites those who have donned the uniform. Inside the halls of a veteran organization, the echoes of military service transform into a harmonious symphony of shared stories, laughter, and the unwavering spirit of those who continue to serve their community long after their time in uniform has ended.

"These organizations are important because the life of a veteran is unlike any other," said Kia Ford, a retired U.S. Naval Chief Petty Officer. "We need someone and somewhere to turn to when we are feeling down, empty, alone. No one in the civilian community can fill that like another veteran. My veteran friends help me through some things they don't even know they help me through. Our similar lifestyles are what bonds us, forever."

"My goal as commander is to ensure members are educated about their health and mental wellbeing benefits; to encourage them to seek support from the county Veterans Affairs office and Veterans Administration, their community and any establishment that cares about them and their families," said First Sergeant A.C. Williams, U.S. Army retired, and the commander of the Tega Cay Veterans Association in Tega Cay, S.C. "I also want to foster a group that cares and understands veterans, that will listen, lend a hand or make an effort to help each other and our families through good or difficult situations."

The Tega Cay Veterans Association is fairly young, yet not unlike the Veterans of Foreign Wars or American Veterans and other veteran groups in its mission. It was designed to preserve and strengthen comradeship between its members, assist members as needed, maintain a true allegiance to the government and to remain a non-profit organization that benefits its community.

So, if you couldn't answer the question, where do I belong, and are looking for:

CAMARADERIE AND CONNECTION
MENTAL HEALTH + WELL-BEING RESOURCES
UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT

INFORMATION AND ADVICE
ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND IMPACT
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Or a sense of continued service or purpose please consider joining other veterans, young and old. Realize that they too may need to grow or change as you influence them as much as they influence you and show each other some grace because everyone needs to belong somewhere.



WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"Dig deep ... don't quit ... Share your glory with your shipmates ... you didn't get there alone."

Avia

Avia Boudreaux served in the United States Navy for 22 years. She started her journey in aviation training and later transitioned to become a criminal investigator. Her responsibilities included physical security, criminal investigations, personal protection assignments, security officer, corrections, drug screening/testing, customs officer, traffic court judge, and Chief Navy Absentee/Deserter Collection Officer. She earned several commendations, including two Overseas Service ribbons, Pistol Sharpshooter and Rifle Expert medals, and two Navy Commendation medals.

One of the most significant takeaways from her military service was the realization that she not only had to meet the standards of her job, but also exceed the expectations set for her male counterparts. She attributes her success in accomplishing her goals to determination and hard work. Her message is clear: "HARD WORK PAYS OFF!"

Avia, her wife, Laura, and their fur baby Maddie Lou currently reside in Easley, South Carolina. Avia jokingly considers herself a "Ragin Cajun" from Acadiana, Louisiana, her wife, Laura, is from New Orleans. They love that they can now enjoy lower humidity and more seasonal weather. Since retiring from the Navy, Avia finds solace in her retirement, taking on responsibilities in her yard and garage.

Today, she remains active in supporting the military and veteran community. She is a lifetime member of the Fleet Reserve Association Branch 15 in Oconee County South Carolina, and is involved in several local veteran groups, including Women Veterans of South Carolina, Vets Helping Vets Anderson, Vets Helping Vets, Helping Vets Greenville, and Patriot Guard Riders.

Her passion for supporting fellow veterans led her to create her own local veteran tribe, where she actively seeks opportunities to provide Veterans with valuable support, such as participating in initiatives like the Upstate Honor Flight, which takes aging Veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials. She firmly believes in the power of veterans supporting one another.

When asked what she would like the public to know about women veterans, her answer was clear and empowering: "Women Veterans are tough, fierce, and caring warriors!!"

For fellow women Veterans transitioning to civilian life, she suggests getting involved with local schools and sharing your military experiences with young women and girls. Speaking at schools can provide an opportunity to inspire the next generation while finding a sense of purpose and connection in civilian life.





Corey

Corey Greenfield served in the United States Navy for six years as a C-130 Naval Aircrewman. She was stationed in Point Mugu, California, and provided support transporting cargo and passengers to more than 22 countries. She says that the largest thing she ever transported on a plane was a boat, but her favorite cargo item was a load of potato chips - because they were light to load and comfy to sleep on during the flight.

When she wasn't flying she supported her squadron as a career counselor, providing resources and support to Sailors as they navigated their career goals. Corey remembers the training pipeline to becoming an aircrewman was long and challenging, and pushed her far outside of her comfort zone. She recalls though, that one of the proudest moments of her life was when she passed her training and received her gold U.S. Navy Aircrew Wings.

Corey's most significant take away from her military career was that it showed her that she had no idea what she was truly capable of achieving. She found herself in situations where she experienced real fear, which can be powerful and often crippling, but the Navy taught her that she had the courage to take a scary situation and find a way through it.

In 2022, Corey was married to her husband, a captain in the Marine Corps Reserve. Shortly after their wedding, he left for his third deployment overseas.

Corey currently works in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) career field where she analyzes data and creates digital map products. She says she loves her job because it balances her love for math and data but also lets her use her creative side designing colorful, engaging maps.

One of Corey's passions is that she loves to sew. She says, "Sewing was passed down from my grandma, to my mom, and now to me. For my family, quilting is a love language.

Corey would like the public to know that for women who serve in the military it's easier to blend in with the general population and not be recognized. There is no stereotypical female service member image like a short military haircut that men often wear. "We are the kind grandma, the soccer mom, the business professional, or the artist - we take many forms."

For her fellow women Veterans she offers this advice: "Give yourself a little grace. Spend time doing the things you love, and make sure to get enough sleep."







WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"When you know yourself you are empowered, when you accept yourself, you are invincible."
~ Tina Lifford



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"She who walks alone,
walks faster; she who walks
with others, goes further."
~ African Proverb

Crystal

Crystal Bristow served in the United States Air Force as a Health Service Management & Military Police Augmentee from 2003 to 2007. In her health service roles, she expertly managed healthcare operations, implemented policies, supervised staff, and collaborated with healthcare professionals to enhance patient care. Her military police responsibilities included enforcing regulations, ensuring the safety and security of personnel and assets, conducting patrols, responding to incidents, and contributing to force protection measures.

Crystal's military service left her with a lasting sense of camaraderie, formed through shared experiences and sacrifices. This bond has profoundly influenced her perspective on teamwork and loyalty, extending well beyond her time in the military.

Today, Crystal is a single mother of a 9-year-old named Grace, juggling full-time schooling and business ownership. As an experienced cosmetologist/business owner in Fort Mill, South Carolina, Crystal excels in addressing individual needs while staying current with the latest beauty trends. She also dedicates time to volunteer and teach cosmetology and esthetics at the Academy of Careers & Technology in Mullins, South Carolina. Crystal aims to empower, inspire, and educate students about the diverse aspects of the beauty industry, emphasizing the importance of self-care and self-expression.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Crystal enjoys exploring various cuisines, experimenting with flavors, and sharing culinary delights with others. She also uses writing poetry as a therapeutic outlet for her creative expression, along with playing the piano.

Crystal advocates for recognizing the contributions, experiences, and challenges faced by women Veterans. She emphasizes the importance of acknowledging their service, supporting their transition to civilian life, and ensuring they receive the care and opportunities they deserve.

Crystal encourages fellow Veterans to seek support from organizations, support groups, and fellow Veterans, and to utilize available benefits such as healthcare, career counseling, education, and job training programs. Crystal underscores the significance of prioritizing self-care, setting realistic goals, leveraging transferable skills, and building a support network of positive and understanding individuals who comprehend the Veteran journey.





Jennifer

Jennifer Hill served for more than 21 years in the United States Army as a Medical Laboratory Specialist. Her responsibilities encompassed every aspect of the human blood supply chain, from collecting samples and conducting inspections to managing the banking and distribution processes. She also held roles in supervising laboratory technical and administrative functions, which included training junior soldiers in basic lab procedures and establishing and analyzing quality control programs. Her service included deployments with the 115th Field Hospital in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Jennifer reflects on her military experience as a source of personal growth, saying, "I am stronger, smarter, and more resilient than I ever imagined." She says she also learned the true meaning of being on a team and the importance of looking out for one another.

Married for more than 15 years to her husband, also an Army Veteran, they are proud to be parents of four children ages 21, 19, 14, and 11.

Today, Jennifer works as an Independent Testing Specialist at Wells Fargo Bank. In this role, she assesses the policies, procedures, and control systems within the different business lines of the bank. Concurrently, she is pursuing her master's degree. Outside of work and school, Jennifer dedicates as much free time as possible to her family. Her strongest passions are for God and her family.

Jennifer's message to the public regarding women veterans is clear: "Women Veterans are an increasing demographic in the military and deserve the same recognition as their male counterparts."

To her fellow Veterans, she imparts this wisdom: "It's perfectly acceptable to seek help. Asking for assistance is not a sign of weakness, but rather an act of courage. It takes a great deal of strength to admit that you need help, and you should never feel ashamed for doing so."







WORDS TO LIVE BY:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

~ Maya Angelou

WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"I AM A VETERAN"



Mishakia

Mishakia Ford served in the United States Navy from October 1995 until October 2015. She achieved the high rank of Chief Petty Officer and was an electrician by trade, but her duties went far beyond that. She also served as an instructor, small boat operator, administrative assistant, and a crane operator. Mishakia considers her status as the first female Electrician Mate Chief (E-7) in the Full Time Support (FTS) to be her most significant accomplishment during her military service.

Throughout her career she supported Operation Desert Storm and the various activities in relation to the 9/11 tragedy. She joined the military with the goal of traveling the world and she has now been on every continent, including Antarctica!

Mishakia now lives with her 17 year-old son in the PeeDee region of South Carolina, where her maternal roots are. She is a substitute teacher for the Clover School District and volunteers in the school library. Her various talents and interests have landed her on many school committees in support of ensuring that the kids' needs are met. She is also a paid volunteer for the York County Voter Registration and Elections office and finds ways to support her community's future, most recently working for the 2020 Census in York County.

Additionally, Mishakia volunteers on her neighborhood fun committee. She helps them plan events for the residents to enjoy throughout the year. Some events she created herself. Outside of doing things for other people, she enjoys painting, puzzles, and other crafty things involving just her, some 90's music, and an adult beverage. She still loves to travel either on a cruise or on a plane, or both.

For the often misinformed public, Mishakia would like them to stop assuming that she must be the wife of a Veteran. It's horrible, and made more so when that assumption comes from a woman. It's a shame that the assumption is not in support of women Veterans. "Come on ladies! Know that we exist and try assuming that the woman is the Veteran."

Mishakias best advice for her fellow veterans is to, "Keep Going! You never know if or when you will inspire someone else."





Roxann

Roxann James served in the United States Air Force and Air National Guard for a total of 19 years of service. While in the Air Force, she was assigned to special duty in the Office of Special Investigations in Washington, D.C. During that assignment she obtained her bachelor's degree in accounting.

After leaving the Air Force and taking a nine year break, her passion for service called her back and she enlisted in the North Carolina Air National Guard where she served in a finance role until she retired. As part of her assignment with NCANG, she was deployed to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey in support of Operation Northern Watch.

One of Roxann's most significant takeaways from her time in the service was how it taught her to overcome both the physical and mental challenges demanded by the military - important lessons that she carried forward in life. She also has fond memories of the travels she made to other parts of the globe. One experience in particular was special because she was able to spend Christmas Day in a cave in Antioch, Turkey, where the Apostle Paul preached and began his missionary journey.

Today, Roxann is married to a fellow Air National Guardsman and together they spend quality time visiting with their grandchildren in Georgia. Despite retiring, she remains dedicated to her community by volunteering with her church and supporting the veteran community. She is an adjutant and social media administrator for the Disabled American Veterans local chapter that assists fellow veterans with their VA claims. She is also actively involved with a local women veterans group advocating for women veteran causes.

Roxann likes to share her unique perspective on how the military and the role of women have evolved since she joined the Air Force in 1974 with anyone who asks. "When I entered the service, women of the Air Force were told we were "ladies," and we attended courses on that subject. When I reached D.C., we had a WAF Commander and were housed in an old WWII barracks with a common dayroom. It was a very safe feeling community."

For her fellow veterans, Roxann offers insights into her transition from the Air Force to civilian life. She emphasizes the importance of finding one's place and sense of purpose. She recalls that leaving the Air Force was a big adjustment, and she first concentrated on her one-year-old son, and then got a job in civilian life. "But I never fit in, so after nine years I joined the Air National Guard near my home and retired after 19 successful years."





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"I am proud to serve my country, and I will do it with honor, integrity, and courage."



WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"No matter the task, do it well. Be the example, you never know who is watching!"



Suzanne

Suzanne Jamison served in the United States Navy, from February 1998 until her retirement in February 2018 as a Naval Maintenance Senior Chief. She served as an aviation structural mechanic. Her role was managing, planning, and organizing work centers on all aircraft maintenance and supply statuses. She also managed complex flight schedules and directed high-tempo flight deck operations onboard an aircraft carrier during combat deployments. Suzanne also served three years on the world-renowned U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, The Blue Angels.

Supporting Operations Enduring Freedom, Inherent Resolve, and Desert Fox were some of the most chaotic yet rewarding times in uniform. Throughout her 20 years, she earned the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal (10 awards). Her excellence was honored as the 2015 Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic Chief of the Year.

Originally Suzanne didn't set out to make the Navy a career. However, she found something she was good at and excellence easily followed. Looking back over her 20 years of service, Suzanne realized she not only met but exceeded all of her professional goals. It was with a sense of pride in her achievements that she was able to retire and open a new chapter as a wife and mom.

Suzanne was blessed to marry her best friend, Dallas Jamison, a FedEx pilot. They have two incredible kids, a boy and a girl who keep Suzanne and Dallas busy but fulfilled as they learn new things and explore the world around them.

Today, Suzanne is very active in her local church and at her kids' preschool. Her hobbies and passions include experiencing new things with her family and bringing joy to others through her crafting and baking.

Reflecting on "Women Veterans," Suzanne finds it hard to distinguish between being a woman Veteran vs. just a Veteran and hopes the need for a separate identifier dissolves. She sees herself as a Veteran with the opportunity to serve with incredible men and women who all worked hard and were part of a team that expected everyone to do and be their best.

To her sister veterans, Suzanne's heartfelt advice is to keep in mind the basic skills you've learned in the military, they will make you a successful civilian!





Tanisha

Tanisha A. Brown served for 12 years in the United States Navy from 1990 until 2002. As a Naval Field Medical Corpsman, she was deployed with the Marines to keep them healthy as their "doc in the field."

When on shore duty, she worked as a Psychiatric Technician in the hospital wards serving those with severe disorders and extreme conditions. She contributed to the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization (JCAHO)/Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) alliance. Going to the National Archives with Lt. Mitchell researching Women and African Americans in the military for an event was a high point; but, her most significant take away from her military service was the camaraderie.

Tanisha has four loving children ages 31, 27, 21 and 14. They are a source of great pride and challenge her to be a better person. Tanisha currently finds herself striving to be grateful in all of life's moments and to learn how to define herself now that her mom has passed.

Tanisha volunteers in many different ways, including as a Child Evangelism Fellowship, a certified Peer Support Specialist, and a Women Veterans Network (WoVeN) Peer Leader. In these roles, she provides yoga and meditation lessons to senior citizens and holds various workshops for fellow female Veterans. Through her service to others, Tanisha has had the pleasure of working with people of all ages, and particularly with children. These children come with many issues. Because of her experiences, she has helped them through it all by loving, listening, and providing consistency in their lives.

Roller skating, learning to cook, and finding herself after losing her dear mother has become Tanisha's hobbies. Her goal is to be loving in everything she does.

Tanisha wants the public to acknowledge that women veterans have stood the test of time in a male-dominated culture and deserve to be respected! Women have fought the fight and won.

Tanisha hopes that her fellow women veterans can learn from her eye-opening acknowledgement. She sought to always be liked by others until one day she realized that someone liking her is not her problem. Don't worry about others, go ahead and be yourself and stand out!





WORDS TO LIVE BY:
"I walk by faith,
not by sight."
~ 2 Corinthians 5:7

I will stand out and be ME!
~ Tanisha's motto



BREAKING BARRIERS: A Historical Journey of Women in the Military

WRITTEN BY MARTINA SCHMIDT

The history of women in the military is a testament to their resilience, courage, and determination to break through societal norms. Over the centuries, women have played crucial roles in various armed forces, challenging gender stereotypes and paving the way for greater equality. Lets explore the rich and complex history of women in the military highlighting key milestones and the evolving role of women in armed forces worldwide.

ANCIENT WARRIORS:

History reveals that women have been involved in armed conflicts since ancient times. The legendary Amazons, a mythical tribe of warrior women in Greek mythology, serve as an early example of the idea that women could be formidable warriors. The Amazons were as skilled and brave as men in combat. However, as societies developed and embraced more rigid gender roles, women's participation in military activities became increasingly limited. It wasn't until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that significant changes began to occur.

WORLD WAR I & WORLD WAR II:

The outbreak of World War I marked a turning point for women's involvement in the military. With men leaving for the front lines, women took on various roles such as clerks, nurses, and telephone operators. The demand for additional personnel led to the formation of women's auxiliary units in many countries. World War II further expanded opportunities for women in the military. Countries involved in the conflict recognized the valuable contributions of women in various capacities. The Women's Army Corps (WAC) and the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) allowed women to serve in non-combat roles.



Verna Bunny Farmer: Women Auxiliary Corps

POST-WORLD WAR II ERA:

The successes and contributions of women during World War II set the stage for continued progress in the post-war era. President Harry Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act into law in 1948. The law granted women the right to serve as permanent members of the armed services. However, the number of women who could serve was capped at two percent of all personnel and prohibited their full participation in combat units and combat aircraft. Despite its limitations, this act established the right for women to serve their country in perpetuity.

KOREAN WAR:

During the Korean war there were 120,000 women on active duty. A third of them were healthcare providers. Others stepped up when their country called on them, volunteering for service in the Women's Army Corps (WAC), Women in the Air Force (WAF), Navy Women's Reserves and Women Marines.

VIETNAM WAR:

The Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation estimates that approximately 11,000 military women were stationed in Vietnam during the conflict. Nearly all of them were volunteers, and 90 percent served as military nurses, though women also worked as physicians, air traffic controllers, intelligence officers, clerks and other positions in the U.S. Women's Army Corps, U.S. Navy, Air Force and Marines and the Army Medical Specialist Corps.



Loretta Forlaw, Vietnam War Veteran

LEGAL AND CULTURAL SHIFTS:

Legal changes were crucial in breaking down barriers for women in the military. When the Vietnam War ended in 1973, the U.S. military ended the draft, shifting to an all-volunteer force. With this change, the armed forces had to actively recruit both men and women. The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 was amended to remove the cap on the number of women who could serve.

The 1990s witnessed further progress as more countries opened combat roles to women. In 1991, during the Gulf War, U.S. military women served in combat support roles, challenging perceptions about their capabilities. The changing nature of warfare, with its emphasis on technology and intelligence, also contributed to a more inclusive military environment.

21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND:

The 21st century has seen a steady increase in the number of women serving in armed forces globally. Women make up 15 percent of the active-duty enlisted force and 6 percent of the officer corps, and women are now participating in combat roles, flying fighter jets, and commanding military units. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Defense officially lifted the ban on women serving in ground combat positions, acknowledging their capabilities and the changing nature of warfare.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist. Gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and the struggle for equal opportunities continue to be issues women in the military face. Efforts to address these challenges and create a more inclusive environment are ongoing, with many nations working to ensure that women have the same opportunities for career advancement and recognition as their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION:

The history of women in the military is a tale of perseverance, breaking down barriers, and challenging societal norms. From the ancient warriors to the pioneers of World War II and the modern-day servicewomen, women have consistently demonstrated their dedication and capabilities in the defense of their nations. As we reflect on this history, it is essential to recognize the progress made and continue the journey towards full gender equality in the armed forces.

Photo Credit:
Ancient Warrior Jean-Pol GRANDMONT

See the table of contents for links to resources used in this article.















TAKE ONE.
TAKE TWO.
TAKE THREE...

WOMEN VETERANS BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Supporting women veteran-owned businesses is a crucial step towards fostering equality and empowerment. Women who have served in the military bring unique skills and experiences to the entrepreneurial world, and by supporting their ventures, we not only acknowledge their sacrifices but also harness their potential as valuable contributors to our economy.

Striking Effects
vickip@strikingeffects.com

Wildflower Massage
https://linktr.ee/wildflower_massage

CJ Forward
www.straightforwardhomesales.com

Hope for Veterans
www.Hope4veterans.org

Villages for Veterans
https://www.villagersforveterans.org

WOMEN VETERANS BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Humble Warrior
WELLNESS & YOGA

humblewarrior.org/

Garden Believer
& Aquascaping

https://www.facebook.com/GardenBeliever/

Georgia Military Women

https://www.facebook.com/georgiamilitarywomen/

Shon Barnwell
EVENTS

https://www.barnwellevents.com/

HOPE
CENTER FOR VETERANS

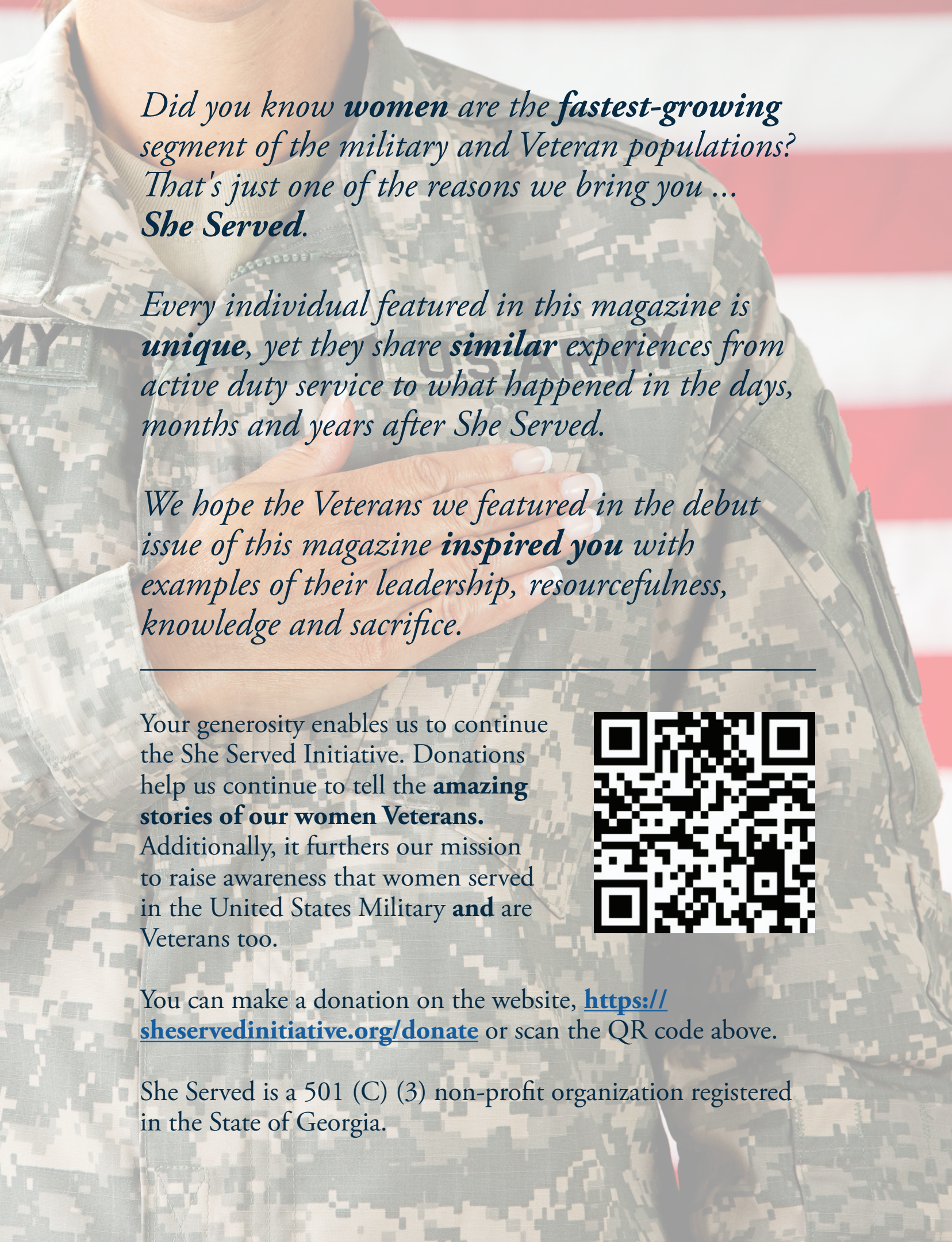
https://hopecenterforveterans.org/

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Heaven On Earth Catering

http://heavenonearthevents.com/



*Did you know **women** are the **fastest-growing** segment of the military and Veteran populations? That's just one of the reasons we bring you ...* ***She Served.***

*Every individual featured in this magazine is **unique**, yet they share **similar** experiences from active duty service to what happened in the days, months and years after She Served.*

*We hope the Veterans we featured in the debut issue of this magazine **inspired you** with examples of their leadership, resourcefulness, knowledge and sacrifice.*

Your generosity enables us to continue the She Served Initiative. Donations help us continue to tell the **amazing stories of our women Veterans.** Additionally, it furthers our mission to raise awareness that women served in the United States Military **and** are Veterans too.

You can make a donation on the website, **https://sheservedinitiative.org/donate** or scan the QR code above.

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