**Women’s History Month Sample Speech**

(5 minutes)

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello, I’m [NAME], [ROLE] of Student Veterans of America [CHAPTER NAME]. It is wonderful to be here with you today celebrating Women’s History Month. When we take a moment to reflect on the contributions women have made to the United States, [CHAPTER NAME] and I are not at all surprised that many of these stories also involve women veterans, giving their all, in service of others.

**WOMEN’S HISTORY**

We can start today by remembering one of the most revered women in American history, the great Harriet Tubman. While she is, of course, most known for leading enslaved people to freedom through the Underground Railroad, she was one the first African American women to serve in the military about 160 years ago. In the army, Tubman played many roles, as a scout, a nurse, a guerilla soldier, and perhaps most interestingly, as a spy. She dressed as an elderly woman and wandered through rebel territory gathering information from enslaved African Americans as well as noting the movement, ammunition depots, and supply lines of the Confederates.

But, even before Tubman, in 1841, Sarah Emma Edmonds uprooted her life in her native Nova Scotia, moved to Detroit, Michigan, disguised herself as a man, and joined the army so that she could serve, and did so as both a nurse and Union spy. At the time she called herself Frank Thompson, but I urge you to remember the name Sarah Emma Edmonds, who would not be stopped when she had a call to serve.

Jumping forward to the 20th century—had she been born in the era of an actual US Space Force, it’s possible that Colonel Eileen Collins, might have enlisted there, rather than the Air Force, but she did go on to become the first female space shuttle commander all the same.

Much more recently, Army General Ann E. Dunwoody achieved the rank of 4 Star General in 2012, having served since 1974. And, while she spoke openly about the lack of equality in her early days, at her retirement she shared that much had changed during her decades of service revolutionizing the Army Material Command.

And, I simply cannot sing the praises of women veterans without mentioning Golden Girl Bea Arthur, whose star turn on our television sets began when she was already 63 years old. Her contributions remain in the form her activism for a variety of causes and physically, in the form of the Bea Arthur Residence for homeless LGBTQIA youth. She still also continues to make us laugh.

**WHO ARE WE?**

As I mentioned, I am the [ROLE] of [CHAPTER NAME] under the banner of Student Veterans of America, representing more than 750,000 student veterans each year. Of that number, women represent a steadily increasing demographic, and also represent more than half of on-campus SVA chapter leadership nationwide.

From our very own chapter, we are honored to have [INSERT A FEW SENTENCES ABOUT A WOMAN / WOMEN IN THIS CHAPTER]

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive organization—where all veterans, military families, and allies are welcomed. We strive to build chapters that allow everybody to bring their whole self to the table. Because while we gather here today to recognize Women’s History Month, no one is defined solely by their gender. All of the women I’ve named today are so much more than simply women.

**IN SUMMARY**

And, to that, you might be asking yourself, if no one should be defined by their gender, why celebrate Women’s History Month at all? My first answer is that true leadership should always be celebrated, to instill hope and inspire the next generation. Greatness always begets more greatness.

And, secondly, I would be remiss if I did not touch on the fact that in actual history books, for centuries now, women have been wrongfully and disproportionately omitted, or even their incredible acts occasionally overwritten with male names. And, that is why during the month of March, we speak these names so that all history books being written today and decades from now, reflect a more accurate legacy of service, commitment, sacrifice, and honor. This month and every month to follow, we invite you to join us by lifting up women’s names and their good deeds, especially to younger generations. Let them know that history is waiting for their names, too.

To quote another woman who made history, Vice President Kamala Harris, “Dream with ambition, lead with conviction… And, we will applaud you every step of the way.”

And, so we will. Thank you for being here. And, happy Women’s History Month!