

FREEDOM FLYER

MARCH 2012

514TH AIR MOBILITY WING



**SPECIAL ISSUE:
WOMEN OF THE FREEDOM WING**



FREEDOM FLYER

CONTENTS

VIEWPOINTS	4
NEWS & NOTES	5
WOMEN OF THE FREEDOM WING	6

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ON THE COVER

Senior Airmen Angela Christiansen is one of several female Airmen serving as security specialists with the 514th Security Forces Squadron. The March issue of Freedom Flyer recognizes Women's History Month by highlighting a representative selection of the women who serve with the Freedom Wing.



Photo by Shawn J. Jones

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As a cyber security technician with the 42nd Combat Communications Squadron, Tech. Sgt. Sonya Williams must be prepared to set up and operate communications systems in austere environments outside the security of established military bases. These conditions require her to build and operate defensive fighting positions and otherwise contribute to the security of her fellow Airmen.

Photo by Shawn J. Jones





Photo by Master Sgt. Donna T. Jeffries

Your mamma wears combat boots

By Col. Michael Underkofler
514th Air Mobility Wing commander

On the small town playground of my childhood, the comeback quip of last resort after being physically or verbally pummeled was “well, your mamma wears combat boots.”

It was the juvenile equivalent of today’s profane four-letter bombs but with bigger consequences. If used, the surrounding crowd within earshot would in unison let out an “aahhh, you’re going to get it.”

Not many dared to use this double whammy epithet. First, after a rough and tumble fight, most didn’t have the chutzpa to disparage someone’s mother. Even the schoolyard bully recognized that this was not polite. By doing so the user might get pummeled further and would probably get a mouth washing with a bar a soap when he got home.

Second, to ascribe warrior status to a real woman was something really unheard of too. After all, in most boys’ eyes in my hometown, mothers and grandmothers were doting, white pearl- and sensible shoe-wearing pecan pie bakers, certainly not warriors.

The only combat boot-wearing women my pre-pubescent friends knew, and possibly admired, were Hippolyta and Wonder Woman. The former was the warrior queen in Greek Mythology whose magical belt was recovered by the uber-man and demigod Hercules during his 12 labors.

The latter woman-warrior was equally as proficient in hand-to-

hand combat and was known to fight for just causes. For example, she joined other comic book heroes in the Justice League to help defeat the Axis powers.

Both Hippolyta and Wonder Woman were Amazons. Both were fictional. Therefore both were considered okay by my friends.

I always found my buddies’ youthful prohibition against real women wearing combat boots in stark contrast to my hometown’s and my families’ real history.

Ignorance is powerful but education is even more so.

Women in my hometown were more than just pecan pie bakers. Since colonial times, they were leaders and advocates, confronting wars and difficult issues head on. In 1774, a group of 51 women vowed to give up tea and

boycott other British products in response to new taxes levied by Parliament.

At their tea party, these North Carolina women resolved to stand firm in their efforts “until such time that all acts which tend to enslave our Native country shall be repealed.” They bravely signed a well-reasoned and well-structured document for the Crown to see, choosing not to hide behind Indian costumes as others had done at the more famous Boston Tea Party.

In doing so, these women created the first instance of organized political action by women in the colonies. They didn’t stop there.

While not serving directly on the battlefield, many played key roles supporting the War for Independence. The same was true

Not all women wear pearls and sensible shoes to work, some wear dog tags and combat boots.

Continued on page 5



The following Airmen were promoted in February

Airman

Keyon Hankins, 514 MXS

Senior Airman

Erick Alvarado, 88 APS
Dante Correa, 514 CES
Joel Gutierrez, 88 APS
Robert Hamilton, 514 CES
Calvin Hunt, 514 SFS
Taran Kalladeen, 514 CES
Jonathan Kocak, 514 CES
Melvin Perez, 88 APS
Jacob Phillips, 714 AMXS
Domenick Polesel, 88 APS
Jonathan Saracino, 714 AMXS
Savitrie Rampersaud, 42 CBCS

Staff Sergeant

Moises Hinostrroza, 42 CBCS

Technical Sergeant

Elvis Hernandez, 514 MOF
Kasim Mothana, 42 CBCS
Kerry Pilkey, 42 CBCS
Jason Reeves, 514 MOF

Master Sergeant

William Almestica, 514 AMXS
Oscar Rivera, 514 AMW
Jason Roats, 514 MXS
Henri Torain, 514 AMW

News Briefs

Motorcycle Course Registration

JBMDL motorcycle course registration is now open. All motorcycle operators are required to take the course prior to riding their motorcycle on base. Register at <https://militarysafepmv.com>. Registration confirmation will be sent via e-mail. Bikers are also required to wear the proper personal protection equipment. Call 562-3082 for more information.

Air Expo

The public is invited to attend the 2012 Joint Base Open House Air Expo set for May 12-13. Attendees will see scores of military aircraft, displays and aerial demonstrations. The event is free and it is estimated to draw a crowd surpassing 350,000.

Mentoring Workshop

The Third Annual Enlisted Mentoring Workshop will be held Jun 9-10. Contact Maj. Dori Mansur at 754-6399 for more information

Freedom Flyer seeks contributions, ideas

The wing's magazine is ready and willing to accept submissions from its readers. If you would like to submit a news article, feature story, commentary or photos, contact the public affairs office at (609) 754-3487 or 514amw.pa@us.af.mil. Also, the staff of Freedom Flyer is always looking for story ideas and reader feedback.

Continued from page 4

throughout the colonies. But in some places, though, women were on the frontlines at gun emplacements, reloading canons and muskets, or tending the wounded.

Bravery didn't die with those women. It continued generation after generation in both political activism and in combat. In reality, they were wearing combat boots even if not formally acknowledged.

It's possible that some of the women in my family were involved in early American conflicts, but sadly that history is lost. I do, however, know and relish the service of recent family members.

A great aunt wore combat boots in World War II Europe. She earned a Bronze Star long before women were officially allowed to serve in combat. Later she transferred from the Army to the Air Force when the new air-centric service was founded. At her retirement, she was chief of her medical corps and the senior ranking woman in the Air Force.

My mother wore her combat boots in the Cold War, working hard to provide top-flight medical care to injured servicemen and women, sometimes in really austere conditions. Unfortunately, she served when women had to be discharged when they became pregnant. If allowed to serve longer, I'm sure she would have had as equally a distinguished career as my aunt.

Finally, my wife wore her combat boots in the air above and on the ground in the jungles of Central America, the deserts of Southwest Asia and in other places which can't be mentioned. She ended her career as an instructor at Air University helping the next generation of leaders understand the history of airpower and pon-

der its future applications.

Three combat boot-wearing women from three generations worked hard to defend and strengthen our country. As we like to say in our family, not all women wear pearls and sensible shoes to work, some wear dog tags and combat boots.

Just as I tell the stories of the women warriors in my family, I encourage you to tell the stories about yours, especially to your kids and grandkids. They will cherish them.

Every day women in our country put on combat boots and serve in the air, on the ground and on the seas. While we may define and re-define what it means to serve in combat, make no mistake, women have always served in harm's way. The war today clearly demonstrates the vulnerability of all of us and the evolving nature of warfare. We couldn't fight it as well as we have without the contributions of our women warriors.

Other women may not have formally served in the military, but nonetheless were not afraid to stand up to fight against injustice. Without their service, we would not have gained our independence, defeated tyranny in many wars, built the weapons of war and protected our homeland. Their stories are worth re-telling too so future generations can become just as resolute to support just causes.

Throughout the year, tell the stories of women warriors and political activists, but tell them even more loudly during Women's History Month. Let's be proud to say on the playground of adulthood, "well, my momma wore combat boots".

I know I am.

WOMEN OF THE FREEDOM WING





2nd Lt. Maggie Rudolphi
732nd Airlift Squadron

Reserve position: C-17 Pilot

Civilian position: EMB170 Captain with Republic Airways

Military service: Two years with the Reserve

"As a woman in this field, I have been treated with respect and equality and have been afforded the same opportunities as my male counterparts. When out flying a mission, it is important for me to be counted on and recognized as a member of the crew without the 'female' label."

Photos by Russell Meseroll

WOMEN CONTRIBUTE TO ALL FREEDOM WING MISSIONS

From 514th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

As Women's History Month is celebrated throughout March, the Freedom Wing can proudly boast the strong contributions of its female Airmen.

Women make up 25 percent of the wing's workforce, significantly higher than 19 percent of the overall Air Force. Those women have plenty of opportunities considering there isn't a single duty position at the wing that isn't open to women, including duties that have a higher opportunity to experience close combat.

Tech. Sgt. Sonya Williams is a cyber security technician with the 42nd Combat Communications Squadron.

Her duty requires her to set up communications systems in austere environments outside the security provided by established bases. In addition to her communications duties, she must build and man defensive fighting positions, perform grid sweeps and contribute to post-attack reconnaissance. At home station, she is often required to lift

and carry heavy communications equipment or drive a forklift.

Williams said gender is not an issue when it comes to performing any of her duties.

"At the end of the day we are all Airmen and we need to accomplish whatever task is set before us, physical or mental, to complete the mission," she said. "There is no distinction between the sexes as long as the mission is successfully completed."

The superintendent of the combat communications squadron concurs.

"The women of our squadron stand shoulder-to-shoulder with all Airmen," said Chief Master Sgt. Edward Williams.

Equality is shown in the air as well as on the ground.

"When it comes to picking crews to fly our most demanding or high-visibility missions, gender does not even come into the equation," said Lt. Col. Dennis Duffy, 732nd Airlift Squadron commander. "We consider technical ability, professionalism, leadership and the ability to get the job

done."

Even though male Airmen make up the majority of the 732nd AS, the squadron has a good track record for ensuring its women have the same opportunities as its men.

"The 732nd chose Senior Airman Jennifer Patterson as our 2011 Airman of the Year not because she is a woman, but because she is an excellent Airman and skilled loadmaster who deserves the recognition," Duffy said.

Patterson became a Reserve C-17 loadmaster after being encouraged by her husband who serves as an active-duty C-17 loadmaster.

"Being a female in a male-dominant career field doesn't faze me," said Patterson. "Just because I am a female, the standards shouldn't change."

The squadron is also proud to have the first reservist to graduate from the rigorous weapons instructor course. She was only the second woman to graduate the course and did it as her class's "outstanding graduate."

WOMEN OF THE FREEDOM WING

Airman 1st Class Alissa Anderson
714th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Reserve position: KC-10 Extender Mechanic

Civilian position: Federal Express courier

Military service: 2 years with the Reserve

"Serving in what used to be a male dominated profession is a great accomplishment because it shows that our country is progressing in all aspects to be better as a nation."



Photos by Shawn J. Jones





Photos by Shawn J. Jones



Senior Airman Angela Christiansen
514th Security Forces Squadron

Reserve position: Security Specialist

Civilian position: Government security contractor, Defense Intelligence Agency

Military service: 5 years with the Reserve

"The law enforcement field, whether it is civilian or military, has always been a male-dominant field, and it was intimidating at first, but I exceeded the limits of my own strength, persistence and endurance by choosing to be an Air Force Reserve security forces Airman."



Tech. Sgt. Sonya Williams
42nd Combat Communications Squadron

Reserve position: Cyber Surety Technician

Civilian position: Working on long-term Reserve orders with the 42nd CBCS.

Military service: Ten years, with five years of Reserve service

"The thing I like about the Reserves is that I get to continue serving my country as a military member while still living as a civilian. And because our unit members do not see each other on a continual basis, we really look forward to seeing and working with each other when we're on duty."

WOMEN OF THE FREEDOM WING



Photos by Shawn J. Jones



Capt. Rachel Hutchins
514th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron

Reserve position: Flight Nurse

Civilian position: Oncology nurse for Hematology-Oncology Associates of Northern New Jersey.

Military service: Seven years with nearly two years in the Reserve.

"I feel honored to carry on the tradition of strong women serving their country throughout the years. I try to inspire other young women to do the same whenever I can. I hope to show them you can be a wife, a mother, a professional and serve proudly."



Senior Airman Jennifer Patterson
732nd Airlift Squadron

Reserve position: C-17 Loadmaster

Civilian position: Part-time student and military spouse to active-duty C-17 loadmaster.

Military service: Nearly three years with the Reserve

"Being a female in a male dominant career field doesn't faze me. Just because I am female, the standards shouldn't change. Knowing that my fellow crewmembers have my back and know that I am just as good, if not better, than any other Airman in my field is comforting."



Photos by Wayne Russell



Major Molly Curland 732nd Airlift Squadron

Reserve Position: C-17 Pilot

Civilian Position: Mother of two

Military service: 13 years total, 6 with the Reserve

"I love serving in the Reserves because it gives me the opportunity to do the two things I love most, be a wife and mother and to fly. It is the best of both worlds, I get to continue my career and enjoy the plane, people and duty but I still get to be with my children on a regular basis."

FREEDOM FLYER

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FOR THE FAMILY OF:



Airman 1st Class Alissa Anderson, a crew chief with the 714th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, unravels a cable on an external power generator prior to performing maintenance on a KC-10 Extender on the flightline here Feb. 21.

Photo by Shawn J. Jones