

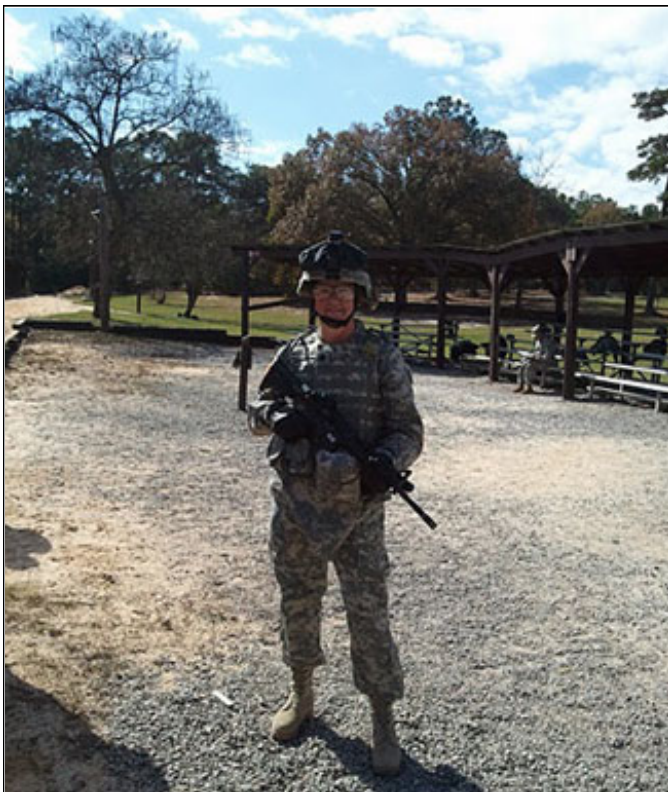
Women's History month: Local military women who have shaped history

2013 Carlisle Barracks Women's History Month

Women's History Month celebrates women who shaped history

Across the Army War College campus are students, staff and faculty whose experiences have shaped recent history - in the U.S. Air Force and Army, and more. Many found themselves as "the first woman" in varied roles but none sought that distinction. Their intent was to be members of the team.

Nikki Griffin Olive: Short-range Air Defense Artillery battalion commander



Lieutenant Colonel Nikki L. Griffin Olive, an Active Reserve and U.S. Army War College student.

Commissioned as an Army Signal officer in 1990, Griffin Olive served eight years on active duty in various Army units, with the past 14 years in the Reserve Component.

In 22 years of service, she has held leadership positions as a platoon leader, executive officer, battery commander, brigade S3, and battalion commander.

In 1995, she was one of the first females assigned to 1-5 Air Defense Artillery Battalion (Stinger Missile) at Fort Stewart, Ga., and the 1-5 Air Defense Artillery

Battalion (later reflagged as 1-3 Air Defense Artillery Battalion), a combat arms battalion.

After a year as the signal officer for the battalion, she was selected to command 1-5 ADA Headquarters and Headquarters Battery (Headhunter Battery), which provided combat service support and global broadcast for the Forward Area Air Defense Command Control Communications and Intelligence Stinger Missile Battalion for 3d Infantry Division.

With 3d Infantry Division's high OPTEMPO, Griffin Olive rotated three times through the National Training Center, executed numerous Victory and Marne Focus exercises, and served in the division during the reflag from the 24th Infantry Division to the 3d Infantry Division.

"Serving and commanding in the Air Defense Artillery Battalion, while challenging, was one of the highlights of my still on-going military career," said Griffin Olive. "I was honored to serve with some of the brightest and hardest working Soldiers and officers in the Army."

Marybeth Ulrich: full professor at the Army War College

Dr. Marybeth Ulrich, among the first wave of women to attend the Air Force Academy graduating in 1984, is currently the Professor of Government in the U.S. Army War College's Department of National Security and Strategy.

Ulrich served as a navigator on air refueling tankers in the Strategic Air Command. Sponsored by the Air Force to earn a PhD, she taught Political Science to cadets at the Air Force Academy. She continues her military service as a colonel in the Air Force Reserve and is currently the Reserve Air Attaché to the Russian Federation, as well as an Air Force Academy Liaison Officer.



Joining the Army War College faculty in 1999, Ulrich was the first woman to be hired as a Title-10 civilian professor and then became the first woman and the youngest person to earn the rank of full professor in 2005.

"I entered USAFA just as the first women were graduating. The Academy was still adapting to our presence," said Ulrich. "It was very much a 'fish bowl' environment for the women since we made up only 10 percent of the class and we were dispersed among the 40 cadet squadrons. The Academy tried not to change its

program because of the women, so initially women were required to take wrestling in Physical Education, the Jody calls were not cleaned up right away, and there were very few women on the staff and faculty.

“Overall, I would not trade my experience at the Academy and the follow-on experiences that it made possible,” said Ulrich. “Knowing that I was able to complete such a rigorous program as a distinguished graduate is a source of pride that I have drawn on my entire professional career.”

“It has been very satisfying to watch the barriers to women in the military fall, from aircraft opening up over the years, to the recent repeal of the women in combat barriers.

“It has been especially interesting to watch the services’ future women leaders pass through the War College these past 14 years knowing that their opportunities will only continue to grow,” said Ulrich.

Stephanie Williams: Combat Tactics Instructor Pilot, Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Center

Lieutenant Colonel Stephanie Williams, U.S. Air Force Academy graduate and pilot, is currently a U. S. Army War College student.

Williams was 10 years old when she knew she wanted to fly airplanes and serve in the military. “The Air Force allowed me to do both,” she said. Today, Williams is a veteran of Operations Southern Watch, Joint Forge, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

After graduating from the Air Force Academy she spent nine years on active duty flying C-130s all over the world. “Thanks to the opportunities in the Air Reserve Component, I was able to continue serving and flying, first part-time in the Missouri Air National Guard and later full-time in the Air Force Reserve,” she said. “I also spent time in Depot Flight test and at a MAJCOM staff.”

In 1996, Williams was the first woman aircraft commander to graduate from the aircrew course at the Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Center in Saint Joseph, Mo. In 2002, she became AATTC's first woman Combat Tactics Instructor Pilot, and in 2009, she was the first woman pilot assigned to the 339th Flight Test



Squadron when she was selected as the Director of Operations.

"Women entered combat aircraft shortly after I earned my wings, so I had the privilege of watching that first group of women to fly fighter aircraft pave the way as true pioneers for those women who followed.

"The significance of my 'firsts' is very small in comparison to many other military women," said Williams.

"Women Senior NCOs who had been assigned to AATTC for many years thought it was noteworthy both when I graduated from the course and when I returned as an instructor pilot on the staff.

"To me, these ladies were the real pioneers," she said. "A few of them were original members of the unit, which was founded by the Air National Guard in 1983, later adding active duty Airmen and Air Force Reservists to the staff.

Carol Kerr: Regular Army

Carol Kerr, retired Army Reserve colonel and graduate of the Army War College, serves as the USAWC Public Affairs Officer.

Before they joined the Long Gray Line at West Point in 1976, women were integrated into Army ROTC programs in colleges across the nation. And,

before that, they were introduced into pilot programs at 10 major ROTC programs. Penn State was one of them, and in 1972, that seemed like an adventure. In fact, it seemed like an invitation to, "Be all you can be."

"Penn State ROTC was deeply into the newly integrated program by the time a general officer in the Women's Army Corps came to visit, and she was not happy to see long hair and short skirts in uniform," said Kerr.

"Perhaps the cadre was unaware that there were female standards for uniform and hair length or, perhaps they were more focused on the training and experiences. We all took a verbal lickin' and moved on. That was the way of it: a few missteps along the way to making it work. In the end, we were accessed into the Regular Army, rather than the Women's Army Corps – opening up new options, such as Tactical Intelligence, for me.

"The pilot program in Army ROTC introduced a string of firsts," said Kerr. "At one point, I learned I was the first woman in a combat infantry brigade in Europe but my focus was building competence as an S2. By the time I got to my next assignment at a stateside division, I thought that being the lone woman was behind me until I reported in to a colonel who took time to let me know that women never work out. I did. And, I came to understand that the 'first woman' phenomenon had more meaning for those around me than it did for me,



for whom everything was a first experience.

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