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Retired Maj. Gen. **Dee Ann McWilliams** served almost 30 years as an officer in the Women's Army Corps and Army as a human resources officer, managing new policies and their effects for recruitment and personnel readiness regarding women and the Army.

McWilliams, currently president of the Army Women's Foundation, spoke about the progress of women's service in the Army at the Army



Heritage and Education Center Thursday, Mar. 21.

*Retired Maj. Gen. Dee Ann McWilliams, president of the Army Women's Foundation, speaks about the progress of women's service in the army at the Heritage and Education Center, Thursday, Mar. 21. The lecture was one of many activities during the Army War College's recognition of Women's History Month.*

**Julie Manta**, USAWC Assistant Provost, concluded that

McWilliams' themes rang true about changing times and common sense.

"The important take away was that leaders must use common sense when implementing policy changes for women and shouldn't rely on conventional wisdom."

McWilliams said that women in the Army have been prohibited from doing a lot of things in the past for reasons that were not always rational, because leaders at the time were reticent to counter conventional wisdom.

She referred to a common, former perception that a woman shouldn't get weapons training because she couldn't manage the weight of a 10-pound weapon. McWilliams noted the irony of that 'wisdom,' given that a woman will hoist a 30-pound child in one arm and 40 pounds of bags of groceries in the other.

The lecture was one of many activities during Women's History Month recognition.

Additionally, the Army Heritage and Education Center offered 'did you know?' videos about women's history and a "Civil War Women" exhibit featuring spies, nurses and sanitary commission workers and their contributions to the war effort.

Please view some Army Heritage and Education Center content recognizing Women's History Month:

**Civil War Imagery:**

[http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/AHM/civilwarimagery/Civil\\_War\\_Women.cfm](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/AHM/civilwarimagery/Civil_War_Women.cfm)

**Historical Photos:**

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151412085463682.1073741826.113116603681&type=3>

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151400953493682.1073741825.113116603681&type=3>

**Did you know? Videos:**

[www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/awards/womenshistorymonth.cfm](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/awards/womenshistorymonth.cfm)[www.usahec.org](http://www.usahec.org).

**Ingrid Gjerde: Norwegian infantry battalion commander**

**Colonel Ingrid M. Gjerde**, a Norwegian Defense Infantry officer, is currently the Norwegian International Fellow in the U.S. Army War College Class of 2013. She is the 2<sup>nd</sup> female International Fellow in history.

Gjerde's service to her country was inspired by her older brother and friends. She attended the Norwegian officer candidate school at the age of 19, and because of her love for outdoor life and sport chose the infantry and gained most of her military experiences from serving in infantry battalions, home and abroad.

Among her other firsts, Gjerde was the first Norwegian rifle platoon commander to serve in an international operation, Lebanon in 1994, and in SFOR in Bosnia 1998, the first female rifle company commander to serve in a NATO operation.

"With very few exceptions, I have felt that my commanders, peers and troops have appreciated me for my hard work, dedication to my service and results," said Gjerde. "I have done the same jobs and carried the same loads as my male colleagues, so I have never felt that they have treated me differently as 'the woman' in the unit."

Both the Norwegian government and military leadership are in agreement about the importance of increasing the number of women in military services, she said.

"I have appreciated the ability to serve my country in the branch that I found most interesting," said Gjerde. "I have felt fear and despair in societies with tense conflict, and it has been hard to leave my children, family and friends, but I also have felt great happiness and satisfaction



over achievements home and abroad.”

“The greatest thing about being a soldier is the same for men and women--the very strong friendship and trust within your unit and the ability to contribute to a more peaceful world,” said Gjerde.

**Jill Long: USAF Pilot**



**Lieutenant Colonel Jill A. Long**, U. S. Air Force pilot, is currently a U.S. Army War College student.

“I see my career in the Air Force as not one of firsts, although there have been a few incidences of this, but more of a continuation of the legacy of women warriors,” said Long. “[It’s] a legacy which one day I hope will be so entwined with the fabric of our military that the firsts are no longer notable due to the gender but are notable for the honor they have brought our profession at arms.”

The women who fly today in the military services are following in the footsteps of the Women Air Force Service Pilots, the WASP of World War II, she said.

“I recall seeing a WASP fly a pink P-47 at an air show and thinking, ‘Cool...but I wouldn’t have painted it pink.’ In retrospect I can see the subtle influence being able to

connect to someone can help solidify your courage to try something new,” said Long.

One of only five women in Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training in the early ‘90s, Long found commonalities in the experiences and attitude of **Marion Stegeman Hodgson**, who wrote, *Winging My Wings*. “Her grace, humor, and unflinching determination were an example to those of us who follow in her footsteps.

“And today, we are accepting the lead, cultivating the new wingmen who are taking to the skies,” said Long. “Moving into the lead position is a bit daunting.

It causes you to think more about those who are on your wing or who will follow along your flight path than you do about yourself.

Mentoring from **Jan Goodrum**, the last President of the WASP organization, helped Long recognize the need for balance when she was assigned as the first female “jump ALO” supporting the 173d ABCT, as the first woman to command the 2d Air Support Operations Squadron (the largest ASOS in Europe), and again as the Deputy Group Commander of the Air Support Operations Group in Kabul, Afghanistan. “My performance in each of those positions was not only a continuation of her, and her fellow WASPs’, legacy but would also be reflected onto all those who followed in my footsteps,” said Long.

