

Commander's Call Topics



Oct. 25, 2012

"So, I, along with my female classmates, spent four years proving that the standards, in fact, would not have to be lowered, and that [women could not only survive, but actually thrive](#) in that very challenging environment," -- [Gen. Janet C. Wolfenbarger](#) gives the keynote address at the 15th anniversary celebration of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Washington, D.C.

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Do's and Don'ts for Airmen during political season](#)

With the 2012 general presidential election only weeks away, please keep in mind that special ethics rules apply to active-duty Airmen regarding their political activities.

[F-35A completes first in-flight JDAM release](#)

An F-35A conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) aircraft completed the first in-flight weapons release of a 2,000 pound GBU-31 BLU-109 Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) from a 5th Generation fighter, Oct. 16.

[Remains of two Airmen lost in 1969 identified, honored](#)

The remains of two Airmen who died when their F-4D Phantom II was shot over Laos in 1969 were returned and honored at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors Oct. 19.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Online access simplifies dependent updates](#)

Family situations can be complicated, but updating family benefit information doesn't have to be, now that it can be done online.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[AF awards \\$25K to essay winners](#)

The Air Force awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 25 Airmen or family members for their entries in the 16th annual Air Force Club Membership Scholarship Program essay contest, Air Force Personnel Center officials announced.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE, TECHNOLOGY

[Declassified document shows 'real' flying saucer](#)

The grainy film showed a round ship floating out of a hangar. Its silver, aluminum exterior glistened in the sun as it hovered a few feet off the ground. As it glided over a pool of water, it kicked debris into the air and the glass canopies of the two cockpits were showered with grass and gravel as the saucer flew forward.

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://www.airmanonline.af.mil/>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://gum-crm.csd.disa.mil>

<http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

www.usajobs.com

www.nafjobs.org

Air Force Association Scholarships

<http://www.afa.org/aef/aid/scholars.asp>

Editor's note: October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, providing victim and caregiver alike with the hope that with early detection, they can both experience life after cancer with renewed hope and determination.

Breast cancer survivor: One mother becomes daughter's hero

During the first year of college, the world can seem so bright, cheery and hopeful. You can't imagine anything could come along and taint life as you know it. For me, I remember the day that darkened my life so clearly – something my 18- almost 19-year-old self never thought would happen – the day I found out my mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society's website, 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer during their lifetime. Eighty-five percent of those women will have had no family history of the disease. For those of us with family history in the form of a "first-degree relative" (mother, daughter, sister), the risk of getting breast cancer doubles.

In the days leading up to her disclosure, I knew something was a little off. I had been feeling homesick and a little down. Instead of encouraging me to keep going and telling me it would be okay, my mom actually offered to pay for me to come home. The day I arrived in Hawaii, it was a beautiful, sunny day – a stark contrast to the news I was about to receive.

My mother sat me down and told me she had breast cancer. I remember just sitting there, still and quiet with tears pouring down my face, thinking, "How could this be? How could my wonderfully strong mother have cancer? Is she going to die?"

After her surgery as she lay in her hospital bed, I watched her struggle not to get sick from the morphine the doctor's had given her.

During her battle to recovery, the tables were turned. At the young age of 18, I was the one who had to take care of her, making sure she was clean and comfortable. My mother seemed so frail when I took her home, but I knew she really wasn't. Never once did I hear her complain or wish for a different life. Never once did I see her turn from her faith – if anything this ordeal made her grow stronger in her faith.

When the results came back, she was told the cancer had in fact only been in her cyst, which had been removed during the surgery before chemo treatments. As she continued through chemo, she lost her hair and decided to wear her baldness proudly. By the fall, she had gained much of her strength back, and I headed off to college again.

Cancer is not unknown to us, as it runs in our family. My mother's mother had breast cancer, and then later died of ovarian cancer when my mom was young. Because of the family history, my mother knew what to watch out for and caught the cancer early. However, family history or not, everyone should know the signs and symptoms.

As women, we should do our own breast self-examinations and go to our annual women's health appointments. Once at the right age, we should have our mammograms annually.

My mother, whom I already respected, became my biggest hero the year she survived cancer. As we observe National Breast Cancer Awareness Month during October, help spread the word and raise awareness. I know I will. And if I am ever diagnosed, I hope I will fight and survive like my mother and the 2.6 million U.S. citizens who have survived breast cancer.

*By Staff Sgt. Amanda Dick
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All Hallow's Eve

Halloween—at once, scary and exhilarating—is rooted in ancient Celtic populations and the indigenous tribes of Mexico and South America. It is the one holiday neither merged into a weekend nor made into a reason for travel to be with one's relatives. In fact, our traditions of costume wearing, trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, and haunted-house decorations almost demand that we stay home.

Today, the ancient superstitions that fueled the celebrations to appease the ancestral spirits have been reinterpreted. One of the centuries-ago Celtic traditions required a household member roam the streets disguised as a beggar, carrying lantern made from a hollowed-out turnip, in search of evil spirits. The disguised householder would then give the spirits sweets in hopes of persuading the evil-doers to not harm anyone in the household for the year to come. Today's take on that old-world practice has school-age princesses, superheroes, ninjas and witches, often accompanied by a similarly costumed pet, going door-to-door demanding sweets with a sing-song "Trick or treat."

The Day of the Dead, a 3,000-year-old pagan ritual of revering the dead of the indigenous tribes of Mexico and South America, has morphed into the more modern ofrenda, or altar, in Hispanic churches where memorials for deceased family members vie for space with commemorative offerings of food and flowers.

But what's tradition without trends? According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), as goes Halloween sales, so go holiday sales. In other words, if Halloween sales have an upward tick over the previous year's sales, it is more-than-likely that holiday sales will too. A recent NRF survey found that a record 170 million people will celebrate Halloween this year, with each person expected to spend nearly \$80 on decorations, candy and costumes. This is actually a bounce back to 2008 levels after last year's dismal (by comparison) \$56.31 per person. Total Halloween spending is expected to reach \$5.8 billion this year.

The U.S. Census, which measures recent actual numbers, tells us that in 2011, there were approximately 41 million trick-or-treaters (children age 5 -14), that \$113 million-worth of pumpkins were harvested from the top six pumpkin producing states (Illinois, California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan) and that 1,155 manufacturing establishments, employing 35,074 people, produced chocolate and cocoa products in 2010.

Zombies? Vampires? Chocolate? Whether you're in Transylvania County, N.C., Tombstone, Ariz., Skull Creek, Neb., or any other celebrating neighborhood, Halloween promises to be a frightfully good time.

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

Oct. 25, 1923 – The court martial of Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell for insubordination began. He was found guilty on Dec. 17, and sentenced to a five-year suspension from active duty without pay or allowances. After reviewing the sentence, President Coolidge made it a five-year suspension at half pay. On Feb. 1, 1926, Mitchell resigned his commission. During the trial he succeeded in championing the cause of air power as a separate entity.

Oct. 24, 2000 - An F-22 successfully fired the first unarmed Raytheon AIM-120C Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile in its initial separation test the China Lake test range. The AIM-120C, with clipped wings and fins, would be the *Raptor's* primary weapon.

Oct. 26, 1962 - Strategic Air Command received its last B-52H Stratofortress and last three B-58 Hustlers.

Oct. 27, 2006 – The 49th Fighter Wing flew 25 F-117 Nighthawks in formation over Holloman AFB, N.M., for the largest flyover in its history to commemorate the aircraft's 25th anniversary.

Oct. 28, 1985 – The first six female officers started initial qualification training for Minuteman crew duty. All six women previously worked with the Titan II system. They finished the class Feb. 7, 1986.

Oct. 29, 1950 – C-47s made aeromedical flights from Sinanju Airfield, North Korea, the northernmost Korean airfield ever used by Far East Air Forces aircraft, some 40 miles north of Pyongyang.

Oct. 30, 1940 - The 71st Squadron Royal Air Force (1st Eagle Squadron with American volunteers) became operational.

Oct 31, 1994 – Two B-1 Lancers from Ellsworth AFB, S.D., flew a nonstop mission to a bombing range in Kuwait. The 25-hour mission was the first time for the B-1s in the Gulf Region.

Nov. 1, 1970 – The 336th Tactical Fighter Squadron began the first Air Force tests of new bare-base mobility equipment in a field exercise at North Field, S.C. The exercise demonstrated the unit's ability to deploy and operate from a bare-base site using specially designed, air-transportable, expendable shelters and work facilities.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>.

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