

Commander's Call Topics



Feb. 28, 2013

"As you enter positions of power and trust, dream a little before you think."

Toni Morrison

Novelist

Also in this issue... Air Force women and the Women's National History Project. Please see Page 2...

Two women, one dream

It is the personal resourcefulness of two women—Jackie Cochran and Nancy Harkness Love—who made the Women's Air Service Pilots a reality, and changed the course of history. Like so many women being honored throughout Women's History Month, they saw a need and how to fill it, and they made it happen. And although they were of one mind where women pilots in service to their country were concerned, they couldn't have been more different.

Jacqueline Cochran was born (probably around 1906, but the date is uncertain) in a cotton-fields-and-sawmill small town in western Florida. It is said that she grew up in such poverty that she never owned a pair of shoes until she was nine. As she grew, she loved the sight of an airplane, and she firmly believed that one day she would fly. In 1932 she earned her pilots license, and she not only flew, she soared. At the time of her death in 1980 she held more international speed, distance and altitude records than any other pilot, male or female.

Nancy Harkness was born in 1914, the daughter of a wealthy physician. By the time she was 16 she earned her pilot's license, and during her college years at Vassar, she earned extra spending money by taking students for airplane rides. She married Robert Love, an Air Corps Reserve major, and in early 1942, he was called to active duty in Washington to be the deputy chief of staff of the Ferrying Command. In support of the war effort, Nancy took a civil service position near Baltimore, and she piloted her own plane for her daily commute to the Operations Office of the 2nd Ferrying Group, Domestic Division.

The Domestic Division was commanded by Col. William H. Tunner, and Nancy Love convinced him of the idea of using experienced women pilots to supplement the existing pilot force. Although Col. Tunner's proposal to the Army Air Corps was denied, he appointed her to his staff as Executive Director of Women Pilots. Within a few months she had recruited 29 experienced female pilots to join the newly created Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS). That same year, Jacqueline Cochran was appointed Director of Woman's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) for the U.S.

The WFTD and WAFS merged in 1943, to create the paramilitary WASP organization at 120 air bases across America. The 1,074 female pilots each freed a male pilot for combat service and duties. The WASPs flew over 60 million miles in every type of military aircraft. At the end of 1944, the WASP program was discontinued and the WASP disbanded, but not without changing the course of history forever.

*Martha J. Lockwood
Chief, AFPRO Information Products*

► TRENDING ...

"We're deeply concerned for our civilian Airmen and the mission. We'll keep working to prevent these actions, which would decimate morale and break faith with their service to our Air Force." -- Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley speaking during the Air Force Association's 29th Air Warfare Symposium & Technology Exposition about [possible sequestration](#) impacts.

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Hagel takes office as 24th SecDef](#)

Just before his private swearing-in ceremony as the 24th secretary of defense, Chuck Hagel and his wife, Lilibet, arrived at the Pentagon this morning and were greeted by Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, military assistant to the secretary of defense.

[AF releases pay and allowances continuation program](#)

Air Force senior leaders recently released Air Force policy on the Pay and Allowance Continuation program for Airmen who become wounded or ill while supporting a combat contingency.

► 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://militaryonesource.af.mil>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://mypers.af.mil>

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

Air Reserve Personnel Center

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

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veteran 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>

Air Force Safety Center

www.afsec.af.mil

Women write history differently in the Air Force

March 3, 2013 marks the centennial of the suffragists' march on Washington. Marching up Pennsylvania Avenue demanding the right to vote, 5,000 women staged a "national procession" the day before Woodrow Wilson's presidential inauguration. Although this was the first civil rights parade to use the nation's capital as a backdrop, it would be another seven years—1920—until the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote.

And it would be another 60 years after that—on through the years encompassing The Great Depression, World War II, The Korean Conflict, the war in Vietnam, and well into the Iranian Hostage Crisis—that President Jimmy Carter would proclaim March as Women's History Month.

The National Women's History Project (NWHP), founded in that same year, is an educational nonprofit organization whose mission is to recognize and celebrate the diverse and historic accomplishments of women by providing information and educational materials and programs. Each year, NWHP designates a theme for the month-long celebration of the contributions and accomplishments of women. This year's theme "Women Inspiring Innovation through Imagination," focuses on the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics—the so-called STEM subjects.

In a message to the NWHP constituency, Molly Murphy MacGregor, the project's executive director and co-founder stated, "Unfortunately, women remain largely underrepresented in many STEM professions and academic programs."

That may be so for women throughout history and in the general population. For example, women own 7.8 million businesses, yet women-owned business accounted for 52 percent of all businesses operating in the health care and social assistance sector.

However, that statistic doesn't ring true for women in the Air Force, where science, technology, engineering and mathematics inform every Airman's career—from the pre-cadet to the astronaut, from the newly-recruited Airman to the general officers. Once again, the women of the Air Force are bucking a trend, and we are all gaining momentum.

*Martha J. Lockwood
Chief, AFPRO Information Products*

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

Feb. 28, 1946 – The XP-84 Thunderjet first flew at Edwards AFB. This was the last subsonic, straightwing fighter-bomber to see operational service.

Feb. 29, 1944 - Fifth Air Force bombers put both Japanese air bases at Alexishafen, New Guinea, out of operation. This command also supported the first landing made in the Admiralty Islands to complete the isolation of Rabaul.

March 1, 1963 - The Air Force achieved its first Advanced Ballistic Missile Reentry System launch from Cape Canaveral AFS, Fla.

March 2, 1910 – Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois began solo flying at Fort Sam Houston. Foulois was the only pilot and only one with flying duty assigned to the Signal Corps at that time.

March 3, 1986 - TAC's first OT-37 Tweet replaced the Cessna O-2 aircraft at Shaw AFB.

March 4, 2002 - During Operation Anaconda, the Air Force experienced its first combat deaths since the 1991 Gulf War. Two airmen died in helicopter assaults near Gardez, Afghanistan.

March 5, 1985 - Through March 9, airlift crews flew 123 tons of food and medicine as part of four famine relief missions to Sudan, Niger, and Mali.

TRENDING *(Continued from Page 1)*

[AF releases criteria for new combat medal](#)

Air Force officials released nomination criteria for the new Distinguished Warfare Medal Feb. 15, following defense officials' announcement of the new decoration days prior.

▶ **PERSONNEL ISSUES**

[Accountability made easy with mobile support](#)

Events ranging from the catastrophic storms in the northeast to the tsunami in Japan have displaced many Airmen and civilians throughout the past few years resulting in numerous reasons to use the Air Force Personnel Accountability and Assessment System.

▶ **FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

[Commentary - Getting back to basics can save lives](#)

In the stressed, overworked and strained ops tempo environment of today's Air Force, safety sometimes ends up pushed to the back burner.

▶ **ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY**

[DOD Implements Secure Program for Mobile Devices](#)

The Defense Department is rolling out a program that will allow users of a range of mobile devices -- working anywhere from remote battlefields to the Pentagon to rapidly share classified and protected data across all components.

[Academy cadet's research could save AF \\$4.9 billion](#)

An Air Force Academy cadet's research into how the Air Force buys missiles could save the service as much as \$4.9 billion over five years while increasing the Air Force's inventory.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit

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

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