



# Women Military Aviators

*January 2020*

preserving the past, promoting the present, protecting the future

## *Greetings!*

Welcome to a new year and a new decade, although some will debate that 2021 is the start of the decade. Either way, it is time for a new beginning and anticipation of things to come. It's the feeling of excitement that I always had when starting a new assignment. What are your plans for 2020? Getting more involved with WMA is a great resolution to have on your list, whether it's to volunteer to help with Membership, document your story, or attend a convention and connect/reconnect with the military aviation community. You can email me or visit the website, to find where your talents can best serve WMA. *Sophia Conerly*

## *From the President*



As members of the elite Women Military Aviators, it is our honor and duty to help improve the flight path ahead for past, present, and future aviators. Your WMA Board and Committees are actively working several issues important to our members to include recording the histories of those who blazed trails before us as well as recent updates to the pregnancy flight restriction policy. WMA has a powerful voice on topics important to military aviation. We want to actively pursue additional important challenges as these items arise — what is it that your WMA organization can get behind to help make a difference in your aviation career? How can we help remove obstacles for the generations to come? Your Board is filled with compassionate, can-do leaders who are at max power and ready to release brakes — we want to unite with a consolidated voice to make a positive impact to our membership's legacy! Continue to let us know the issues you are seeing, no matter where you are in your career or life journey. You have a voice and an amazing opportunity to use it via your WMA platform. Please join us on any of the existing or future efforts — we welcome your ideas, talents, and passion for making a positive difference! I am honored to serve you and I look forward to meeting you at WAI Orlando in March and learning your story first-hand!

Blue Skies,  
*Charlie Poirson*, Col, USAF  
President, WMA  
[charlie@poirson.com](mailto:charlie@poirson.com)

## *Celebrating a Pioneer, Bee Haydu...Margie Varuska*

BJ and I had the honor of attending Bee's 99th birthday celebration last month. What an event! The host was Ruth Jacobs, a close friend of Bee's and a 99, and she pulled out all the stops. Over 80 people attended and all knew or were connected to Bee in some way.

[Note: my connection to Bee began in the early eighties when we were charter members of WMPA, later WMA. Bee was our Historian and kept beautiful large scrapbooks (now archived at TWU) of members' newsworthy accomplishments. In approximately 2005, she asked me to take over as Historian and I worked with her closely to make the transition.]

The venue was the Palm Shores Community Center in West Palm Beach (very near Bee's condo on Singer Island) and the view of the ocean was spectacular. We met many incredible folks during happy hour and look forward to keeping in touch with them.

Bee arrived in her WASP uniform in a wheelchair and managed to say hello to everyone during the evening. After dinner, we sang Happy Birthday (it was also the Ninety-nines 90th anniversary) and she spoke to the crowd, making jokes for those of us who bought her books ("if you don't like them, I don't care"). She was very awed and appreciative of the outpouring of support and made us all feel very special just to know her.

It was a magical evening and we all agreed to meet again next year for Bee's 100th birthday.

Some of the interesting women I met:

Terry Carbonell - International Director of the 99s (says she has been in touch w/Charlie about a military liaison?); lives in Key West, will look for Diana.

Lennie Sorenson - 1st female Continental pilot (as well as many other firsts); she'd like to reach out to TWU.

Lisa Taylor - Director, WASP Museum in Sweetwater.

Ana - an 11 year old young lady who wants to be a Navy pilot; I encouraged her to visit our website and make contact!

Sharon Menear - 1st female USAir pilot, also an author of the Samantha Starr Action Thrillers featuring a Female Airline Pilot.



*Margie & Bee*





## ***WAI Conference 2020***

Ladies, the 2020 Women in Aviation (WAI) Convention in Orlando, Florida is coming up fast! The convention is March 5th - 7th, at the Coronado Springs Resort, Walt Disney World Complex. This is a wonderful opportunity to reenergize your aviator spirit and mentor young women, encouraging them to become military aviators!

WMA has three education sessions scheduled at the convention. Dr. Kate Landdeck will lead off with her history of Women Military Aviators, beginning with the WASP. Capt. Meaghan Camp will follow moderating the "Striking a Balance" panel with aviators who are juggling being in the Reserves/Air National Guard, being a commercial pilot, and raising a family. And in trail, Kerry Sheridan who will moderate the "Women in Combat Operations" panel. We will also have a membership meeting and then of course the famous Flight Suit Social on Friday night, sponsored in part by Lockheed Martin!

WMA also will be presenting one scholarship for flying lessons for a deserving future pilot. All work being done by the Scholarship Committee headed up by Peggy Phillips.

And there is plenty of time to sign up to volunteer for a two-hour block at the WMA booth. Kelly Hamilton has graciously stepped forward to be the Booth Supervisor!

WMA has a block of 20 rooms that are reserved in a casita (a building separate from the main hotel, but well within walking distance of all venues). To make a reservation in this block, call group reservations at 407-939-4686 and ask to be put into the Women Military Aviators Block. DON'T WAIT, the rooms in the WMA block are going fast and the rest of the resort is sold out for Saturday night. This reservation must be made NLT 5 February 2020. We will turn all unused rooms back at that time. See you there!

To register for the WAI Conference, go to <https://www.wai.org/20conference>.

To volunteer at the WMA Booth, contact Kelly Hamilton, [colonelkelly@icloud.com](mailto:colonelkelly@icloud.com).

For questions about WMA at WAI, contact Kathy Cosand, [kcosand@hotmail.com](mailto:kcosand@hotmail.com).



*Everyone has oceans to fly, If they have the heart to do it. Is it reckless? Maybe. But what do dreams know of boundaries? Amelia Earhart*



## *Bravo Zulu!*



Congratulations to Astronaut Jasim Moghbeli, former Marine Corps AH-1 Cobra Pilot, on successfully completing astronaut training under the Artemis Astronaut program. She along with 12 others are now eligible for assignments to the International Space Station. OOH RAH!



## *Images from the Past*

This is me, Sophia Conerly, standing by my H-3 in Bahrain.

I was assigned as “Mama Duck” or Det OIC of HC-2, Det-2, “Desert Ducks”. Our mission was providing logistics support for 5th Fleet in the Arabian Gulf. It was an exciting time and lots of flying!

Share your moments by sending photos to Sophia ([sgconerly@yahoo.com](mailto:sgconerly@yahoo.com)).



## **WANTED!**

The 99s are looking for a military woman aviator or two to help out with the annual 99s WASP luncheon. As the WASPs are not able to attend SUN n FUN as easily, the 99s are transitioning the annual luncheon panel to a Panel Talk made up of WASPs and women military aviators. If you are interested in participating on the panel and can be at SUN n FUN in Lakeland, Florida, March 31 - April 1st, contact Myra Bugbee at [mjbugbee@gmail.com](mailto:mjbugbee@gmail.com) or, Kerry Sheridan at [ksheridan32@yahoo.com](mailto:ksheridan32@yahoo.com).

## *Committee News*

### *Pilot Registry*

Continuing the call for winging information. It's important to archive this information for posterity. Tricia Wood is leading the project and needs your participation, and your help in sharing the project with other women who aren't WMA members yet. Please contact Tricia at [jatawood@gmail.com](mailto:jatawood@gmail.com).

### *Membership*

Safety is to aviation as membership is to WMA, it's everyone's job. Please share this newsletter with other women military aviators and encourage them to join WMA. The website is, <https://www.womenmilitaryaviators.com>. And don't forget to renew your membership too!

### *Historical Committee*

#### Historical Committee Conducting Oral History Interviews at WAI Conference

Our Oral History Program "to capture the flight and leadership accomplishments of WMA Members through the collection of personal recollections" is well underway and we want to add your story!

If you plan to attend the WAI Conference, please find time to schedule your interview. Your session will last approx. 90 minutes from "takeoff to touchdown" which includes some admin and set-up time in addition to your 60 minute interview.

We know that the conference demands much of your time and we are happy to work with you to find a convenient time to get together. The Historical Committee as well as some of our Service Representatives will be available March 5, 6, and 7 to conduct interviews on site at the Coronado Springs Resort.

If you are interested in participating, please email Margie to be added to the schedule. We will send you a list of open time slots and some sample questions. Help tell the true tale of women in military aviation!

Your WMA Historical Committee:

Margie Varuska, [margievaruska@gmail.com](mailto:margievaruska@gmail.com)

Marcy Atwood, [puckwood@comcast.net](mailto:puckwood@comcast.net)

Peggy Carnahan, [PegCarnahan@cs.com](mailto:PegCarnahan@cs.com)

Next month: Building Your Personal Collection

Visit us at:

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and on FB:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/womenmilitaryaviators/?ref=bookmarks>