

Marine in Space

On 5 October, Marine Col Nicole Mann launched into space leading the NASA spaceflight to the International Space Station where she will stay for six months.

She was the first female Marine to join NASA in 2013 and became a mission commander of SpaceX Crew-5. As mission commander, Mann will be responsible for all phases of the flight, from launch to re-entry.



While aboard the space station she will serve as an Expedition 68 flight engineer. She also will make history on the mission as the first Native American woman in space, a member of the Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes in Northern California.

Col Mann is joined by astronauts Josh Cassada, Koichi Wakata, and Anna Kinkina.

The crew will study microgravity's affects on the



Left to right: Anna Kinkina, Josh Cassada, Col Mann, Koichi Wakata

cardiorespiratory system, modeling heart tissue to improve therapies for spaceflight-caused health issues, and the 3D bioprinting of human organs and tissues for implantation, among multiple other types of research.

They will return to earth in March 2023.



"I think a lot of people sometimes will ask, 'how does it feel to be a female astronaut or a female Marine?' and I think it's important that young girls realize that they have these leadership opportunities for them," Mann said during a press conference. "But from an operational perspective, to be honest, it really doesn't matter if you're a woman or a man, or what country you're from or your gender or your race. We are coming together as a human race."

Col Nichole Mann

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For questions and comments regarding the new governance structure.

WMA 'NOUNCEMENTS

Official Publication of the WMA

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**DEADLINE FOR JANUARY ISSUE
10 JANUARY 2023**



Reporting In...*National President*

WOW! Now THAT was a Convention for the history books! What a phenomenal experience we had. We were VEGAS STRONG! From the guest speakers, Margaret Kibbon, RADM (Ret) and former chaplain for the Marine Corps, and Major General Bobbi Shea, Office of Legislative Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps, our author panels, the fun run/walk to memorialize fallen victims from the Las Vegas 2017 shooting, our active duty, and so many members and their guests!! It was absolutely surreal at times. And I would be very remiss if I did not recognize our Nevada 3 Sagebrush Chapter for their support and hard work. We could not have made this Convention such an experience for all without your help! Congratulations is not enough – you all made us WMA PROUD! And of course, I hope you are following little Opha Mae on her travels throughout the United States! Never know where she will show up! (More on Opha on the Convention page).

Planning for Atlanta 2024 will begin shortly. If you would like to volunteer your services for planning, support during convention or anything else, our Immediate Past President, Rhonda Amtower, will be leading the charge. Her email for convention planning is **CPC@womenmarines.org**. Atlanta Dogwood Chapter, GA-1, will be our host. Location (venue) has not yet been determined but be on the look out – advertising for this convention will begin early.

So now we head off into the Marine Corps holiday season: Marine Corps birthday celebrations, Veterans Day ceremonies, Thanksgiving, Wreaths Across America, Christmas, New Years! Whew! Exhausting to think about it all. I am sure many of you will participate – please make sure to log your events into Facebook so we can ensure you receive plenty of coverage.

The 2022-2024 Board of Directors will continue to work on our strategic vision, campaign plan for donations and fundraising, improving the member experience, and of course, increasing our membership and participation in many programs. As Board President, I will actively be reaching out to partner with a variety of veteran organizations to ensure our presence is known. As for membership, I tasked the Convention attendees to recruit one person and Major General Shea tasked them with recruiting two! We did not collaborate on that – just happened. Let's get those members aboard!

I want to wish everyone a very happy and healthy holiday season! WMA has a lot to celebrate this year and forward. Let's blast off into 2023 with a bang!!!

*Semper Fidelis,
Ann*



Opha Mae

Reporting In...*Vice President*

Marines, first let me say thank you for this opportunity to serve as your Vice President. WMA is a great organization, and I can't wait to see what great things are coming our way. I had a great time at the convention, meeting members and running into Marines I served with. The chapter workshop was amazing, and I wanted to thank all the members who attended. The ideas that were flowing through the members was inspiring. There were ideas on fundraising, recruitment, retention, and community service. There were also concerns about chapter meetings, reaching our younger and older members, and communication. These are only a few of the items talked about.

Going forward I hope to share your suggestions and answer all your concerns by holding chapter training. This training will consist of many different topics throughout the year. I plan to have chapter training a couple times a month (on the same subject) but broken down into areas. This will hopefully allow as many members as possible to attend and receive the training. This training will be open to all members, not just officers. My goal is to reach as many members as possible.

If there is a topic you would like me to discuss, please let me know by sending me an email at **listening@womenmarines.org**. I am monitoring that email. Again, thank you for this opportunity, I look forward to working with all of you.



Patty Collins

MOLLY MARINES

Platoon 2058

PFC Dreterria S. Maiden, Clarksdale, MS
Graduation Date: 2 September 2022

Platoon 2066

PFC Bethany Vega, Manchester, CT
Graduation Date: 30 September 2022

Platoon 2070

Pvt Evalyn Hoppe, Wausau, WI
Graduation Date: 30 September 2022

Platoon 3042

Pvt Brown
No information sheet submitted

Platoon 3046

PFC Andrea M. Walden-Sittman, River Pines, CA
Graduation Date: 1 July 2022

Platoon 3050

PFC Michelle Mendive, New Plymouth, ID
Graduation Date: 19 august 2022

Platoon 3054

Pvt Rita Ladraa, Staten Island, NY
Graduation Date: 19 August 2022

Platoon 4022

PFC Kierra A. Schmidl, Lake Hopatcong, NJ
Graduation Date: 10 June 2022

Platoon 4023

LCpl Rosa E. Lopez, Carlsbad, CA
Graduation Date: 10 June 2022

Platoon 4025

PFC Cristianne H. Tchakounte-Somgwack
Bossier, LA
Graduation Date: 22 July 2022

Platoon 4029

PFC Estefania Rangel, San Gabriel, CA
Graduation Date: 22 July 2022

Platoon 4035

PFC Julia G. Johnson, Geneva, IL
Graduation Date: 16 September 2022

Platoon 4036

Pvt Brenda Lopez Contreras, Sacramento, CA
Graduation Date: 16 September 2022

Platoon 4039

Pvt Brenda A. Lopez Contreras, Sacramento, CA
Graduation Date: 16 September 2022

Platoon 2141—San Diego

PFC Karen Alvidresaleman, Beaumont, TX
Graduation Date: 2 September 2022
GySgt Finley, SDI GySgt Brinkman



Platoon 2142 - San Diego

PFC Angelique M. Ponce, Whittier, CA
Graduation Date: 2 September 2022
Sgt Curiel, SDI GySgt Thomas, Sgt Jordi



IRON MIKE

Platoon 4024

PFC Timothy L. Whitley, Greenville, SC
Graduation Date: 22 July 2022

Platoon 4026

PFC Antonio C. Perales, Taylor, MI
Graduation Date: 22 July 2022

Platoon 4028

Pvt Ozuna George, White Plains, NY
Graduation Date: 22 July 2022

Platoon 4030

PFC Hogan A. Tooke, Alexandria, VA
Graduation Date: 22 July 2022

Passing

A lot of our members won't recognize the name Mary L. StremLOW. Those of us who are forever grateful for her woman Marine history books are very much aware of her and mourn her passing.



Mary was a retired colonel who wrote and lectured about sexism in the armed forces and the role of women in the Marines. She passed on September 3rd after a short period of declining health. She was 88.

Born in Buffalo, the oldest of four children, she was part of a family of military women. Two of her aunts, Petrina Nigro Harman and Rose Nigro De George, served in the Marine Corps in World War II. One of her sisters, Major Carol Diliberto, served during the Vietnam War.

While attending Buffalo State Teachers College, she took part in a summer program which led to a commission as a second lieutenant when she graduated in 1955.

Among her tours of duty, Mary served as: executive officer at Women Recruit Training Battalion at Parris Island; Inspector-Instructor for the Women's Reserve Platoon in the Third Infantry Battalion in Boston; an instructor at the Woman Officer School at Quantico; and the woman officer selection officer for the First Marine Corps District.



While Mary was stationed at the Marine Corps Museum in Washington, D.C., she wrote the book we all admire and thank her for, "A History of the Women Marines, 1946-1977." For young women considering a career in the armed forces, she produced another book, "Coping with Sexism in the Military." She also wrote "Free a Marine to Fight: Women Marines in World War II" for a 50th anniversary Marine Corps monograph series about the war.

She was awarded the Legion of Merit when she retired in 1987.

In 1992, Mary was appointed by Gov. Mario Cuomo to be a deputy director in the State Division of Veterans Affairs, heading its Buffalo office and overseeing its 25-county western division. She also was chairman of its Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards, and a member of the Secretary of

the Navy's Retiree Council, the Veterans Administration Advisory Committee for Women Veterans, the Albany County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee, and the national boards of the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association and the Retired Officers Association.

The State Assembly named her Woman Veteran of the Year in 1994.

For three years she served on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and, as a public speaker, called attention to the overlooked role women played in the military.

"American women soldiers, sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen – through every war – kept our troops fed, and paid, and supplied," Col. StremLOW said to the crowd at the Moving Wall, a half-sized replica of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Orchard Park in 1989.

"They repaired planes, drove trucks, rigged parachutes, and were gunnery instructors," she said. "They were the nurses on Anzio Beach, in Korea, and in Vietnam. On their jungle fatigues they wore the blood of dying and injured Americans. And to this day, they cannot forget the young faces."

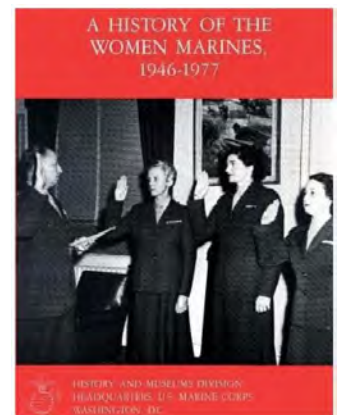
For 20 years, until she was 80, she made an annual six-week visit to Italy, where she learned to speak Italian and cook Italian cuisine.

Her husband, George J. StremLOW, played football in Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, under coach Marv Levy. A Marine Corps lieutenant colonel who earned two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star during two tours in the Vietnam War, died in 1983.

Mary's survivors include two sisters, nieces, and nephews. A Memorial Mass was offered on September 10 in Orchard Park.

If you want to learn about our history, get a copy of "A History of the Women Marines, 1946-1977." It's easy to find. Just Google it.

Semper Fidelis, Col StremLOW, with great appreciation and admiration by many women Marines for your contributions to female service members and for your service.



Sondra Metzger

Chaplain's Corner

As a first-time attendee of the WMA Convention, let me say it was a fabulous experience! If you have never been, please plan on coming to Atlanta in 2024. To those of you who worked so hard to plan and implement the Convention, please know that your labors did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Thank you!! It was great!

My overall experience of the Convention and our two keynote speakers have given me a lot to reflect on over the last few days. Chaplain Kibben (RADM, USN, Retired) used the metaphor of a tapestry to describe the WMA and our shared experience of being women Marines. MajGen Shea, in talking to LCpl Gonzalez, reminded us that we gathered at the Convention as a sisterhood of "strong, motivated women for a common purpose," the threads that form a tapestry bigger than our individual selves.

Amy Foreman has written a poem called "Tapestry".

The pattern on the underside confused
By snarl and tangle, jumbled, twisting knot.
Its warp and woof embroidered without
thought

It seems: the flawless linen now infused
With spots of wreckage—perfect weave
abused.

"A waste of thread," I cry, upset, distraught,
And try to pluck the mess now sewn taut,
Then see the Eye that watches me, amused—
Whose Hand now turns the fabric right-side-
up.

I, thunderstruck perceive a pristine shawl,
True motif, dyed perfection, glossy shine
That stirs me as I contemplate close up
The faultless weft, undamaged after all.
Eternity alone discerns design.

As we each trained to be Marines, our DIs had the responsibility of taking our individual threads and weaving them together, not only to form our platoons, but to weave us into the larger tapestry of the Marine Corps. What a task! While, admittedly, sometimes a painful process, we owe them a debt of gratitude. Now we come together to weave ourselves together into forming the tapestry that is the Women Marines Association.

Melinda Townsend



TAPS

Life Members

Beisner, Ruth (Anderson)	1029	06/23/2022	FL-3
Burns, Phyllis L. (Crabb)	1566	07/19/2022	MAL
Comeau, Lidwine		10/07/2022	MAL
Day, Autumn	3456	07/24/2022	OH-1
DeVries, Sherry M.	2909	08/05/2022	MAL
Frey, Nicola ("Nicki") L.	2048	06/01/2022	TX-3
(Varelas)			
Patrick, Roberta N.	165	07/22/2022	MAL
Stanford, Shirley J.		11/13/2019	CR
Stremflow, Mary L.	3286	09/03/2022	NY-8



Since the Chaplain mentioned our Drill Instructors, here's a photo from the DI Reunion this year.



Evelyn Kandel, NY-9, on an Honor Flight to the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC.



Sgt Crumlish (Kandel) (far right in above photo) and in the one opposite.

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Marine Presence at the 25th Anniversary Celebration at the Military Women's Memorial

From Friday, October 14th through Sunday, October 17th, the Memorial hosted an anniversary celebration designed to recall the very events that between 30,000-40,000 women veterans and supporters enjoyed in 1997. The only part that disappointed many was the lack of women attending this time around. Numbers of attendees at the five distinct events ranged from a low of 250-300 at lunch on Friday, to perhaps 500-600 dropping in at the Memorial on Sunday to



Pam Bloustine, Karen Kelly, Mitzi Manning, and "Jenny"



observe the ribbon cutting on the Vaught Center and to share a piece of cake.

Kicking festivities off, the first planned activity was to be the service luncheons.

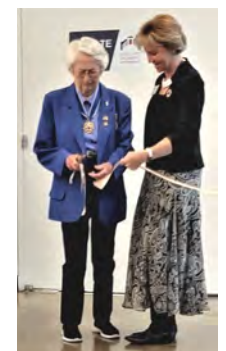
These were to be held at the same venue, in separate dining rooms. Because of the low response, the leadership made the decision to have all services combined. It was a great move, as many of the women present had ties with women in other services through friendships forged during joint tours, shared school experience, and multi-service deployments.

That same evening, in a ballroom with corporate sponsor tables against the walls loaded with free give-a-

ways, the group enjoyed a "chat and chew" (buffet and bar) highlighted by an outstanding cover band with a heavy Motown sound.

Saturday was a day for exploring the recent renovations at the Memorial and for shopping in the souvenir shop. That same evening, approximately 300 veterans reenacted the candlelight walk across Memorial Bridge from the Lincoln Memorial to Arlington Cemetery and the Military Women's Memorial.

Sunday was the culmination of much planning to honor Brigadier General Wilma Vaught with a naming ceremony and ribbon-cutting on the refurbished auditorium. The Vaught Center will serve as a lasting tribute to the woman most responsible for the existence of the first ever memorial honoring the military service of American women. At the reception following, General Vaught greeted old and new friends, and proudly wore her recently received Presi-



BGen Vaught and MWM President Phyllis Wilson cutting the ribbon for the Vaught Center



dential Medal of Freedom.

It was a great weekend... those of us who attended just wished there had been more sister Marines there with us.

Mitzi Manning

Which boot camp is tougher? This Marine experienced both.

LCpl Kylie Hathaway is one of the few Marines who has hiked San Diego's hills and battled Parris Island's sand fleas to earn her Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.

Hathaway, 19, began recruit training at San Diego, where she served as the guide for her platoon. She was just two weeks away from becoming a Marine when she fractured the tibia bone in one of her legs — threatening to derail all that she had worked so hard for.

Hathaway said, "When I got dropped, they had given me two options: It was go home that day or go to Parris Island. And, I wanted to be a Marine, so I opted to continue my recovery and go to Parris Island."

As she began to recover from her injury, Hathaway's greatest concern was that her leg wouldn't heal, or she would break it again, forcing her to go home. Fortunately, she was cleared to go to Parris Island, where she spent three months in the Female Recovery Platoon. Women who are injured during recruit training in San Diego can join the Marine Corps' sole Female Recovery Platoon at Parris Island.

In April, Hathaway resumed boot camp at Parris Island on the 30th day of the training cycle. One of the most daunting challenges she faced was adapting to her new platoon — and learning to not keep comparing them with the recruits in her old platoon.

It was a struggle to learn how to work with these unfamiliar recruits. She initially closed herself off from the rest of her platoon. Her goal was simply to get through The Crucible and graduate as quickly as possible, she said. But when her senior drill instructor made Hathaway the guide for her new platoon, she was forced to take charge and be a leader.

"I needed my platoon in order to do that," Hathaway said. "I had to remember the things that my senior drill instructor from San Diego would tell me: 'Good leaders know their Marines. It's not just: you're there, you tell them what to do. You get to know them personally so you can work with them better.'"

So, Hathaway got to know her fellow recruits better and on May 14, her senior drill instructor was there at the end of the Crucible to give Hathaway

her Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. But the reality of her accomplishment didn't really sink in until she met her family at

graduation. It was the first time she had seen them in eight months.

Hathaway said she had been at boot camp for so long that she would sometimes refer to herself in the third person as "this recruit" while talking to family members. Once, she even asked her mother for permission to make a head call.

After going through boot camp at the Marine Corps' East and West Coast training depots, Hathaway is in the unique position of experiencing what life is like for a recruit at both San Diego and Parris Island.

Some differences between the two are subtle, such as the different terms used at the two depots for cleaning.

"In San Diego, we called it 'scuzzing the deck,'" Hathaway said. "But in Parris Island, we called it 'tiny bubbling.'"

Of course, one major difference between the two training depots is that recruits at San Diego climb a lot of hills. But Parris Island has two things that San Diego lacks: humidity and sand fleas, she said.

Since the dawn of time, Marines have opined on which recruit training depot is tougher: San Diego or Parris Island. For Hathaway, it's a split decision.

"I feel like San Diego pushes you more physically while Parris Island tries to push you more mentally," Hathaway said.

Hathaway explained that she began recruit training at San Diego and immediately had to deal with the hills and the other physical challenges of boot camp.

"I personally don't really think that one is harder than the other," Hathaway said. "I think it just depends on how you want to look at it: physically vs. mentally."



Jeff Schogol

Edited for space by

Sondra Metzger



Bobsledding Marine

Riley Compton has been selected as one of three pilots for the USA Bobsled and Skeleton Federation team, meaning she will represent the U.S. in the World Cup competitions. She

learned of the achievement during a virtual call on October 10th.

Compton began bobsledding in 2020, and soon aspired to make the national team. To be eligible, she needed to compete in five races on three tracks in two years. She accomplished this during her third season, racing in the U.S., Austria, and Germany.

Since 2019, Compton has been an active-duty Marine stationed in Camp Pendleton, and said the leaders on the base have been supportive and encouraging of her bobsled schedule and goals.

Compton will compete in bobsled events in Canada, Europe, and the U.S. from November to February. She hopes to be the first female Marine to compete in the Olympics.



Riley at the front of the bobsled

Edward Rudd

Edited by Sondra Metzger

WMA Wreaths Across America Challenge

Help us reach our goal of 250. One wreath at a time.

REMEMBER the Fallen. . . HONOR those who Serve. . . TEACH our children the value of Freedom.

On December 17, 2022 at 12:00 pm, Women Marines Association National Level (M10040P) will be helping Jacksonville National Cemetery to Remember and Honor our veterans by laying Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes.

Troops to get aid with abortions

The Pentagon will provide travel funds and support for troops and their dependents who seek abortions but are based in states where they are now illegal, according to a new department policy. The military will also increase privacy protections for those seeking care.

The policy sets guidelines so local commanders aren't allowed to influence whether service members get access to care.

Military Suicides Declining

Suicides across the active-duty military decreased over the past 18 months driven by sharp drops in the Air Force and Marine Corps last year and a similar decline among Army soldiers during the first six months of this year.

The shift follows increased attention by senior military leaders and an array of new programs aimed at addressing what has been a persistent problem in all the services, although it's unclear what impact any of the programs had or if pandemic-related restrictions played any role in the decline.

The Defense Department is still grappling with widespread shortages of mental health personnel and a difficult push to reduce the stigma of seeking help. But the numbers provide a glimmer of hope that some of the recent changes, which range from required counseling visits to stress relief education and recreational outings, may be working.

According to the data, the number of suicides in the Air Force and Marine Corps dropped by more than 30% in 2021 compared with 2020, and the Navy saw a 10% decline. The Army saw a similar 30% decrease during the first six months of this year compared with the same time period last year.

The Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps have all had a bit more suicides in the first six months of 2022 than during the same time period last year, according to preliminary Pentagon data. That makes it unclear if the downward trend will continue through the end of this year.

Lolita Baldor

Associated Press



**Happy 247th,
Marines!**

Welcome to the 2022 Las Vegas Convention! Lots to show, so grab a beverage, a comfy chair, and relax.

Hello from Oklahoma and not Las Vegas! We have a lot of photos for the rest of the newsletter. So many that if I list the Marines who took the photos, I will have less room for photos. We don't want that, do we??

So here are the major sharers of photographs:

PRO Mary Ann Merritt

Karl Hackbarth

Martin Buitron

And a variety of attendees

Many thanks to those hearty souls! One other thing about the photos...
I don't know everybody's name, so a lot of the photos don't have captions.

Sondra Metzger

Reporting In...Opha!

This little 4" doll was making the rounds at the convention. She shows up in quite a few photos, and judging by that, I'd say she was the "hit" of the convention!

Not all of them are "Ophas." Once you get one, you have to name it after someone you admire in the Corps/WMA. There can only be ONE Opha, and that name is taken. For instance, there's Big Guns, Julia (Hamblet), Jenny (Jenny Wrenn), and Sabourin (Mary Sabourin).

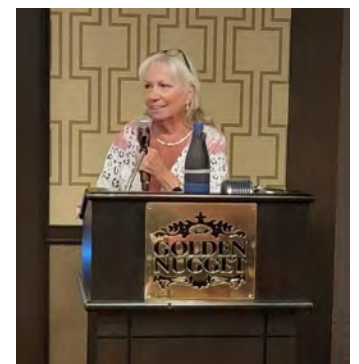
And not all of them are white. You can order ones with a different skin tone from Amazon. They are called Pops by Funko, and there are other branches as well as male Pops.

Because of her popularity, she may show up in future newsletters, so I thought it best to properly introduce (warn) you.



Sondra Metzger

The Thursday Meet and Greet - Elvis was IN the House



Emcee Pam Bloustine



Way to go, Dennis Kovats!



Pam with Barbara Hoadley, oldest member there at 93!



Rhonda getting in some practice for her next job.



NE-1, Grace Carle Chapter, presented Rhonda with a shadow box of a framed flag made out of red and white roses. On the glass it says, "Home of the free because of the brave." It was a thank you from them for all the ways she helped the chapter over the past few years. The shadow box was made by Pam Voss.



Active Duty all registered and ready to go!



Carol Mutter, Pam Bloustine, and Elvis. Bet you never thought you'd see those names in the same sentence!



Opening Ceremony



**Jeff Merritt
Carol Mutter**



**Dennis Kovats
Dr Betty Moseley Brown**



**William Amtower
Rhonda Amtower**



**Guest of Honor Chaplain
Margaret Grun Kibben**



Desert Pines MCJROTC Unit



Our active duty Marines with MajGen Shea in the middle



Lucrecia Abrego, President, NV-3

Tributes to SgtMaj Bertha Peters Billeb and SgtMaj Grace Carle, the first and the last Sergeants Major of Women Marines



***Rhonda Amtower presenting the
National Service Award to Lillian Cross***



***Guest of Honor, Margaret Grun Kibben
Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives***



***Rhonda with Jennie Carle, the niece of
SgtMaj Grace Carle***

National Service Awards

Heather McKibben

Heather McKibben is a WMA Life member who has taken her personal time to help many WMA members, their family members, and fellow Marines with understanding their claims for VA Disability.

Being a rater for the VA she can give correct information and guidance as to the direction they need to take to make a well-rounded claim or to increase their ratings.

She is always professional and ready to help anyone who needs help. Heather has worked one-on-one with WMA members. She will go over the claim process and review the claim. She has assisted in weeding out crucial information from the claimant's file that may have been overlooked by VSOs. This is an area that is so crucial as one missing fact can get a claim denied or a rating lowered.

Without Heather, many would not get the disability rating that they should have deserved. She has contributed so much to our members, our family members, and any Veteran we have referred to her.

Citation

Heather McKibben has given her time and expertise to WMA members as well as her fellow Marines as they work through the claim process, always answering questions, guiding those who are lost, and supporting all veterans. Heather's willingness to go above and beyond is truly deserving of the WMA National Service Award.



Lillian Cross

Lillian Cross is a life member of WMA who has played a significant role in maintaining WMA Headquarters property and accountability which is held at Marine Corps Base (MCB), Camp Pendleton, CA.

WMA has been notified by MCB Camp Pendleton to vacate the building WMA Headquarters is housed in as the building is designated to be demolished. No other building on the base is available, and all outside entities using base facilities have also been asked to remove themselves from the base. The conclusion is to dissolve WMA Headquarters.

She was instrumental in cataloging and scanning historical records of WMA. With new technology, WMA has developed a policy to reduce space and weight by scanning as many pertinent documents into electronic format. Disposing of property that no longer has use for WMA. Destroying files with personal identifiers (PKI) information.

Over the years she has been the custodian of WMA's organizational flag. This includes removing chapter designation ribbons of the chapters that have folded. Obtained or created chapter designation ribbon(s) of newly approved chapters. This consists of the care and maintenance of poles, stands, and ornaments. Along with shipping or bringing the organizational flag to and from conventions.

She has single-handedly served WMA Headquarters for many years along with her husband Ken, who is a Loyal Escort. Her exceptional organizational and administrative abilities have continually endeavored to improve the effectiveness of the WMA Headquarters. A job well done.

Citation

Lillian Cross's perseverance and total dedication to ensure WMA Headquarters and property and organizational flag were maintained exceeded all expectations and requirements. Lillian's exceptional professional ability, self-motivation, initiative, and loyal dedication to WMA reflected great credit upon herself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Women Marines Association.

(This is Lillian's second National Service Award)



"I had a fun filled memorable weekend is an understatement!!! Lack of sleep, lots of cocktails, lost \$100s, 260+ pictures taken, reuniting with old friends and made many more and making memories by our laughter is truly priceless!!! This trip was much needed and comforting surrounded with many of my sister Marines!!! Many will never understand our experiences, the process and earned title "Marine;" it's the bonds that bring us together and our comradeship! Each of us has a story where we came from and who we are today!!! We work hard but play harder!!! Oohrah!!! I am truly blessed and grateful to be part of this world class bad ass warriors called "The Few, The Proud, The Marines"!!! Big shout out to all my sisters out there who made this weekend special!!!" — Annette Mirasol Aguirre

The PX



"Seeing a room filled with Women Marines of all ages; active, retired, and old vets like me (I served mid-60s) was incredible. Learning of all the current opportunities and advances for WMs was exciting and so interesting! And the duty stations!!! One of our participants is currently stationed in Taiwan, and another in Japan! And now the women can wear slacks!!!

WhooHoo!!!

The camaraderie was heart warming, the speakers excellent and the whole experience awesome!!! Great fun!!!

PS: A couple years ago former LtCol Jennifer Nothelfer (who recently married a friend of ours) sent a WMA brochure home with my husband after learning I was a vet. I joined National and found the CA-3 group, who were warmly welcoming and delightful!!!

I am blessed!!! :)

— Janet Johnson



“This is what it’s all about. Attending a convention will give you the opportunity to meet the next generation of Marines and reconnect with Marines from the past. This week was a blast with fun filled activities with sisters from past conventions, sisters you served with, and new sisters currently serving. It was truly a great time and experience. I even got to reconnect with a Marine I served with back in the 1980s at Camp Pendleton unexpectedly. We went down memory lane, catching up and getting know each other again. You never know who you will see again. I built many new friendships, visited the famous Leatherneck Club, gambled a little, experienced Freemont Street and even supported the community by participating at the Vegas Strong 5k/1m. Marines have a bond that no other service has. We are truly Semper Fidelis to our corps and to each other. Our sisterhood bonds us together. There were lots of photos taken, memories made and the comraderies that I will take back with me to carry me through until the next convention in 2024. Till we meet again! Semper Fidelis!” — Lily Brockmeier



Recognition and Awards



Donna Campbell, DC-1, accepting the Newsletter Award plaque from Mary Merritt with LE President Michael Pearce, and Rebecca Lowell. Second place went to OR-1, and third place to HI-2.



The Ruth and Dick Broe award for Overall Chapter Achievement went to OR-1. Rhonda Amtower presented. OR-1 also received the Website Award.



NE-1 was redesignated as the Grace Carle Chapter. Presenting the streamer to Pam Voss is Michael Pearce and Rhonda Amtower with SgtMaj Carle’s niece Jennie Carle observing.



Mary Anthony accepted an award from Rebecca Lowell for her chapter, CA-7, winning four awards at the 2018 convention.



The following chapters received their 50-year anniversary streamers.



FL-3 - Patty Collins and Rhonda Amtower presenting the streamer to Eileen Skahill.



IL-2 - Stephanie Kifowit and Lisa Bauc of IL-2 accepting the streamer.



GA-1 - Johnetta Williams accepting the streamer for GA-1.



CA-7 - Iris Biggers accepting the streamer for her chapter.



OH-1 - Mary Merritt accepting for OH-1.



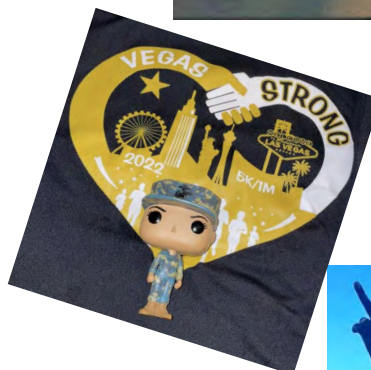
"I thought the Las Vegas convention went off well considering that it was only a three-day conference. I would have liked for the convention to be a bit longer, maybe five days, and that would have given more time to perform more in depth some of our cherished traditions, like the Memorial Service, First Timers, and the Recognition and Awards program. Then again, after COVID, chapters did not submit entries for the R&A, so there wouldn't have been much of a program anyway. Having co-chaired a convention I know how much work goes into putting one of these things on, and I think NV-3, being a relatively new chapter, did a wonderful job of making us all feel welcome. I know NV-3 had its ups and downs but they adapted and overcame. Job well done." — Lillian Cross, CA7



***I think
Jeanne Botwright
was having a pretty
good time!***

Vegas 5k/1m Run/Walk

This event is done every year and commemorates the anniversary of One October in 2017 when a man from Mesquite opened fire on the crowd attending the Route 91 Harvest music festival on the strip from his 32nd floor suites in the Mandalay Bay hotel. He fired more than 1000 rounds, killing 60 people and wounding at least 413. They run to remember those who lost their lives. They will run and walk in their memory and in honor of the survivors and the first responders. They will never forget!







Convention attendee Elizabeth Dahlmann placed 3rd in her age group!



Because NV-3 had the largest group of participants in the race, the committee awarded them a plaque! 75 Marines!



All the Vegas Run participants at the Closing Banquet. Oorah, Ladies!



Memorial Service

The Tree of Memory
Attendees were asked to write the name of those Marine Sisters who have gone before us on a ticket and leave it on the tree.



This board holds the names of all our departed Sister Marines since the 2018 Convention.



Yolanda Garcia (left) and Melinda Townsend (right) at the podium



(L-R): WMA Chaplain Melinda Townsend, Ann Crittenden, MajGen Roberta Shea, Rhonda Amtower.



(L to R) Current President Ann Crittenden; Immediate Past President Rhonda Amtower; Past President Carol Mutter; Past President Dr Betty Moseley Brown

A Tribute by Ann Crittenden

The words I am going to say today were written by the Marines who have gone before us and unfortunately have passed away in the course of the past four years.

These words were easy to write and to speak as the legacy these Marines lived is our reason to celebrate their lives today.

This memorial service is not just to remember, it is to expound on the achievements these Marines lived, provided to their country, their service, and to each other. And to those of us who opted to choose this way of life – whether a few years or 30! It is a life of service and one that is not the norm in our country.

Our new website does a tremendous job of capturing many of the memories Marines have and compares how different each generation of Marines experienced in their Marine Corps life. For example:

Today women make up 6.2% of the Marines Corps' total force on active duty, and they are active in 93% of the military occupational specialties.

Those numbers have come a long way since Opha May Johnson, one of the first 305 women accepted for active duty in the Marine Corps Reserves in 1918. All were restricted to jobs that kept them from deploying overseas.

It was not until the 1970s that women began to be exposed to more occupational fields, weapons training, higher levels of physical fitness, and the multitude of FIRSTS in so many categories began to be cataloged. Those numbers continue to go up today.

The Marines we remember today are some of those FIRSTS and for that we applaud you and remember your courage and bravery against some of the greatest odds a group of women such as these could face.

There is one large elephant in the room that continues to haunt us and that is discrimination. These women and those of us that continue to serve our country today are not the norm – we are a separate breed that wants to not only be different, but make a change for the better for all women, regardless of what occupation in life they want to serve. We chose to serve our country, not to chase the discrimination war against the men who built this large gun club.

I found a poem written by Emily Dickinson that fits what we as Marines experience as we navigate through a military environment. Our women Marines from Opha Mae to today have learned to overcome a lot of adversities, but discrimination remains prevalent. The women in Emily Dickinson's era made it clearly known that they were not going to suffer in light of it. In this short poem, Men are symbolized as Prose, Women as Poetry.



(continued on next page)

Title: They Shut me Up in Prose:

They shut me up in Prose;
As when a little Girl
They kept me in the closet
Because they liked me “still”;
Still! Could themselves have peeped
And seen my Brain – go round
They might as wise have lodged a Bird
For Treason – in the Pound
Himself has but to will
And easy as a Star
Look down upon Captivity
And laugh – no more have I!

We Marines, past, present and future are a strong and vital group. We have overcome and surpassed many past difficulties and found our way. We are proud to be part of the Marine Corps, as it is an organization that is bigger than ourselves and proudly serves our country. We have been able to retain who we are – we did not change ourselves to fit in – we made ourselves invaluable.

The Marines we honor today in this ceremony would be very proud of all of you – it has been an honor to serve along side every one of you. More importantly, it's been an honor to provide this Tribute and honor the memories of those who have gone before. Semper Fidelis.



The installation went off without the usual traditions. Instead, it was held during one of the business meetings. The above shows Rhonda installing the new Board of Directors: (from the left) Ann Crittenden, Pat Horton, Leila Garcia, Margaret Lazarus, Karen Laino Giannuzzi, Kat Montira, Christine Williams, and Patty Collins.



That's an awfully small gavel for such a big job!



The new “Boss”

Closing Banquet



***Ann Crittendon, MajGen Roberta Shea,
Rhonda Amtower***



***Rhonda pinning the National President's
pin on Ann.***



***The color guard from Desert Pines MCJROTC to the left, and
below. Outstanding job! Thank you, Cadets!***



***Our new
National President***





**Guest of Honor
MajGen Roberta Shea**



**MajGen Shea and
Mary Merritt**





Mr & Mrs Isaac Bazile



Mitzi Manning (center) and her sisters, Amy Schmitt (left) and Jane Neal



MajGen Shea, Lillian Cross, and Iris Biggers



NE-1, Grace Carle Chapter



HI-2, Wahine Koa Chapter



SnapShots



Molly Marine Chapter LA-1 had the honor of the National President, Rhonda Amtower, to install newly elected chapter officers on 20 September during the Convention. April Austin accepted for Janet Heriot (Treasurer), Allison Stein (Secretary), President Rhonda Amtower, Melanie Young (Vice President) and Nora Huete (President).



50th anniversary pic of Nancy Anderson and Mitzi Manning, 30th WVCC 1972, with one of their platoon commanders, Carol Mutter.



April Austin

Betty Mosley Brown, Denise Schlyer, Cheryl Bednarek, Angela Porter, and Diane Schlyer-Austin welcoming me into the elevator (after they kinda left me). — April Austin



Jamie Lee Anderson

"I was at a pow-wow with my pow-wow buddy/ fellow veteran when I spotted "Native Veteran, Navy." I buy the Navy hat for my pow-wow buddy, she buys the Marine hat for me. A few years later another friend tells me that I need to wear my veteran hats every day. She tells me that I am not wearing them for me. She tells me that I am "wearing them for the veteran who needs to see it, and knows that they are safe. It gives them another day." After a day-long journey involving dragging a seabag sized wheeled duffle bag between a train, plane, and an automobile, I arrive at the Golden Nugget. I am not expecting the magic of my veteran hat to come into play.

I look across the room and then it happens. I see someone who draws me in the way familial ties and hometowns draw a person forward. I take her in and she reminds me of the women back at the Navajo reservation. Something about the way she moves that the Marine Corps did not march out of either of us. I take a quick look down on her bolo: Tropix Knight (on the left). She feels like home in the way she talks. Tropix asks me what tribe I am from. I tell her I am Navajo. We go through the process of comparing clans as well as where our families are from on the Navajo reservation. It turns out that we are both from Lukachukai, AZ. From our clans we are indeed family, and in our culture we are sisters through our respective father's clans. I had hoped to meet up with one person from my platoon, or someone I served with. I did not consider meeting someone from where I learned to read, color, and start school."



"If you weren't in Las Vegas from 29 Sep thru 3 Oct, you really missed out! We saw, sang, and danced with Elvis and his showgirls, had outstanding meals and heard motivating speeches from Chaplain Margaret Grun Kibben and Major General Roberta L. Shea. I swear, if I was about 45 years younger, I would have enlisted all over again!

There was lots of laughter, a few tears, and much comradery! Approximately 43 current active-duty Marines were there sharing their stories with us 274 or so old-timers. It was hard to tell who was more motivated! Many of us also spent time on Fremont Street, in the casinos, and bars, and a couple of brave souls even went on the Zip line!

There was only one thing that disappointed me - we didn't have a quorum at the business meeting! That means not enough Marines came to the business meeting. Turns out that this year there was nothing to vote on, so it was not a problem. But when we only meet every two years and have business to take care of, YOUR attendance at the business meeting is VERY IMPORTANT!

Other than that, if there were any problems, they were not visible. Every time I saw a Marine anywhere in the hotel or vicinity, I would get an OohRah! or a Semper Fi! It seemed like a good time was had by all!

If you've never attended a convention, let me be the first to invite you to Atlanta in 2024! Plans are already in the works, and I know it will be another great time.

See you there!"

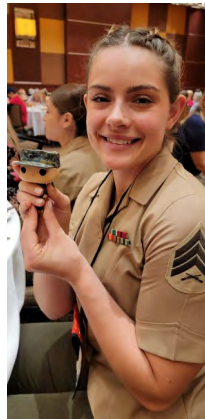
Kat Montira



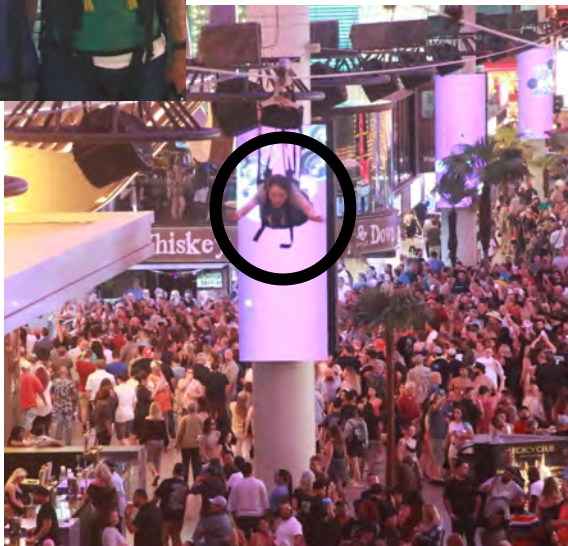
“Sister platoon!!! Nikhom Vilaysouk Bailey (Plt 4020) and I (Plt 4021) went to bootcamp in April-July 1993. We went to PA school afterwards at Camp Johnson, then went to California together! She was stationed in Camp Pendleton and I was in MCAS Tustin! We had great times together until we met our husbands and went our separate directions! I married my Marine husband and we both had orders to MCAS Iwakuni Japan and Nikhom had orders to Utah where she met her husband! After 25 years later including the four kids we each have, we finally physically met in Vegas this past weekend! And we picked up where we left off and had a wonderful fun filled weekend together like old times...Oohrah!!!” — Annette Mirasol Aquirre

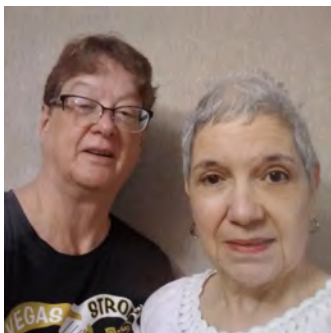


The birth of the new Chaplain's Corps was official as the prior National Chaplain, Eileen Skahill (middle), presented the new Chaplain, Melinda Townsend (right), and Assistant Chaplain, Yolanda Garcia (left), with Cross Collar Devices.



Tami Schmidt and Jeannie Morehart took a ride on the Zipline that runs down the length of Fremont Street. Tami is located in the black circle.





Denise and Marge

"I expected to have a wonderful time at the convention, but it was way beyond wonderful. I don't even have words to describe how meaningful it was. The best ones I can come up with are 'pure joy.' It was simply amazing to meet with more women Marines than I ever have before.

My enjoyment of the whole experience was at least doubled when I unexpectedly found myself rooming with Marge Nordin. Marge and I started chatting and realized we had gone through the Women's Officer Candidate Course together. This was in the summer of 1976. That's 46 years since we had last seen each other! Marge and I talked about the people we had known then and also at The Basic School afterward. We laughed really hard at some of the crazy things that some of us got up to. Also hilarious to remember were some of the ill-advised workarounds our commanders came up with as the Marine Corps painfully adjusted to having more women in its ranks.

Now that it's over, I send to all the women who attended my sincere love and best wishes. Semper Fi!" — Denise Neuman

"I got to Vegas Wednesday afternoon to attend the WMA Convention. I was so excited to attend this convention because I met up with old friends from previous Conventions. You see them, you call their name, they call my name and immediate bear hugs with the side sways. Talking face to face again with chapter members that have moved away. And then meeting new sisters, hearing their stories, exchanging info to keep in touch. NO ONE has the Camaraderie like us Marine Corps sisters.

Our new President, Ann Crittenden, talking at this convention has motivated me to increase chapter membership, publish events to newspapers, radio stations, social media, etc and reach out to MAL. I'm so excited to see the new changes that the new board will be implementing." — Iris Biggers



Beca Ives and Rachel Denise McCormick, from boot camp to their first duty station to now. These two pics are 25 years apart.



Velda McCoy and Kristin Andrew haven't seen each other in 33 years.



"I was able to meet up with my roommate Carrie (Hobbick) Mercer (right) from Okinawa, Japan, at the convention. We had not seen one another, or really spoken to one another, since May 1992. Thirty years ago!! We had so much fun re-connecting and hanging out with other sisters, new and old, at the convention." — Kay Ross





NE-1 riding in style on the Party Bus





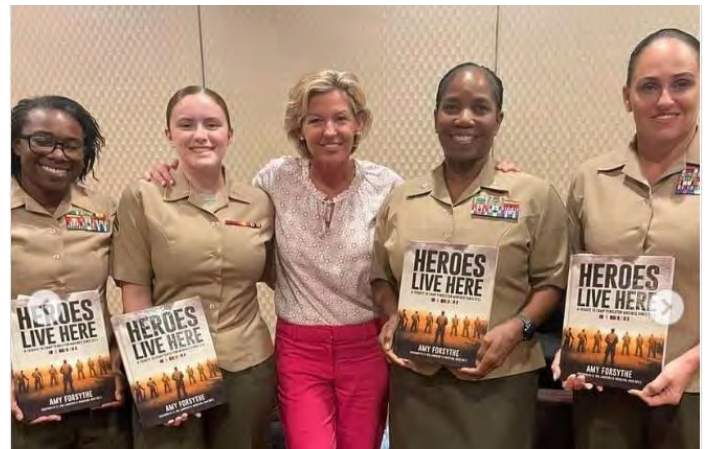
“This was my first time in Las Vegas, but my fourth convention. It didn’t disappoint. I spent a large amount of time making memories with my Chapter. I met some new friends and reconnected with old friends. I experienced some highs (like the zip line).

One thing I didn’t expect was the reaction to the Signature Quilt. I am truly humbled in the response I received. I just used my God given talent to commemorate a wonderful Anniversary in our Women Marines history.

Thank You to NV-3 and WMA for a very wonderful convention.” — Tami Schmidt



Sherrina Thomas, Felicia Grace, Danette Foster, Johnetta Williams, and Velda McCoy from GA-1.



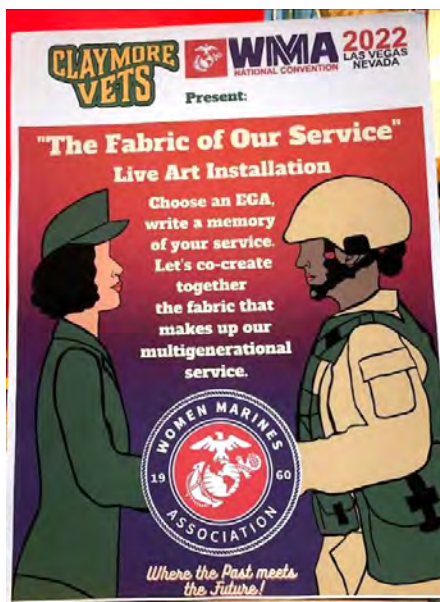
Author and workshop leader Amy Forsythe



“Conventions are great for connecting with friends you haven’t seen for a while. While checking out the PX set-up, ran into 2 friends who had moved to Hawaii several years ago. Another lady came running up to me and gave me a big hug. Janet is a retired MSgt. and we worked in the TMO Freight office at Camp Pendleton, CA on and off throughout her career (I worked civil service in the same office).

At the opening banquet an active-duty SSgt from TMO Freight, 4th Marine Reserves, New Orleans, started to talk to me. I asked her if she ever dealt with anyone from Camp Pendleton TMO Freight and she answered a lady named ‘Mary.’ I put my hand out and said ‘Hi, I am Mary.’ The New Orleans Marines made a unique challenge coin that said ‘Distribution Management Office’ on the front and ‘Marine Forces Reserve’ on the back. She presented one to me. We had the same assigned seating at the opening and closing banquets.

I was sitting next to the outgoing 3rd Vice President and her husband. We discovered we were both from Milwaukee, WI, went to the same high school, and graduated 9 years apart.” — Mary Anthony



Live art installation for the Claymore Vets. Attendees “signed in” by writing on the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor.



"To all 'Nouncements readers

I am introducing myself to all of you as the new Director of Development and Fundraising, a new and exciting position that will build on so much work that has been done since WMA was formed. Thank you, Carol Mutter, for your dedication to the WMA and for so many years heading the Ways and Means and Financial Committees that have produced so many initiatives, scholarships, and innovative ideas.

These initiatives have kept WMA solvent and have helped so many young people and families to succeed. I know Carol will continue to guide us and especially me as we chart some new initiatives and continue to watch WMA grow into the future.

I am looking forward to serving you all and listening to new ideas and improving on many still "on the books." It will be up to you all to help propose initiatives to raise money for the good causes of the WMA. I hope to expand on working for women veterans who need our help when they leave the Corps and I especially would like to see more suggestions to help women veterans who want to start up their own businesses. Entrepreneurship is so important and can help us increase membership as we move into the future.

The ideas and work on the new branding without losing our heritage builds on the theme of the Nevada Convention : 'Where the past Meets the Future.'

I hope in some small way we can together build on the great work of WMA as a premier non-profit organization known for the assistance it provides veterans and families and prides itself on its history while looking to the future. Send me your ideas and remember that Atlanta is less than two years away!

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve."

Karen LAINO Giannuzzi

And finally, we cannot finish this convention issue without recognizing our wonderful sponsors!

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