



# Oklahoma Women Veterans Organization Tulsa Chapter 0212

## OKWVO-TC — e-Newsletter



*OKWVO-TC 0212 is a 501 (c) (19) non profit War Veterans service organization composed of women who have served or are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. The mission of OKWVO-TC-0212 is to provide an opportunity for communication and association with women who have served, retired, and are serving in the United States Armed Forces.*

Christina Smith, Editor

### **President's Message:** Happy Spring Equinox 😊!

Our April meeting is going to be full and fun because we are going to hold an auction. To be able to have this auction, we need YOU. We need you to bring from home items that you no longer desire to have and are willing to auction off to raise funds for the Mission 22 bench. Don't forget to bring your cash or checkbook, all donations will be accepted.

I would like to share with you a little about a road trip that Phil and I took in February & March, to Alabama and Florida. We visited Moton Field where the Tuskegee Airman trained to be pilots. We also visited the working lighthouse in Pensacola, and we learned about the Coast Guard and the SPARS specifically. Let me share a little of our nation's great history with you.

**In Tuskegee, Alabama,** *Mildred Hemmons Carter* was a private pilot in 1941 and married new Lieutenant and pilot Herbert Carter in 1942. Mildred was the first civilian hired by the Army Air Corps. She literally cleared the way for the airmen by bulldozing the trees off the site of the airstrip. Her husband nicknamed her "Mike" due to her tomboy way of dressing, and even the name painted on his plane during the war. Although her husband was a fighter pilot during World War II, Mildred herself was integral to the success of the Tuskegee program. From creating the documents to equip the base at Tuskegee to rigging parachutes to various administrative duties, she continued working at Tuskegee Army Air Field throughout the war. She applied to be a WASP, one of the Women's Airforce Service Pilots who delivered planes during WWII. Qualified, she was rejected due to her race. Mildred later served as a mentor to other African American women pilots and continued to fly into her sixties. Seventy years after earning her pilot's license, Mildred Carter was designated a WASP for her services.

Additionally, she is a Designated Original Tuskegee Airman.

*Ms. Winifred Davis:* During WWII, Winifred Davis, a descendant of Tuskegee Institute's founder, Lewis Adam's, left her teaching position at Tuskegee Institute to support the war effort as a parachute rigger at Moton Field and Tuskegee Army Air Field. She also opened her home to cadets and helped newcomers settle into the community. In 1957, she earned her master's degree in education. Her three sons all joined the USAF.

**April 13th Meeting Agenda**  
50/50 Raffle  
Birthday Salutes,  
Recognition of New Members  
Announcements-Wellness Checks  
Round Table Discussion  
Auction for Mission 22

**OKWVO-TC 2012 Board**  
President -  
Ann Schermer  
Vice-President - Tina Smith  
Secretary - Deborah Wipf  
Treasurer - Elyce Holloway  
Chaplain - Sandy Bingaman  
Historian - Debra Clark  
Social Chair - Debbie Drain  
Sunshine Lady - Melissa Hurst

In 1942, due to the wartime manpower shortage, the Army Air Forces began accepting women as apprentice mechanics. Moton Field's managers had made no provision for female mechanics when they planned its facilities. Women soon made up a large proportion of the mechanics and support personnel, driving gas trucks, fueling aircraft, washing the aircraft and working on engines.

*Louise Lomas Winters* was honorably discharged after 10 years of service as an Army nurse. Afterwards, she became a head nurse at St. Elizabeth Hospital, a federal psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C.

These are some of the ways many women of the surrounding communities helped in the war effort at Tuskegee's Moton Field. They served as nurses, housecleaning staff, office workers, secretaries, even guards, and even more.

In 2002, the 332nd Fighter Group was reactivated as the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW). Almost 50 years after desegregation in the military, men and women of the 332nd AEW in Iraq proudly wear the unit citations earned by the Tuskegee Airman in WWII.



**In Pensacola, Florida**, we visited the working lighthouse on NAS Pensacola and learned about the SPARS. It all started with lighthouses; in 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt abolished the Lighthouse Service and transferred control to the US Coast Guard. The lighthouse keepers were given the choice to join the Coast Guard or remain as civilian employees. Lighthouse keeping was a family affair and it wasn't uncommon for the wife and children to be involved in keeping the light lit and turning.

In November 1942, Congress authorized the acceptance of women into the US Coast Guard reserve as commissioned officers and at the enlisted level, for the duration of the war plus six months. Its purpose was to release officers and men for sea duty and to replace them with women at shore stations. By the middle of the war SPARS were replacing men as Pay and Supply officers at shore stations. The Coast Guard closed its Pay and Supply School in Maryland and opened a new SPARS training center at Palm Beach. Integration was an issue in the women's corps just as it was in the male units. Black women were permitted to become SPARS by October 1944; however, they were not allowed in the officers' training program.

Women began with limitations in the USCG, but they quickly proved they could do more. Initially assigned only as seamen, 42 other ratings were opened to women by the end of the war. The rules prohibiting women from command were amended. The first woman to command was LTJG Vera Hammerschlag, of the Chatham LORAN Monitoring Station in 1943. The first female commander of a US ship of War was LTJG Beverly Kelly in 1979. SPARS began with 800 recruits. Today's Coast Guard has 44,000 active and selected reserve members and 10% are women.

As war ravaged the world, women as well as men were called upon to do their part fighting for freedom. Some women found their way into the Navy as WAVES or into the Army as WACs. Others joined the Coast Guard and became SPARS.

SPARS' duties were limited. They could not command a Coast Guard cutter. They could not even go out to sea. They had no authority over any man in the Coast Guard, officer or enlisted, and could not serve outside the mainland of the United States. Yet over 10,000 women volunteered to become SPARS between 1942 and 1946.

In St. Augustine, SPARS were housed on the 2nd floor of the Hotel Ponce De Leon, separate from the men, and they were later housed on the Bayfront. SPARS and registered nurses staffed the sick bay where the most serious medical problem was an outbreak of measles.

SPARS stands for *Semper Paratus, Always Ready*, the motto of the United States Coast Guard. Not only was the name easy to pronounce, but it also has a nautical connection. A spar is a stout pole, such as a boom or mast.

**Ann**

**#Mission 22:**

Whether you are a VET, a family member or a part of the community, you are a part of the mission. These memorials remind us of the sacrifice and honor of those we've lost, and help tie civilian to soldier. Yet, there

was not a national monument for those men and women who have fallen in the war against Veteran suicide. With your support, we were able to build one. The memorial is currently in Norfolk, Virginia at the Larchmont Public Library. It will be

**April Meeting**



**Mission 22 Fundraiser**

moving to Broken Arrow, Oklahoma in the summer of 2019. Go to [mission22.com](http://mission22.com) to find out how you can help.

Thank you Freddy's and Kimberly-Clark for your wonderful support of women veterans and your donations!  
We Salute You!

WIMSA

[www.womensmemorial.org](http://www.womensmemorial.org)

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

2019 General Meetings

2nd Saturdays 10:00 am - 12:15 pm

Meeting Location: VFW Post 577

6th and Peoria Tulsa, OK

Come and join your OKWVO Sisters and friends

for Breakfast \$6.00

13 April (Auction)

8 June

10 August

12 October

14 December

(Christmas Party and Election of Officers)

WVRD October 4-5 Midwest City area

Women Veterans Recognition Day

Contact [okwvo.org](http://okwvo.org) for further information on

WVRD information

**BOARD MEETINGS**

3rd Sunday of the each Month

2:00 pm - 4:00

Contact [womenvetstulsa@gmail.com](mailto:womenvetstulsa@gmail.com)

with board ideas

**CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH**

Karen Bissell, USN

Carmen Hill, USA, ANG-Present

Melissa Hurst, USN, OKANG, USA

Stacey Kitsmiller, USN-Present

Teri Massey, USN

Sandy Oxford, USN

Wishing you a day filled with happiness  
and a year filled with joy. ...

**CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL**

Lisa K, Bruce, USA

Moon Lim Canon, USN

Harriet Frank, USMC

Adele Kraus, USA, USAR

Kathy Kytte, USAF

Melva Thomas, USMC

**The USS Tulsa (LCS 16) commissioned as the US Navy's newest warship!** On Saturday, Feb. 18, 2019, the Littoral combat ship which bears the name of Oklahoma's second-largest city was commissioned at a pier in San Francisco. Members of OKWVO, Deborah Drain, Sandy Oxford, and Tina Smith attended this historical event at American Legion Post 1. Experiencing this event and hearing former Tulsa Mayor Kathy speak gave all in attendance great pride as we cheered for her and the great people who made this great warship come to fruition. A SALUTE to all! Anchors away to the Commander and crew of the USS Tulsa!



**Celebration Women In Uniform**

March 1st began the celebration of National Women's History Month for 2019. DAV, Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care System, and WIMSA celebrated women veterans throughout the month who have served their country with honor and distinction. We salute you! Thanks go to Lisa Northey-Mapes of the Tulsa Coffee Bunker and Tina Smith of OKWVO-TC for their presentations at the Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care System, Muskogee. A great salute to Chaplain Nancy McCoy who coordinated the special event, Celebrating Women in Uniform.



**4th Annual  
Kimberly-Clark Shooting Fundraiser  
May 10-@ Red Castle Gun Club,  
Skiatook, OK  
Deadline to Register May 8,  
Event May 10 , 2019**

This year's Shooting Fundraiser is hosted by Veterans and Employees of Kimberly-Clark. For Registration and Questions contact: Eddie Been, edwin.L.Beem@kcc.com or Lisa Bruce, [lisa.K.Bruce@kcc.com](mailto:lisa.K.Bruce@kcc.com): Phone-918-528-8252. \$80 per Shooter (5-person teams) \$55 for Veterans /Active Duty/National Guard/ Reservists.

**Thanks to ShamRock The Rose Volunteers**

A *Hooab* to Alma Moss and her niece, Debbie Drain, Stacy Kitsmiller, and Sandy Oxford for helping out at the 6th Annual ShamRock the Rose OKWVO-TC Booth. We all enjoyed meeting great people and some wonderful women veterans! The Navy outnumbered us that evening! It certainly was a wonderful evening enjoying each other's company, getting to visit and just "kick back!"

**2019 VETERANS DAY PARADE  
PHOTOS NEEDED**

Trina Fisher of the Combat Vet Center and a member of the Veterans Day Parade Committee is heading up a Parade website. If you have photos to share, send to [Tulsaveteransdayparade@gmail.com](mailto:Tulsaveteransdayparade@gmail.com)

**Need by April 3.**

Thanks so much for your donation of historical photos.





*In Memoriam to Our Fallen Sisters of OKWVO-  
TC 0212*

*Anna Jacobs King, USA Nurse Corps, Korea,  
(1949 -1957) 1925 - 2014*

*Virginia Lee Kruizinga, USMC,  
(1954 - 1957) 1933 - 2016*

*Tina Pendola, USA,  
(1973 - 1976) 1949 - 2016*

*Christy Peterson, USN,  
1949 - 2018*

*Julie Traynor Schuman,  
USAF, 1931-2018*

*Pietje (Gertruda) Smits Wall, WWII USMC,  
(1944 - 1948) 1924-2016*

