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# DAILY MINER

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## Faris knew she would become a WAC

Honoring All Who Served



Courtesy  
**Rebecca Neill**

**Rebecca (Neill) Faris**

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I grew up knowing that I would become a WAC, a member of the United States Women's Army Corps. My mother joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, which soon got rid of the word "Auxiliary," during World War II.

She was born and raised, took basic training, and had her first duty station in Iowa – she thought she was never going to see another state. But she did eventually get to Salinas AFB, Calif.

Dad, meanwhile, was drafted, trained as an armored soldier, and was ready to be shipped to Germany. He managed to get a short leave, traveled to California and in 1943 they were married in the base's first all khaki wedding – bride, groom, chaplain, attendants, and guests.

Mom often talked about how much she enjoyed her military experience, so growing up I decided I wanted to know that life, too. I graduated from Mesa High and Mesa Community College and then began my enlistment process. On July 1, 1966, I was on the big bird flying out of Phoenix on my way to Ft. McClellan, Ala. Coming down out of the clouds, I couldn't believe how green the landscape was!

The first day in basic training involved making, stripping, and remaking our cots, again, and again ... and again.

We, in Company B, 3rd Platoon, under the tutelage of Sgt. Mix, had an unusual training session. In addition to learning to keep our lockers, footlockers, uniforms, and bay in tip-top shape, going to training sessions to study military discipline, protocol, ranks of all the services, first aid, drilling, physical training, and CBR, our platoon was selected to make training films.

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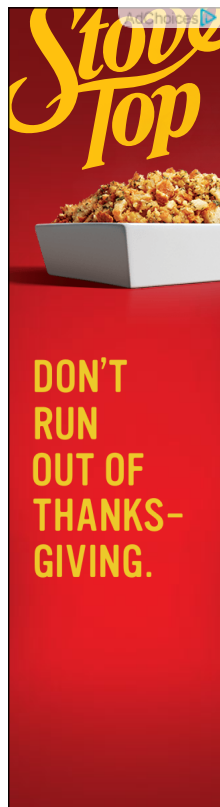
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We graduated in September and I was selected as the outstanding basic trainee and awarded the American Spirit Honor Medal.

Next, it was on to Ft. Gordon, Ga., for 18 weeks of advanced individual training to become a teletypewriter equipment repairman. My first assignment was Ft. Ritchie, Md.

It was a great post for sports teams and I enjoyed participating. During one of our training days, I was surprised to see we were watching one of the films our platoon made in basic. I was honored as WAC of the month, chosen to attend NCO Leadership Academy (placing second in the class); was the company guide-on bearer, floor sergeant, and eventually selected to become an officer candidate.

At that graduation ceremony I was again honored, this time as the outstanding candidate and I became a second lieutenant.

My first duty assignment was as the executive officer of the WAC Detachment at Ft. Rucker, Ala.

The highlight of that assignment was swearing in my younger brother, Andy, as a warrant officer, upon his graduation from Army helicopter pilot training.

My final assignment took me to Baumholder, Germany, serving as the post adjutant.

I was promoted to captain and completed my service on March 3, 1971.

A major regret was that I didn't do more personal travelling while serving. But I'm glad I served, making me eligible to be a member of The American Legion.

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