



AIRCRAFTSMAN


CORPUS CHRISTI ARMY DEPOT

December 2020



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CERTIFICATE OF RETIREMENT
FROM THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
PATRICIA A. WAHL
HAVING SERVED FAITHFULLY AND HONORABLY
WAS RETIRED FROM THE
UNITED STATES ARMY



U.S. ARMY

Relinquishment of Responsibility

by Kat Pettaway-Clarke, Lead Public Affairs Specialist, Corpus Christi Army Depot

As the Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) looks to celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2021, they bid a solemn farewell to its first female Sergeant Major. Often, Sergeant Major Patricia A. Wahl walked through the Depot holding all accountable to their duties, with uncompromising expectations of continued excellence, while focusing on the mission of getting the helicopters back to the Warfighter. "Seeing our artisans and journeymen do the work they do and seeing the pride they have supporting the Warfighters is humbling," said Sergeant Major Wahl.

As the Depot Sergeant Major, her responsibilities included "Ensuring we [CCAD] meet the Commander's intent and vision." If there is a lesson to be taught, one will quickly learn in true Sergeant Major fashion. "CCAD is truly the cornerstone of Army Aviation; we enable people dressed like me to bring 'hell' down upon our enemies, move brigades and service members around the battlefield, bring our wounded and dead home," Sergeant Major Wahl stated.

While gauging safety in the industrialized areas, and monitoring over 3,300 civilian employees health, and morale between shift changes, Sergeant Major Wahl said "CCAD's employees' impact the Department of Defense. Our Nation's strategic defense is paramount to our nation's security."

Following the legacy of her father, retired Army Sergeant Major Paul Hardwick, Sergeant Major Wahl entered the military in 1991, when great strides had been made towards gender equality. That year, as the discussions became more contentious and public, 'the U.S. Senate votes overwhelmingly to open combat positions for women aviators,' allowing women to be placed in non-traditional roles. Sergeant Major Wahl was among the women placed in those non-traditional roles, "...I was either the only female or part of a small group of females- each deployment presented its hurdles and difficulties."

A few years later, women were able to serve in all open non-combatative positions. Sergeant Major Wahl was a beneficiary of this mo-

tion, deploying to various iterations of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom in the countries of Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Bosnia. Sergeant Major Wahl said "I just learned quickly to adapt and be innovative."

By 2013, women were fully integrated into combat roles, it was also the year that Sergeant Major Wahl attained the rank of Sergeant Major. When asked what it meant to reach the enlisted ranks' pinnacle, Sergeant Major Wahl said, "Being a servant leader, taking care of my formation both professionally and personally."

During her tenure as the Depot Sergeant Major, Wahl found herself on the battleground again, but this time with an invisible adversary that struck virally and caused global havoc-COVID-19.

On the front line of this war against COVID-19, serving alongside CCAD Commander Colonel Joseph H. Parker, Sergeant Major Wahl employed skills she learned in previous conflicts. "I was always able to turn a bad into a good and motivate my formations to face the unknown, be a team, be a family," said Sergeant Major Wahl.

"Sergeant Major will be missed, she was a confidant to me and to others down the chain. She led the return to work protocols [during COVID-19] with 95% efficiency, and was able to bridge the gap assisting CCAD to meet both revenue and production goals," said Colonel Parker.

Along with CCAD senior leaders, she strategized plans to keep the workforce safe and quelled the fears of employees and their families. "CCAD's most valuable asset is our employees; you take care of your employees; they will take care of the mission.:" Sergeant Major Wahl continued, "...Being a female Soldier, I brought different



attributes to the table from my male counterparts". In this particular time in history, those qualities helped with the healing of CCAD.

Prior to COVID-19, Sergeant Major Wahl championed the importance of education, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. She encouraged brigades along with Army National Guard and Reserve units to utilize the Depot as a training facility on helicopters for deploying Soldiers. "Our Army's success depends on bringing talented Soldiers together in teams built on competence, resilience, discipline, and trust – to ensure every Soldier can say with confidence and pride, 'This Is My Squad.'"

As an Army ambassador to university and high school students, she constantly shared opportunities in STEM fields at CCAD and the Army telling students to "Enjoy the journey! Be comfortable being pushed to new limits, embrace change, and never say 'I can't.'"

During CCAD's remembrance ceremonies, Sergeant Major Wahl had the resolute responsibility of 'ringing' the bell for each employee who had passed away. The bell was originally onboard the USS Albemarle (AV-5), one of two seaplane tenders during World War II, then later renamed USNS Corpus Christi Bay (T-ARVG-1). The ship was transformed into a floating aeronautical maintenance facility for helicopters from 1965-1973. The bell is also used to celebrate Depot milestones such as the first UH-60V, the second phase of a completed facility, and advances in chemical processes.

Sergeant Major Wahl is a native of Clarksville, Tennessee, much like

Corpus Christi; it is the 5th largest city in the state. Prominent people from that city include musical legend Jimi Hendrix, NASCAR driver Jeff Purvis, Piggly Wiggly grocery chain founder Clarence Saunders, and track and field Olympian, Wilma Rudolph. Now Clarksville, has another success story to embrace, Sergeant Major Wahl, recipient of three Bronze Stars



Other highlights of her 30 year career include Military Assistance Program and Security Co-operations Sergeant Major at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan; Brigade S-3 Sergeant Major, 101st, Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Command Sergeant Major of the 327th Aviation Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas.

As she reflected on her transition, to don civilian attire in-lieu of her Army Combat Uniform, she shared that her motivation has been her daughter Josie. "I never stopped having fun and enjoying what I did. [I] had days that I did think to myself -I'm done, but I reminded myself I had my daughter watching her mom push through barriers and obstacles. And I wanted my daughter to see that nothing can hold you back as long as you put your mind to it".

On 2 December 2020, Sergeant Major Wahl relinquished her responsibility of CCAD after 25 months as the Senior Enlisted Advisor. During the retirement portion of the ceremony, Major General Todd Royar, U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM) Commanding General said, "There are two truths I'd like highlight, the first, is that people are the forefront of our Army. The second, is that the

non-commissioned officers are the backbone of the Army, and there is no better person to represent that than Sergeant Major Wahl."

During the ceremony, Sergeant Major Wahl was presented with the Order of Saint Michael Silver medal by Colonel Parker, on behalf of the President of the Army Aviation Association of America, Jeffrey J. Schloesser, Major

General Retired. Major General Royar, presented the Legion of Merit on behalf of General Edward M. Daly, United States Army Materiel Command; the Presidential Certificate of Appreciation from the Commander in Chief, President Donald J. Trump; the US flag; and a Certificate of Retirement on behalf of General James McConville, Chief of Staff, United States Army.

Her daughter, Josie, also received a special award that is presented to military children-the BRAT (Bravery, Resilience, Adaptability, Tolerance) Certificate of Appreciation. It was presented in honor of her distinguished and steadfast support of her mother.

As her final gesture, Sergeant Major Wahl rang the bell with her daughter to signify her departure from the Depot.

Commander's Corner

The Holiday Season of 2020 is unlike any in our memory. Getting a chance to relax, unwind and celebrate a tough year with your family is important. I highly encourage everyone to do so, but to so within limitations and to be smart and not catch nor spread COVID-19. Vaccines are on the way in the very near future and this is the time to buckle down and do the right thing. Do the right thing for you, for the Depot, but most importantly, for your loved ones. We need you and you need them. Spread the word, not the virus.

I encourage everyone to be safe and celebrate the season in your own way, whatever that may be. It is a great time to recognize and celebrate our diversity. We are stronger and better together. Our diversity is a combat and industrial multiplier. Let's treat everyone with dignity and respect and know that only together are we CCAD.

People First – Winning Matters
I am CCAD
We are CCAD
We keep the Army Flying

Joseph H. Parker
Colonel, Aviation



CCAD Milestone: Tagnite Immersion Process

by Della Adame, Public Affairs Specialist, Corpus Christi Army Depot

CCAD recently reached a new milestone when electroplaters Adrian Alvarado and Thomas Barrera conducted the inaugural Tagnite immersion process. Chemical Process Branch Chief, Peggy Hatcher, rang the USS Albemarle/USNS Corpus Christi Bay ship's bell to signify the achievement.

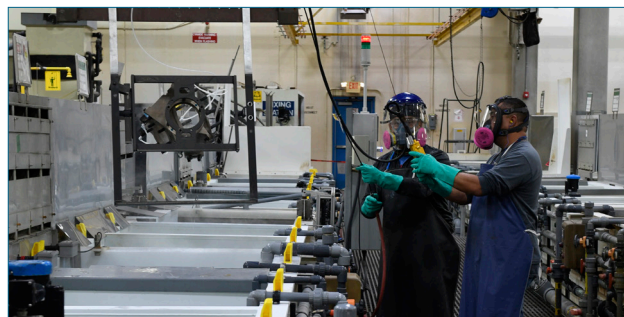
The Tagnite process will prolong the life of components and eliminate the use of hexavalent chromium [Cr(VI)] with a superior corrosion resistant coating. CCAD remains committed to the safety of the environment, the War fighter and the Workforce to maintain readiness.

Senior Executive Service (SES) member, Mr. Brian Wood, Executive Director of the AMCOM Logistics Center, toured CCAD for a first-hand look at Depot operations, military construction and new processes. SES Wood had an opportunity to ring the USS Albemarle/USNS Corpus Christi Bay ship's bell commemorating a milestone of the first Tagnite immersion process.

(Read more about the significance of the Albemarle ship's bell in the photo caption at right and in the SGM's cover story.)



ABOVE: Peggy Hatcher, Chemical Process Branch Chief, rings the original bell from the USS Albemarle, which was converted from the seaplane tender into USNS Corpus Christi Bay in 1966, to provide repair support as a floating depot for helicopters off the shores of Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam.



ABOVE: CCAD electroplaters, Adrian Alvarado and Thomas Barrera, operate the controls of the hoist that immerses the aircraft component into the chemical bath for the initial coating of corrosion resistant Tagnite.

Living Proof That People Are CCAD's Greatest Strength

by Della Adame, Public Affairs Specialist, Corpus Christi Army Depot

For the second shift employees of the Corpus Christi Army Depot, days and nights are different in a few ways – breakfast is in the late afternoon, lunch is eaten when the stars are out and dinner is served after midnight. They are a small group who clock in as the masses are clocking out.

Just as the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance (AVIM) second shift crew at Hangar 45 had started their break at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, instinct and training kicked in for the team of aircraft mechanics as "Call 911!" was shouted in the break room.

Eunice Garza, aircraft mechanic, hearing the 911 directive, immediately advanced toward the urgency of need to assess the situation.

Jose Guillen, aircraft mechanic, was attempting to get a response out of his co-worker only to discover that something had obstructed the airway.

Garza says, "I could not believe that this happened so quickly and right before my eyes. I have always been prepared, so my training just took over."

Guillen, a U.S. Navy veteran said he kept thinking, "You are not going to die on us today." As soon as that thought crossed his mind, everything else was an automatic response from years of crucial repetitive training.

As the employee's skin began to take on the pale blue pallor of someone who is not getting enough oxygen in their lungs, Guillen and Garza, working in unison, lowered

the employee to the ground.

Without any regard for herself – Garza attempted to clear the airway of the obstruction using skills she learned.

As these lifesaving efforts were occurring in the break room, aircraft mechanics Richard Eaton, and Cindy Cantu, waited outside the hangar to flag down emergency personnel. Meanwhile, Guillen fervently continued first aid procedures, when suddenly what was lodged inside was coughed up and out. After what seemed like an eternity to Guillen and Garza, the sound of gasping for air is heard.

Medical personnel arrived within moments to administer aid. Cantu assisted medical personnel with information on the incident, while

as being as close to death from lack of oxygen as one could get, "I was mostly just thankful that our persistent efforts paid off, but also glad that my friend did not sustain any serious injuries. I was happy knowing our teammate would be going home to family again," said Guillen.

The team's knowledge of emergency procedures, and the rapidity of how each reacted, demonstrated their readiness to act selflessly and willingly. By being proactive in caring for a fellow employee in need during a harrowing situation, their actions demonstrated the Warrior Ethos.

Garza added, "No one can be prepared as much as we would like to be. In an emergency adrenaline takes over and then you deal

with the effects afterwards. I was very thankful that my co-worker was okay and that emergency services arrived quickly. We all work together as a team every night in the hangar and consider all of them my family."

The CCADer and family, were so appreciative of the life-saving mea-

sures that co-workers were presented with 2020 Silver Eagle coins as tokens of gratitude, including a replica of the coin for them to keep handy and remind them of their heroic actions on that day.

The actions of the group embody the best of our Army Values and are commensurate with the finest traditions. Ms. Garza received a personal thank you letter from the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command Commanding General, Major General Todd Royar and a thank you letter from CCAD Commander, Colonel Joseph Parker.



ABOVE: Hangar 45's second shift AVIM aircraft mechanic crew. Sitting, Edward M. Rokusek. Standing, L-R: Jose Guillen, Cindy M. Cantu, Eunice V. Garza, Grace Trevino, Richard A. Eaton.

Grace Trevino, aircraft mechanic, retrieved magazines to cushion the employees head while lying on the concrete floor.

Garza is trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and taught CPR for 13 years. Her disregard for her own personal safety and willingness to take immediate action is the reason her co-worker is alive today. Garza's quick thinking and courage to help proved integral to the safe resolution of a potentially deadly situation.

Guillen summed up the situation

LSS Black Belt Certification Awarded

Michael Herrera, Process Improvement Specialist in the Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) received his Black Belt certification.

The project centered on switching from a manual determination of what operations to include in the Computer Aided Process Planning (CAPP) Plans, utilizing the historical data to determine what operations could be removed from the most utilized routes.

Since 2003, CCAD has trained or gained over 120 Black Belts and Green Belts combined.



Vance Receives Order of St. Michael

Clay Vance began his civilian career with the U.S. Army Aviation Materiel Command in 1983. Today he is the Cargo/Attack Branch Chief in the Maintenance Airworthiness Engineering Division Systems Readiness Directorate (SRD) Aviation and Missile Center (AvMC) Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM).

He traveled the world working on fielded aircraft assessment, specializing in electrical engineering depot support work. His leadership and management ability was recognized and he was asked to lead a number of Integrated Process Teams (IPTs) and become a "Train-the Trainer" for BG Irby's process improvement initiative.

In 1995, Clay led the Airframes and Accessories Section of the Maintenance Engineering Division and assumed leadership responsibility for all aircraft overhaul support, the ACE program, and supporting CCAD non-dynamic component shops. Under his leadership CCAD dramatically expanded their UH-60 overhaul program in the late 1990's. He later served as the ALC Technical Lead member of an AMCOM Command-wide IPT seeking ways to improve the Critical Safety Item (CSI) process to maintain safety and readiness in a cost-effective and efficient manner. He helped the group maintain a constant focus on the need to maintain readiness and efficiency while achieving the safety goals inherent in the CST program.

Vance has continued to serve as a leader in Depot airworthiness engineering and has exercised leadership responsibility for virtually every platform in the Army Aviation inventory, to include unmanned aviation systems (UAS). He has led cross-service support efforts with the Navy and Air Force and has been a key player in just about every innovation in Army aviation maintenance for the past 30+ years.



Mr. Vance was presented with the Order of St. Michael Bronze award. As a technical leader in Army aviation with an outstanding appreciation for business and logistics, he is dedicated to ensuring cost wise readiness for the Warfighter. He has served as a civilian in support of Army aviation for more than 37 years. His contributions have been widely recognized and he wakes up every day with the goal of making life better for Army aviators.



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In Europe: Call 00800-1273-8255

In Korea: Call 0808-555-118

In Afghanistan: Call 00 1-800-273-8255

If you're struggling and feeling isolated as the holiday season gets underway, support is available through the Military Crisis Line.

If a Veteran in your life is having suicidal thoughts, responders are available now.

Call 1-800-273-8255 or visit www.veteranscrisis-line.net/get-help/military-crisis-line

TRICARE Select Group A retirees will be required to pay an enrollment fee beginning on January 1, 2021. Implementation had been delayed since the Congressional authorization in 2017. Group A is retirees and family members if the sponsor's initial enlistment occurred before January 1, 2018. The enrollment fee is waived for medically retired individuals, family members, and survivors of active-duty deaths.

Learn more: <https://tricare.mil/Plans/Enroll/Select/EnrollmentFees>



At the end of December, the 2020 Social Security tax deferral will end. Beginning January 2021, the normal 6.2% Social Security tax withholdings will again be deducted and you will also see an additional deduction - for the deferred 2020 Social Security tax collection - taken from your pay. Per IRS guidance, the Social Security taxes deferred in 2020 will be collected from your pay between January 1 and April 30, 2021. The amount of Social Security taxes deferred in 2020 will be collected in eight installments between the pay periods ending January 16 and April 24, 2021.

For more information, visit: <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral/>.



Around the Depot

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Include "story suggestion" in the subject line.

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