



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

NOVEMBER 25, 2023

NU WKG, ISSUE #7

Accepting the Challenge: Vicki Hippard '78



As a high school student in Cincinnati, Ohio, Vicki Hippard determined “a military career is one profession where opportunities for women were promising and where the pay was equal to that of men.” With that, she accepted the challenge to attend Norwich University as one of the first women in the Corps of Cadets.

“It may have been a gamble on the part of the administration—and we were definitely an experiment—but it worked,” Vicki said. “We paved the way for others to follow in our footsteps.”

Sacrificing “present pleasures for future goals” Recruit Hippard did very well at Norwich. In a 1974 *News from Norwich* article, she said, “Each girl must prove herself in an environment that is downright hostile for a while. The pressure is on from all sides to prove that she can perform as well as the male cadets in every phase of education and military training.” Despite the no-fraternization rule, limited freedom, strenuous physical training program, and male prejudices that they faced, the female cadets had a relatively low drop-out rate. She was among the Norwich women who visited West Point in 1976 to advise them on integrating females into their Corps.



Majoring in Government and Criminal Justice, Cadet Hippard was a member of the Military Police Company, and attained the rank of Captain in HQ Company, all while maintaining an A average. In her senior year, she had the highest GPA in the Corps and was awarded the Distinguished GMC Cadet Ribbon for outstanding performance in Air Force ROTC.

Vicki graduated in 1978 and commissioned at Officer Training School, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. She was stationed at RAF Alconbury, England and Charleston AFB, SC, serving in the positions of Traffic Management Officer, Vehicle Maintenance Officer and Vehicle Operations Officer.

In 1985, Vicki married fellow Air Force officer Robert Mudrinich and separated from Active Duty to start a family. They have four children, three of whom are currently serving as active-duty military officers.

"My experiences at Norwich and the challenges I found there instilled in me a desire to pursue excellence in both values, personal development and accomplishments," Vicki says. "The number of women in the Corps has grown and they have so many more opportunities than we had back then. That is a good thing. We must keep moving forward to even greater success!"

Records documenting women's history and experience at Norwich are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>