



**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Lisa McCarthy**

**1. Why did you join?**

There has never been a question of whether I would join the military. At a young age, my mother, a Navy Chief Petty Officer, kept us strongly involved with her career. When there was an event, my sisters and I were there. When she had drill, we were there. She enrolled us in Sea Cadets and helped build our passion alongside hers. When it came time for me to decide for my own what I wanted my future to look like, it was easy. I knew I wanted to live in my mother's footsteps, but wanted my own stories to share. After discussions with my dad, who also served in the Navy for a short time, about the various branches and the opportunities each provides, I joined the Air Force Delayed Entry Program the soonest chance I had, the summer before my Senior year of high school. Shortly after graduation, I went to enlisted basic training where I joined the Services career field. Growing up in an enlisted household and having family members who were all enlisted, commissioning was never a thought in my mind. As an Airman in a Missile Squadron, I was surrounded by officers, and more specifically, Air Force Academy graduates. Two years into the squadron, my Flight Commander approached me, highlighting his thoughts on the Academy being a great opportunity for me. I have always been taught to never close an opened door, so I delved deeper into his proposition. I thought about the pros and cons of commissioning and considered in a commissioned position, how I could impact Airmen. From there, I decided to take the step forward and put my application in. Soon after I submitted my application, I transitioned over to the base Services unit. My experience there was great, but different. We had very few officers in our unit, who because of the merging to FSS weren't around much; this was a turning point for me. It further solidified my reasons for commissioning, to make it a point to get out to my Airmen and learn who they were and what their job entailed. And, to be there to help them achieve their goals and aspirations.

**2. What does Women's History Month mean to you?**

Women's History Month gives us a chance to reflect on the women who have come before us and the contributions they have brought to society and the military. This month is just another small reminder that we have the capability to achieve any dream we set our hearts and minds to.

**3. What inspires you to wear the uniform every day?**

There are so many inspirational reasons I could look back and give for why I wake up every morning and choose to wear this uniform, but Father Dennis Edward O'Brien sums it up in this quote: "It is the

soldier, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us the freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who gives us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag." We are all soldiers. Despite our physical and mental capabilities, we all have one thing in common, our uniform. By raising our right hand and saying the Oath of Office or Enlistment, we are choosing to announce publicly our commitment for something greater than ourselves. I choose to wear this uniform because I absolutely love the Air Force. I wear this uniform for the freedoms that it has given us as Americans. Despite the negativity that goes around us, I know that by wearing this uniform I am bringing more good to our country.

**4. Name a female who has inspired you and why.**

Of all the great examples of women in my life, I will have to say my greatest inspiration has and always will be my mom. After she and my dad divorced, she was our primary caregiver for nearly a decade. She worked seven days a week to ensure we had food on the table and a house over our head. Somehow, she still managed to be at every single one of our sporting or musical events, and coached two years for one of the teams I was on. She showed us how to have strong work ethics and still be compassionate. Despite her complications and dislike of my dad, she showed us all the love in the world and taught us to shoot for the stars and move toward our dreams. She treated her Sailors the same; with respect and understanding, care and concern. She held them to high standards and nothing less because she knew what their potential was. She learned who they were and figured out what their passions were. When it was time for me to leave home, she guided me along the way and helped me build a plan for my career in the Air Force. She taught me the importance of setting realistic and achievable goals. As an Airman and away from home for the very first time, she walked me through the emotional stresses that followed. Through the years our relationship has evolved from mom, to best friend, to hero. She is my Wonder Woman.