



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

MAY 4, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #30

## Proving Herself: Irene (Nadeau) Mills '78



Irene Nadeau entered the Norwich University Corps of Cadets from Somersworth, NH in 1974 as an electrical engineering major. She was the recipient of an AFROTC scholarship which paid for three of her four years at Norwich. As one of the first eight women in the Corps, Irene said, "You have to prove yourself every day, that you can do a good job".

Competition was steep across the entire Corps of Cadets. In December 1974, just four months after joining the Corps, Cadet Nadeau was chosen as Regimental Rook of the Month, representing the Regimental Military Police Company (MP). Irene recalls the recognition was received with mixed reviews. "Some guys called it tokenism," she said, "Some said congratulations, and others said, 'You've made history!'"



In addition to MP Company, Irene kept busy by joining the Fencing Club, Junior Weekend Committee, and Big Brother/Big Sister Program. She also was one of the first women in Mountain Cold Weather which provides training in mountaineering and skiing, as well as survival and rescue techniques. Irene was recognized by the Arnold Air Society with the AFROTC Leadership ribbon. In 1978 she was the first woman to graduate from Norwich with an engineering degree, earning a BS in Electrical Engineering. She was commissioned as a 2nd LT in the US Air Force and stationed at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. Irene married her classmate, 2LT Orrin Mills in June 1979. Following their honeymoon in Prince Edward Island, Canada, Irene returned to the Air Force Institute of Technology at

Wright Patterson to complete work on a master's degree.

The Mills became a Legacy family when two of their children followed in their footsteps at Norwich. Thomas graduated in 2006 and Ambre in 2007.

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

### **Attend a Women Kicking Glass Event.**

- Sunday, May 5, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass Boston High Tea](#)
- Saturday, May 18, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass So. California Gathering](#),  
Los Angeles, CA
- Sunday, June 23, 2024 - [Washington DC Women Kicking Glass Reception](#),  
Military Women's Memorial, Arlington, VA
- Friday, September 20, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass Gala](#), Plumley Armory,  
Norwich



### **Women Kicking Glass Pop-Up Store – April 26-May 13**

Show your pride in Norwich's trailblazing women with special, limited-edition merchandise featuring the Women Kicking Glass logo.

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