



# Spotlight on ACL Female Volunteer & Former Cadet



Past cadet, Kendra Stordy-Mellish, believes in lifelong learning and challenging herself!

Kendra Stordy-Mellish CD built on her cadet experience and joined the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves & Regular Forces, before returning to volunteer for the Air Cadet League in Prince Edward Island after many years of service. She always stayed involved with the ACL in various provinces throughout her career.

Kendra was one of the first females in Air Cadets, following in her father's footsteps by joining 53 C.E. Monty DFC Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron in Summerside, PEI. Whilst loving the many aspects of the Cadet program, it was not surprising that her passion for flying grew as her father owned several planes, even when they did not have a family car.

"There were only two or three girls on the airfield in those days," says Kendra. Undaunted, she earned her Glider licence, then onto Private Pilot licence and finally a Pilot instructor rating. She became the second female to achieve the rank of Warrant Officer First Class in 53 RCACS. "I remember one of the dedicated volunteers bringing us hot meals on the airfield during familiarisation flying, on cold days."

Inspired by her passion to fly, Ms. Stordy-Mellish received her commission in 1988 as a CIC officer. She was also an honorary member of the 880 Naval Air Sqn as a cadet at CFB Summerside. She met her future husband at age 13, also an Air Cadet- Frank Mellish. He was also CIC before he joined the regular forces, before the two married in 1990. They became a military couple travelling wherever the DND needed them. Sadly, Frank was killed in action in Afghanistan on 03 Sep 2006, leaving Kendra a widow with two children.

"There were only **two or three** girls on the airfield in those day"

L-19 helped buy for PEI in memory of her late spouse



All pictures are provided by Kendra

Kendra as WO1, Mess Dinner



Having a belief in life-long learning, she earned her degree, Bachelor's of Business Administration and Human Resources and completed numerous DND courses and several diplomas. One of her favourite experiences was attending the Regular Force Flight Safety course in Shearwater, NS. At that time, Kendra was a 19-year-old Officer Cadet in the Cadet Instructors Cadre, and she was the only female among 40 male participants in the course back in 1988.

One thing that she was taught early in her military career is to accomplish one thing each year. Challenge yourself! In 2005, she tried out to be on the Base Petawawa team Nijmegen Marches, consisting of only 11 soldiers, including 2 females.

"We trained hard for the International Four-Day Marches Nijmegen. This experience was one of the toughest things I did physically. Having an Air Cadet team of 11 cadets in front of our military team, marching and singing songs for 50 kilometres a day for four consecutive days for a chance to earn the royally approved medal, the Vierdaagsekruis. If 11 Air Cadets can complete this march, so could I!"



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She continued to serve in the CAF in a variety of positions and, more recently, with Veterans Affairs in Charlottetown, PEI. Despite a very busy life, she continued to volunteer for the Air Cadet League and held the position of League Chair for PEI for nine years until recently.

She volunteered to give back and to give herself a sense of purpose but enjoyed the camaraderie amongst the volunteers and feels great pride knowing she made a difference in the lives of cadets.

“There’s also a quiet moment of pride when a former cadet returns to the squadron or ACL and shares how we’ve inspired their career or contributed to their personal growth;” explains Kendra.

“Creating a Provincial Cadet Day on Prince Edward Island after 84 years of existence is another highlight that stands out!”

“We’re a team of volunteers helping young people learn aviation skills, build confidence and prepare for life. You don’t need prior experience, just enthusiasm. Volunteering with the Air Cadets is incredibly rewarding. Even a few hours a month helps. Come to a taster night, no commitment, just see for yourself.”

Ms. Stordy-Mellish has been recognized by many awards in uniform and from the Air Cadet League, each of them well deserved and includes the recent King Charles III Coronation Medal, and the Provincial Distinguished Volunteer Medal.

Kendra – Regular Force



Power Pilot 1987, solo cross-country flight from Greenwood to PEI



Kendra is presenting awards to cadets



All pictures are provided by Kendra