Air Force ROTC Allows Women (1969-1970)

The Air Force led all military branches in incorporating women into ROTC, beginning with a trial basis in 1969 and rapidly expanding by 1970 due to overwhelming positive response and increasing demand for female officers.

Early History

- **1956**: WAF (Women's Air Force) section introduced into ROTC program as an experimental program
- **1956**: Janet Marshall of George Washington University was the first woman to enroll in WAF Cadet ROTC Program
- **1959**: Only 3 WAF ROTC units remained after the Secretary of Air Force ordered phase-out by 1960

Modern Integration

- **1969**: Women officially allowed to join Air Force ROTC; pilot program began with women admitted to AFROTC units at several universities during the 1969-70 school year
- **1970**: Air Force ROTC women cadet program expanded to national scope after overwhelmingly positive response to pilot program
- **1970**: Kathy Thompson (University of Maryland) became the first female cadet to enroll in the program to compete for a commission in the regular Air Force[1]
- **1973**: Women admitted to AFROTC Junior Program (two-year program)
- **1973**: Ann Orlitzki (University of Connecticut) became the first female Second Lieutenant commissioned through UConn ROTC in May 1973

Legislative Context

- **1967**: President Johnson signed Public Law 90-130, lifting grade restrictions and strength limitations on women in the military
- **1973**: End of the Selective Service (draft) led to radical changes in military recruiting practices
- **1976**: Separate WAF status abolished; women entered the Air Force on an equal basis with men
- **1978**: Air Training Command (ATC) assumed responsibility for AFROTC programs; opportunities for undergraduate pilot training afforded to female cadets

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[1] https://afrotc.umd.edu/

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