

Veteran of the Month October 2004

Congratulations to Bobbi Jean Jarvinen!



In partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission, we are pleased to present the October, 2004 Veteran of the Month – Bobbi Jean Jarvinen.

Staff Sergeant Bobbi Jean Jarvinen (Gowdy) was born and raised in Minnesota, attended Minot State University and joined the United States Air Force in 1979 to see the world. After graduating from Basic Training, Bobbi was sent to Sheppard AFB in Texas to attend Plumbing Specialist School. Her first real duty assignment in Michigan was close to home so she finagled a swap to Luke AFB, Arizona, and from there to Okinawa, Japan.

Bobbi 's first assignment in Okinawa was to support the small Civil Engineering shop at Okuma Station, a resort on the northern end of the island. However, since she was the first female to be assigned to that position, the local nationals were not that receptive, so she spent a few weeks caddying and driving the speed boats for the brass, before being reassigned to Kadena Air Base. Bobbi spent the next four years at Kadena, where, as a plumber, she was assigned to water systems, where she learned to scuba dive in order to perform maintenance on interior valves of water tanks/towers, performing many plumbing tasks, including installation of major building air conditioning systems to minor day-to-day repairs of housing facilities, to her turn as part of the sewer auger team with Big Bertha. Her favorite role was that of supporting fire suppression systems in the SR-71 Hangar, where she got an opportunity to sit in the cockpit of a Blackbird.

Bobbi cross trained to the Production Control field, where she worked in vehicle control and Prime BEEF (Base Engineer Emergency Force), doing vehicle accident investigations and war readiness planning for the Civil Engineering Squadrons. Bobbi was able to travel around the Far East, including a short stint in Korea. While at Kadena, Bobbi received many awards and commendations, including Airman of the Quarter, where the reward was to fly in a F-15 Fighter Plane.

In July 1983, Bobbi and her family were stationed at Ellsworth AFB and again had many roles, to include Missile Scheduling, Production Control, Service Call and finally as the Base Scheduler. Bobbi had multiple additional duties while assigned to Ellsworth such as co-chairing the Days of Thunder Air Show; acting as Officer of the Day for the Base Fire Marshall, where she was one of the first people on site for the B-1 crash; traveling the US with a computer system implementation team, that turned out to be a precursor to the Internet.

In December 1988, Bobbi left the service and became a permanent resident. Currently, she is employed at Rapid City Regional Hospital in the Information Systems Department. Bobbie is an active member of the community. She is a lifetime member of the American Legion Post 320, where she has served as Americanism Chairman, Adjutant and Commander. She has also served as a District Americanism Chairman, District Vice Commander and Pennington County Vice Commander for the American Legion Department of South Dakota. She volunteers her time to the veterans at Fort Meade and the State Veterans Home and was honored as a South Dakota Legionnaire of the year in 2001. She is the immediate past Chairman of the Veterans Coordination Committee, a member of the Veteran of Foreign Wars, the Kiwanis Club, and Leadership Rapid City Class of 2001 where she is working on the Founders Park project. Bobbi has devoted 14 years of service to the Black Hills Area Council in numerous capacities and still holds various roles.

Bobbi is married to Don Jarvinen and has three college age children, Matthew a senior at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, Katherine a junior at the School of Mines, and Jennifer a sophomore, also at the School of Mines.