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by Staff Sgt. Russ Jackson
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

5/29/2014 - **JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash.** -- It is like riding a bike. Once you learn, you never forget. In the case of Betty Dybbro, Woman Airforce Service Pilots veteran, her bike is an airplane.

Alongside 25,000 other women, Dybbro volunteered to fly for the Army Air Force during World War II. She was one of 1,074 women who passed the training and spent 1944 as a WASP flying for the Army Air Force. During that time, she piloted the Vultee BT-13, the Texan AT-6, Martin B-26 Marauder and the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress while stationed at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

Dybbro will be the keynote speaker for the 2014 Heritage Dinner at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in June. Before the dinner, she was offered the chance to tour McChord Field and receive an in depth view of what it is like to be a pilot in today's Air Force.

Met by retired Maj. Gen. Don Brown and female pilots stationed at McChord Field, Maj. Sueann Lamia, 10th Airlift Squadron, Capt. Rachael Deroche, 10th AS and 1st Lt. Samantha Caszatt, 7th AS, Dybbro began her tour at Heritage Hill.

Brown escorted Dybbro up the ladder of the Lockheed-Georgia C-141B Starlifter and into the cockpit so she could see firsthand the advancements in aviation technology since her flying days.

"To see all the new things in these planes in the last 70 years and the technologies is mind boggling," said Dybbro.

The C-141 has not been flown since 2001 so the technological advancements in the C-17 Globemaster III were just as exciting for her to discover. Lamia brought the small group to the flightline to tour a C-17 and give Dybbro time to sit at the controls and ask the pilots questions about flying the aircraft.

"When I left the WASP corps, I flew small Cessna's and Taylorcraft airplanes as an instructor," said Dybbro. "I enjoyed my tour today because I was able to learn so many new details about aviation."

After exploring the aircraft, Dybbro accompanied Deroche to the C-17 simulator to see how she would fare behind the wheel.

Dybbro received a quick tutorial from Deroche, including a flight without movement before she took the controls of the fully functioning simulator. As the cockpit pitched back and forth, she became more comfortable and felt right at home.

"It took a couple of passes to stick the landing but I think I was starting to get a feel for it. Any landing where you can walk away is still a good one," Dybbro said with a laugh.

And at 91 years old, Dybbro did just that.

The 2014 Heritage Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, June 21 at the Collocated Club main dining room at McChord Field. To make your reservations, contact the Retiree Activities Office at 982-2795/5581.

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Betty Dybbro, Woman Airforce Service Pilots veteran, takes flight on a McChord Field C-17 Globemaster III simulator May 28, 2014, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. Dybbro was given the opportunity to test her flying skills and did not disappoint as she took off, flew and landed the simulated aircraft with little difficulty. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Russ Jackson)

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