

REMARKS – SALUTING GUYANESE WOMEN IN AVIATION

Prime Minister Mr Samuel Hinds, Minister Robeson Benn, Mayor of Georgetown Mr Hamilton Green, Major General Norman Mc Lean, Mr Tony Mecdeci, Lt Col (Retired) Larry London, Honorees, Friends all.

The Guyana Defence Force is indeed heartened to be the chosen venue for the honouring of our Guyanese women pioneers in the Aviation Industry, here at our Officers Mess.

Additionally, we are more so proud that among the women aviation pioneers being honoured here today are women who started their aviation career in the Guyana Defence Force – Beverly Drakes, Cheryl Moore, Williette Gardner, Barbara Adams.

The motto of the Guyana Defence Force is “**Service**”. This means that the Guyana Defence Force was established to **serve** Guyana.

For us **Service** has no gender and while the GDF was established in November 01, 1965, in less than two years on 6th February, 1967 we had established, out of a national necessity, the **Women’s Army Corps**.

According to Granger “National Defence: A Brief History of the Guyana Defence Force 1965 – 2005”

“At the start of the United Nations declared “International Year of Women in 1975 – the GDF had already adopted an enlightened approach to the professional development of women and women issues in general.

In January, 1975 Beverly and Cheryl were already enrolled for flight training – Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, USA. Returning with the commercial flight qualifications in 1976. While in

1977 Barbara Adams became the first female helicopter pilot having graduated from Oxford Air Training School in the UK, Willete Lord – Cuba and later at Flight Safety International in Florida.

Additionally, Debra Gouveia flew skyvan and BN Islander for GDF in the 1980's. Aisha Green – daughter of Mayor Hamilton Green in the early 2000's also flew missions for the GDF.

The GDF wishes to recognize the contributions of Paula Mc Adam (Aerodrome Management Enforcement of GCAA regulations) and Ferial Ally (contingency planning for emergencies and security) in the regulatory area of the local aviation industry

At this stage I wish to state that at CJIA, Timehri the GDF continues to promote and support the professional development of our women soldiers. Today, we have present with us some of our women Officers and Warrant Officers who at present are serving as lawyers, doctors, nurses and in other leadership and management capacity of the Force.

Finally on behalf of the Officers and Other Ranks of the GDF I offer our collective and special congratulations to all our honourees today “Our Guyanese Women Pioneers in the Aviation Industry.”

Beverly, Cheryl, Williete, Barbara, Debbie, Paula, Ferie, Sandra, Congratulations, we salute your courage – we honour your sacrifice. I thank you all.