



NATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH 2020

A CADET STORY... 31 YEARS IN THE MAKING!



Vilma Angela Simon Bond
formerly Vilma Angela Simon Quintero

Former TTCF Cadet

Editor and Designer:
Vilma Angela Simon Bond © 3/20/2020

Vilma Angela Simon Bond formerly Vilma Angela Simon Quintero, a woman dauntless, valorous, enduring, unflinching, virtuous, gentle woman of God, was born on the beautiful Island of the Hummingbird, better known as, Trinidad and Tobago; the land of the resounding instrument - the Steel Pan, Calypso and Soca. The land of the greatest show on earth ...Carnival!

Vilma lived and attended school in the Trou Macaque success Village Laventille area, located 20 minutes East of the Capitol Port-of Spain. As the eldest of three siblings, and as a young girl, Vilma lived and practiced a disciplined lifestyle; and from an early age, she began to admire members of the uniformed services. In 1970, at age of nine, she joined the Trinidad and Tobago Junior Red Cross.

Five years later, Vilma joined the Trinidad and Tobago St. John Ambulance Association and Brigade Cadets, where she studied Home Nursing and First Aide.

During her tenure in the Ambulance Brigade, Vilma also became a Kettle Drummer in the Drum Core. During the years of 1978 -1979, she also became a member of the Police Youth.

By the time Vilma became 17 years old, she had her eyes fixed on the Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force, as well as, the Cadet Force. Vilma had developed a passion for a life of serving the public.

In 1977, Vilma wrote a letter to the Ministry of National Security inquiring why females were not a part of the all-male Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force a part of the all-male Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force organization; however, for some reason, she never got a response.

In honor of distinguished women all over the world, changing the course of history in a relevant way, unashamed of whatever their experiences have been, or will be, courageously speaking out in a clarion voice for what they believe.
We salute you!

Brave, brilliant and bodacious game changers, making life better for all of us; uncanny, and at times unapologetic in our quest to break through and leave a huge hole in glass ceilings all over the world.
We salute you!

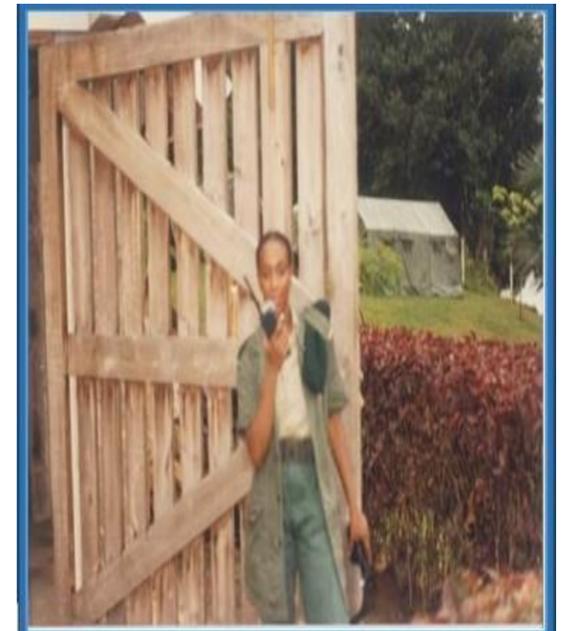
Progressive visionaries and pioneers who empower, embrace and encourage change to celebrate global collective accomplishments.
We salute you!

Advancing human rights and human development standards.
We salute you!

1984, the first group of women trained as officers for the TTCF. Recruits: Donna Elbourne, Eileen King, Joanne Clarke, Marjorie John, Vilma Quintero and Wendy Ann Clarke.



Regarding records, examples of pictures or even documentation, unfortunately, there may be no records available of these valiant women because at the time no one was taking pictures of them, as the first group of women to be trained as officers for the TTCF; however, they basically had to take pictures of themselves whenever they could. Therefore, the training dates listed are approximates.



Undaunted, in 1979, Vilma became the first female to be “unofficially” accepted into the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force Band. She trained with the male cadets, underwent rigid precision foot drills and became an efficient Kettle drummer!

Around 1984 Vilma was selected to be one of the first females in a group of visionary women, who would later undergo officers training and became formally accepted into the Trinidad and Tobago Cadet Force (TTCF).

Upon completion of her training, Vilma was given the rank of Adult Sergeant “A/Sgt. Quintero. V” and she became the first female to be assigned to the all-male cadet unit, Queen’s Royal College “QRC” Alpha Coy.

Vilma remained in the Cadet Force for approximately five years and retired from the Force as a Warrant/Officer. She later migrated to the United States in 1989, to continue her ambitions to pursue studies in Defense Strategies. However, her love for the TTCF, and attributes of **discipline**, **loyalty** and **duty**, instilled in her, did not allow her to rest. Each day while living in the United States, Vilma searched for ways to show her gratitude to the TTCF for the training she received, which shaped her to become the person she is today.

Eventually, Vilma moved to Gaithersburg, MD where every Saturday morning, she remembers getting on a public bus with her case of bows and arrows on her way to a nearby range located at Lake Needwood, near Muncaster-Mill Road in Rockville, MD.



Vilma Angela Simon Bond/A/Sgt. Quintero V. A/Coy Q.R.C



Vilma Angela Simon Bond/A/Sgt. Quintero V. A/Coy Q.R.C

In 1989, Vilma had a *witty* idea to take her two high-tech compound bows home to Trinidad and Tobago to make a surprise donation to her Unit, “QRC” Alpha Coy.

Between 1991 and 1992 or thereabout, Vilma returned to Trinidad and Tobago with her bows, but to her surprise, the bows were seized at the airport and labelled as illegal weapons! At the time, Vilma was not surprised, nor moved at how the matter was being handled by the Ministry of National Security.

A couple days later, she made a visit to the Ministry to inquire about her bows; Vilma was told that her bows were sent to Tetran (The Army Base) to be inspected; again, she was not surprised. By the time she was ready to leave their office, her patience was wearing thin and she notified the Ministry of National Security officer that she was leaving the country in two days to return to the United States.

Vilma Then requested to have her bows with her on the plane. The Ministry of National Security officer assured her that the items would be safe and secure on the plane before she exited the country.

Here is the copy of the approval from the then CFO Neil Alexis for the importation of the Compound Bows.



On her departure day, as she arrived in Piarco Airport, the customs agents re-assured her that her bows were secure and indeed on the plane. Vilma returned to the United States saddened that her long standing efforts of pride and gratitude towards the TTCF went unnoticed, and her brave and fearless efforts proved fruitless. Prior to her visit to the Island Vilma was steadfast in seeking permissions and approval from the then CFO, Neil Alexis. Fortunately for Vilma she did receive the permissions letter.

It was not long after her return to the US, approximately five months or so, Vilma received a message from one of her colleagues that a Caucasian American came to the island, and apparently was allowed to open an archery club and that his efforts were embraced by the community.



Vilma Angela Simon Bond
Warrant /Officer Quintero. V

Around late 1999, Vilma met the love of her life Richard Gary Bond, a Washington DC native. They got married in 2002, and now, 18 years in the making, they have weathered the storms of life together. Vilma also has a beautiful daughter and three precious grandsons.

In 2010, Vilma began her academic journey, as doors began to open for her. She began her studies at Prince Georges Community College in Largo Maryland; she Graduated in 2012 with certificates in hospitality and tourism. In 2016, she graduated with an Associates of Arts in General Studies.

She then began to pursue her second passion which is “dance”. In 2013, Vilma enrolled and was accepted into University of Maryland College Park Undergraduate Dance Program, she completed one semester there and then transferred to Montgomery College in Rockville, MD in order to finish her dance studies. Vilma expects to graduate this Spring of 2020 with an Associates of Arts Degree in Dance/Theatre Arts.

Going forward, Vilma also has her eyes fixed on the conclusion of her educational journey by accomplishing a Masters’ Degree in Dance Education. Her story proves that women have the guts and grit to complete their personal dreams regardless of how difficult and long the journey might be!

Women; God’s tender, strong, and beautiful gift to this Colony.

We Salute you!



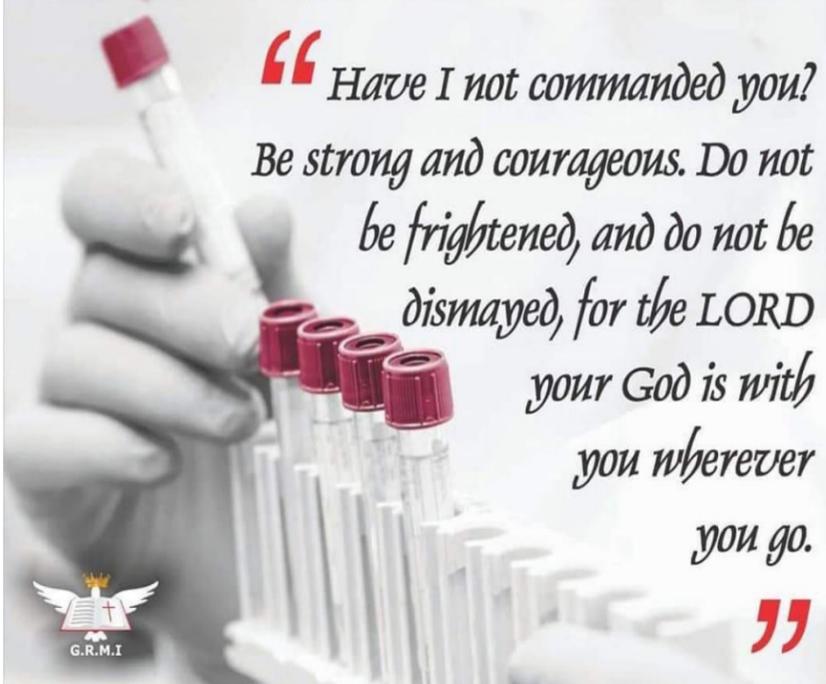
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C.O.V.I.D. - 19
Christ Over Viruses and Infectious Diseases - Joshua 1:9

*“Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous. Do not
be frightened, and do not be
dismayed, for the LORD
your God is with
you wherever
you go.”*



Vilma encourages others who feel they may not be able to accomplish their goals or dreams, to do three things:

First, always remember and ask yourself, “*how bad do you want it?!?”*;

Second, “*speak to that ‘thing’ each day regardless of how long it may take to reach fruition*”, and finally...

Third, “*never accept ‘NO’ for an answer to your dreams*”; “*if you get a ‘NO’, for some reason, look beyond the no and immediately say ‘YES!’ to yourself, and begin to find another door to knock on. Remain steadfast and unmovable until your dreams find you. You will experience many open doors, much more than you can handle!*”

Inspiration from My **Heart to Yours.**

“Courageous women all over the world, stand strong and show bravery in the face of adversity, even in the face of C.O.V.I.D-19. The world is now battling with an invisible enemy on assignment to destroy us, rest assured we have overcome. Gird up your loins and stand strong!”

Contact: info@thebibliofile.org or
Purityinmovement@gmail.com