**AW3 Wendy Potter**

VS-22, 6 February 1997 in the eastern Mediterranean flying off the Theodore Roosevelt. A pioneer for women as Aircrew and as an AW. She graduated from Oakdale High School in Oakdale, California in 1991, joining the Navy shortly thereafter. Her cousin, Margaret Westfall, wrote the following article that appeared in several newspapers including the Modesto Bee on 9 February 1997:

**A Good Person is Now Gone by Margaret Westfall**

*On**Feb. 4, a Navy plane crashed into the Mediterranean, killing four people, including my cousin's daughter.*

*Today in America, we are bombarded with stories of violent young people, callused young kids running in gangs, robbing, raping and murdering daily.*

*We have been forced to turn our homes into fortresses, living behind walls that we can only hope will protect us from the out-of-control mobs that we reluctantly call our future.*

*Very seldom do we hear about the good kids, the ones who want to make something of themselves, the ones who have respect for their elders and, more importantly, for themselves.*

*These are the kids who make the right decisions, kids who work hard to achieve goals, kids who have a vision and the guts to go after that vision - the kids who will make a difference in the future of America.*

*On Feb. 4 one of those kids died. Her name was Wendy Potter and this is her story.*

*She was a 24-year-old newlywed, a Navy weapons specialist with her whole future and career before her, an intelligent young woman with flaming-red hair.*

*She wasn't raised differently than the kids who have chosen a life of violence and crime. She faced the same obstacles and had to make the same choices.*

*She simply chose a better path to follow.*

*She defined her life by choosing to serve her country, demonstrating the virtues that made her a responsible citizen and a leader. She made a conscientious decision to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.*

*For all of us who loved her, her death leaves a wound that hurts to the depth of our souls.*

*This country lost something, too.*

*This country lost one of the good ones, a rare young person, an irreplaceable gift. If we are to keep her legacy alive, she must be remembered as an example of what we should be, of what we can be, and of what we will be.*

*Tell your children and neighbors the story of Wendy Potter, a young woman who chose a path of personal responsibility and integrity. A young woman who worked hard to make this world a better place for others. A young woman who died serving her country.*

*Let them know they also have choices.*

*We'll miss you Wendy.*

*The country will miss you.*