



In 1939, on the day after Germany's tanks rolled into Warsaw, pilot Jacqueline Cochran sent a letter to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt encouraging the use of women pilots in the armed forces. In May 1940, pilot, Nancy Harkness Love wrote the Ferrying Division of Army Air Force with a similar idea, but the Army wasn't ready to put women in the cockpit of its planes. By September of 1942, however all that changed.

The demand for male combat pilots and warplanes left the Air Transport Command with a shortage of experienced pilots to ferry planes from the factory to a point of embarkation. Nancy Love was hired as the Director of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS). A another program was formed to train women pilots under the Direction of Jacqueline Cochran. This program was the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD).

On August 5, 1943, the WAFS and the WFTD were merged and renamed the Woman Airforce Service Pilots or WASPS. Cochran was appointed Director and Love was named WASP Executive with the ATC Ferrying Division.

### **Training**

- Seven months of ground school
- Primary, basic, advanced training, the same as male cadets
- Stationed at 120 Army Air Bases in U.S.A.
- Learned to fly 78 different types of aircraft

### **Duties**

- Ferried planes from factory to points of embarkations
- Flew every type of plane in the Army's arsenal
- Served as flight instructors
- Flew as tow target pilots for gunnery training and engineering flight test pilots
- Flew tracking and search light missions
- Flew simulated strafing and chemical missions
- Served as safety check pilots
- Flew radar controlled (drone) flights

### **Qualifications**

- Must have logged five hundred hours of flying time
- Must have commercial pilot license with 200 hp rating
- Must hold a high school diploma or equivalent
- Must be a minimum of 60 inches tall
- Must be between the ages of 21 to 35
- Must be an American citizen
- Must have medical examination by an army flight surgeon
- Must have cross-country flying experience

### **Deactivation**

When peace was on the horizon the WASP program was deactivated. The hard working WASP pilots were suddenly released on December 20, 1944 without military status or benefits. They had flown nearly 60,000 miles in 78 types of Aircraft with a safety record better than their male counterparts. Although they were subject to military routine and hardship, they were governed and paid by the Civil Service Commission. An attempt to regularize them into the U.S. Army Corps (USAAC) and the Army Air Force (USAAF) came with the Costello bill. The Bill was defeated and the WASP were deactivated in 1944.

### **Militarization**

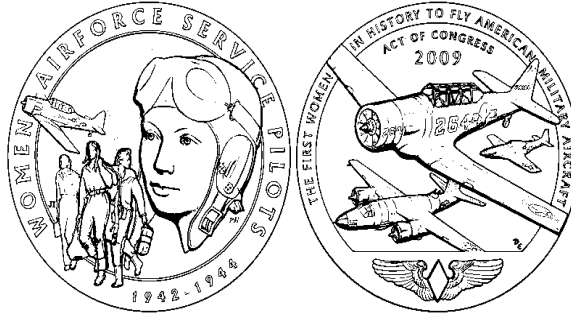
The amazing experiment using women pilots during wartime almost seemed destined to be forgotten. In 1975, under the leadership of Col. Bruce Arnold, the WASP fought the "Battle of Congress" to belatedly obtain recognition as Veterans of WWII. In 1977, with the aid of Senator Barry Goldwater the WASP finally gained their belated militarization from Congress. The Bill was signed into public law on 11/23/77 by President Jimmy Carter.

### **Recognition**

In 1984 each WASP was awarded the Victory Medal, and those who served for more than one year were also awarded The American Theater Medal. It was nearly 68 years, after the Women Airforce Service Pilots was born, these civilian women pilots were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal. Finally, these women received the public honor and respect they so thoroughly earned.

## FLY GIRL FACTS

- First women to serve as pilots and fly military aircraft for the US Army Air Force in WWII.
- Served from 1942 through 1944 at which time their record were sealed and marked "classified" and stored in archives for more than 30 yrs.
- 25,000 women applied for the training program, 1,830 were accepted, and 1,074 graduated.
- The WASP were stationed at 120 Army Air Bases, including Camp Davis in North Carolina.
- 60,000,000 miles of operation flights were flown.
- WASP earned \$150/month while training and \$250 after graduation. Food, uniforms, and lodging were paid for by the WASPs.
- 38 WASP died in service, they received no recognition, no honors, no benefits, no gold stars, and no American flag was allowed to be draped over their coffins.
- The 1st WASP to receive Standard Military Honors and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in 2002.
- Congress awarded WASP the Congressional Gold Medal in 2009.
- On March 2010, surviving WASP traveled to Washington, D.C. to receive their commendation at our Nation's Capitol.



*"You....have shown that you can fly wingtip to wingtip with your brothers. If ever there was doubt in anyone's mind that women could become skilled pilots, the WASP dispelled that doubt. I want to stress how valuable the whole WASP program has been for the country."*

**-General Arnold, (Graduation of the last WASP class)**

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# WASP

## Women Airforce Service Pilots

### "Putting Women In The Air"



**"As long as our planes fly overhead the skies of America are free and that's what all of us everywhere are fighting for. And that we, in a very small way, are being allowed to help keep that sky free is the most beautiful I have ever known."**

**-Cornelia Fort**