

OUT OF THE CLOUDS: THE WOMEN'S AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS
OF WORLD WAR II

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This thesis is dedicated to the many women who served our country out of love and loyalty, in uniform, fields, or factories. Thank you for your service.

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Asher Kai, who is the future.

PREFACE

The Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program was one of the many facets of World War II that changed the landscape of our country. I did a paper on them for my first graduate class in history, and I was hooked. Their service to our country did not appear in any post-war history books, and they were simply invisible for over thirty-three years. Researching their story, and the challenges they encountered allowed me to see the reality of the pre-technology war machine.

They are a small part of the changes that women encountered during the 1940s and 1950s as American society strove to find normal social roles in a country changed by war. The soldiers who returned found their roles changed and struggled to take their place in a world where they were competing with women for employment opportunities. The women who had been recruited to leave their homes and take jobs to support the war efforts found individual personal strength and patriotism and enjoyed the independence of a paycheck and successful work. The story of the WASP is inspirational, and the classification of their program for many years was unnecessary and harmful to their efforts to militarize. The successful outcome of militarization is a great example of purpose and dedication to completing a mission.

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ABSTRACT

The Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program was active from July 1943 to December 1944. After eighteen months of service, the program was abruptly disbanded and classified until 1977. The pilots were sent home, receiving no veteran's pay, benefits, or recognition. Thirty-eight women died while training or on missions, and their fellow female pilots took up collections to send their bodies home. Military documents state that having women on bases distracted the men and the women were not held to the same pilot training standards. Books written by the WASP and other scholars tell a very different story. Why were they disbanded before the end of the war when they were still needed, and why were they classified? Prejudice, of the men against the women, of soldiers who felt that a woman veteran would diminish the standing of the veteran, and of a congress that was concerned with elections and voters.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

American women assumed many roles during World War II. As the men were drafted or enlisted and went to war, women went to work in defense plants and other jobs that were traditionally held by men. They became proficient in finance and home repair, and managed their households with skill and care. *The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George Brown Salute to the Home Front* exhibit at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, states that nearly 350,000 women served in uniform both at home and abroad. General Eisenhower said that he felt the war could not be won without the aid of the women in uniform. “The contributions of the women of America, whether on the farm or in the factory or in uniform, to D-Day was a sine qua non of the invasion effort” (Ambrose 489).

Women in military uniforms worked in offices, drove vehicles, repaired machinery and aircraft, worked as radio operators, and lab technicians. Sixteen nurses near the front lines were killed when they took direct enemy fire. Sixty-eight service women were captured as prisoners of war (POW’s) in the Philippines. They flew planes in America from factory to base, and cross-country shuttling officers and supplies. Thirty-eight women died in crashes during the eighteen months that the Women’s Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) flew, and their families did not have the comfort of a service recognition or a burial stipend. At the war’s end, most of the women wanted to

keep their jobs, but many were forced out by the men returning home. The women veterans also were blocked from taking advantage of benefit programs for veterans, and their service was largely forgotten by the country.

The WASP program began as an “experiment” to see if women could actually pilot a plane under stressful conditions and be useful to the country. During their time in service, they flew covert missions to Cuba and Puerto Rico, and towed targets in darkness along the coastline, taking on live fire so that the male pilots could practice for combat. They were test pilots for new planes right off the factory line, and thirty-eight died in service to their country, one of whom is still missing. As did many of their sisters who served in the military, they went home unrecognized. But the WASP program went one step further and classified the eighteen months of service and all documents connected (Merryman 1).

Many literary accounts have come forward since the WASP program was declassified. The pilots tell their personal stories, and the military has their version of events. Looking back at the documents of the time, it is blatant discrimination and disrespect that allowed the WASP to be buried for so many years.

The Women’s Airforce Service Pilots program was developed to free all available male pilots for military duty. Pilots were needed to ferry planes from factory to military base, and thousands of licensed female pilots were eager to be of service to the country. Though he was initially very reluctant to move forward, Airforce Commander General Harold Arnold gave the go ahead to Jacqueline Cochran to develop the program and find

some female pilots to ferry the planes. This action caused challenges at the stateside military bases, as the women had to be housed and fed. Most of the female pilots ended up in nurse's quarters or inconveniently housed in nearby hotels. The program was never actually designed to be sustainable, and though Cochran and Arnold intended for the WASP to be militarized and utilized after the war, there was never an infrastructure plan put into place that would allow the WASP to have space at the military bases where they were stationed. There were also serious problems and incidents with some of the men stationed at the bases who were not happy working beside the women. The pilots were led to believe that they would take their place next to the men in the Airforce and understood they would continue to fly domestic military flights. This was not the case, and the women were not only discharged from their duties before the end of the war, the program was classified (Merryman 5). It took thirty-three years and a change in the consciousness of America to move the WASP program back into the public eye, and their militarization efforts in 1977 were successful. In March 1979, they were officially discharged from the military, and those still alive could take advantage of veteran's benefits. Thirty years later, on July 1, 2009, President Barack Obama signed a bill awarding a Congressional Medal of Honor to the approximately 300 WASP's still living. Recognition at last for the courage and bravery of the women of the WASP.

CHAPTER 2

LITERARY REVIEW

Sources used in the research of this topic include books written by the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) themselves giving their personal experience and views, as well as authors who were related to a WASP or studied the program extensively. Unclassified Airforce military documents are also used as source material and give a viewpoint of both the issues facing the WASP and the state of America in 1942 - 1943. Finally, journalists who have discovered the WASP and researched and wrote about their story are included.

In her book *On Final Approach, The Women Airforce Service Pilots of W.W. II*, Dr. Byrd Howell Grainger documented in detail the responsibilities of the WASP at various bases. A graduate of class 43-1 (Grainger A-72/D), her comprehensive information gathered for this book was instrumental in the successful militarization in 1977 of the WASP. A member of the first graduating class of WASP, Grainger describes the pilot's experiences with the planes, the weather, the men, the housing and the missions through actual documents, and first-hand recollections. Photographs include the graduating classes, learning to drill, transportation for the WASP to and from bases, and their beloved planes. Information includes class lists, actual copies of orders, and a timeline that follows the WASP as they perform their duties in the military. Much effort was taken to give a name for every photo, and many of the women were found and

included in the mailing list and reunion list due to this effort. Dr. Grainger became a Professor of English and Folklore at the University of Arizona, and authored a book on Arizona, its land and people. *On Final Approach* was her last book published in 1991 months before her death.

Nancy Love and The WASP Ferry Pilots of World War II, written by Sarah Bryn Rickman, details the life of Nancy Harkness Love and her development of the program that would allow women to serve as stateside pilots during WWII. She brought together a small seasoned group of women pilots that took over the duties of male pilots who were then sent to war. The book asks the question of whether Jacqueline Cochran was the reason the WASP program was not militarized. Rickman's opinion is that Cochran so mismanaged the WASP that she was unpopular with powerful Washington allies that she needed to support militarization of her program. Love was the first woman to present the idea to the military to utilize women, but Rickman states that Cochran had enough political pull at the time to push Love out of the top spot and take over as head of overall operations when the programs were combined.

The autobiography of Jackie Cochran, entitled *Jackie Cochran: The Autobiography of the Greatest Woman Pilot in Aviation History* details the background of Cochran, and her influence on the development of the WASP program as well as her unsuccessful actions to militarize the program. Written by Jacqueline Cochran and Maryann Bucknum Brinley, the book talks about Cochran's close friendship with Amelia Earhart, Chuck Yeager, and her record-breaking speed, altitude, and distance records. A

name dropper, and often very complimentary to herself, Cochran describes a world where she is the ultimate hero of all the stories, and her description of Col. Culp Hobby and Nancy Love are demeaning and dismissive. The difference between her and Nancy Harkness Love is glaringly apparent, and the quiet presence of Love contrasts garishly with this showy overblown biography.

In her book, *Woman Pilots of World War II*, written by WASP Jean Hascall Cole, she describes the day-to-day work of the pilots, the interactions of the women with the men and commanders of the bases, and the fear and sadness at the death of her fellow pilots. In a clear and factual style, Cole brings the reader along with her as she catalogs her experiences. Her book stated the expectation that they would be militarized, and the difficult and dangerous discriminatory behavior against the WASP. Her book also talks about the many events of sabotage that she and her fellow WASP believe took place both in training and on missions.

Sally Van Wagenen Keil is the niece of a WASP pilot and tells the story of the women who left their comfortable predictable homes to be in service to their country. In her book *Those Wonderful Women in Their Flying Machines*, Keil documents the beginnings of the Wright brothers, Amelia Earhart, Jackie Cochran, and Charles Lindbergh and sets the stage for the development of the woman pilots of WWII. The pilots give very personal and moving accounts of their time in the program. Details of the deaths of some of the pilots as well as their family reactions remind readers of the losses sustained in this program that so few knew about. Keil has another perspective on

Jacqueline Cochran and her role in the militarization of the WASP. She states that if Cochran had gone for militarization at the beginning of the program it would have been successful. Wanting to wait until the “experiment” was a success kept the public from actually knowing about the WASP until it was too late, and the information they got at the end was designed to be negative and unsupportive. This book also reveals that the civil service pilots adamantly lobbied for non-militarization of the WASP because the men would be immediately drafted into the army and they did not want to be foot soldiers. General Arnold actually called the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) protesters cowards and said that the committee should consider their actions cowardly.

In the book *And Still Flying: The Life and Times of Elizabeth Betty Wall*, author Patrick Roberts helps tell Betty Wall’s story. She talks about flying all of the planes used by the Army Air Forces and her experiences with the base commanders and men she flew with. Traveling to Sweetwater from Faribault, MN with her sister and a friend, she was proud to be one of the WASP, and serve her country.

The Army Air Forces Historical Studies Document #55 (AAFHS) *Woman Pilots with the AAF, 1941-1944* details the development of the WASP program as well as some of the issues that were of concern to the military at that time. The document was written in March 1946 and it shows a declassification date of January 29, 1958. It was prepared by Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) J. Merten England, Dr. Martha E. Layman, Dr. Chase C Mooney, and Mr. Joseph Reither. The forward states that some changes were made to the document after considering the comments of those who reviewed the history. A bit

difficult to read as it was typewritten in 1946, the document states that the women pilots program came to an end because the shortage of male pilots was no longer an issue.

Details of the development of the program and the communication between the commanders is documented. Some of the information directly contradicts the information in books written by the pilots and the two female leaders of the programs, Nancy Harkness Love and Jacqueline Cochran. One obvious fact is clear in the document; there was incredible confusion when the women were originally assigned to the bases. Often the commanders did not know they were coming, did not know what to do with them or where to house them and resented being given girls that he had to watch over. They did not want to pay them out of their budgets, and often the women were dropped by one base payroll and not picked up by the other base until months later. Many of the base commanding officers complained about Jacqueline Cochran showing up on the base and going directly to the women, and not checking in with the commanding officer as was military protocol. Failure to observe normal channels was one of the many complaints from base commanders. They also stated that early groups of graduates were highly qualified, and the reports from the ferrying groups were favorable. However, there was criticism of the program and training, though the document admits that “ill feelings probably did induce a tendency to look for faults in the training school” (AAFHS 61). Comparing the information on the duties and flight capabilities in the military document to the documents produced by Dr. Byrd Howell Grainger and her fellow female flyers show very profound discrepancies.

One example is the restrictions that were to be placed on woman pilots who were menstruating. They were supposed to be grounded from “one day before the beginning of the period to two days after the last day of the period” (AAFHS-55 41). This turned out to be difficult since women can’t always tell what the day before their period is, and using this process the women would have been grounded six to eight days per month, seriously reducing the workforce. After consideration of the workforce issue, the Air Surgeon decided that it was not necessary to ground women during their periods. The AAFHS document also describes the official actions of the House and the personal attacks on General Arnold and Cochran by Congressmen Edward Izak and Joseph P. O’Hara. It shows that the opposition to the bill was very organized and the support of the bill was poorly planned and weak (AAFHS-55 97).

In her book *Clipped Wings*, Molly Merryman focuses on the disbandment of the WASP program during wartime, their failure to militarize, and the final successful action to militarize and recognize the women and the program. Her detailed accounts of the military organizations that lobbied against the WASP militarization shows a clear picture of prejudice and fear on the part of males that did not want women to be a part of their groups. Merryman states in the introduction that the purpose of the book is to provide answers to questions of militarization. The other women’s service branches were all supported by Congress; the Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard were militarized without protest. Her detail of the process the military efforts and the disbandment lend a structure to this system that was clear and concise

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOMEN'S AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS PROGRAM

In 1938, the world was preparing for war. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called Brigadier General Harold (Hap) Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps to the White House to talk about the likelihood of United States involvement in a war with Germany. Military air power was discussed, both Germany's and the United States' and Arnold stated that Germany had 8,000 combat ready planes, and America had less than 1,000. Roosevelt immediately ordered Arnold to increase the number of planes and pilots and to begin readiness for war. (Granger 1). Germany attacked Poland in 1939, and soon other countries became involved. World War II had begun.

The United States, certain that they would soon be in the war, increased the readiness of the country by producing more planes and developing a civilian pilot training program that would increase the flying power in America. The pilot classes were given at community colleges throughout the country and for every ten men one woman was allowed to attend. On May 16, 1940, the fall of France was imminent. Congress immediately approved the funding for 11,000 planes that had been planned, but not built. On June 22, 1940, France was defeated. Arms production in the United States slowed because of metal shortages (Grainger 2). On September 27, 1940, Italy, Germany, and Japan signed an Axis pact. The United States takes stock of its airpower and realizes that more military air squadrons are needed in the Philippines and Hawaii. The United States

at this point has 800 military planes, 700 of which are obsolete (Grainger,2). After the attack on the US Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan. This declaration dramatically increased the immediate need for pilots and planes as the United States officially entered World War II.

The declaration of war by the United States changed the landscape of life in America. Women entered the workforce in unparalleled numbers and by 1945, nearly one out of four women worked outside the home. They were recruited to work in factories and other businesses to replace men in as many positions as possible, freeing the men up to enlist in the military. “Rosie the Riveter” became a government campaign symbol and encouraged women to work in the munitions industry. The aviation industry also needed women in their workforce and more than 310,000 women worked in the US aircraft industry in 1943, over 65 percent of their total workforce. Though women who entered the workforce during World War II were crucial to the war effort, their pay lagged far behind their male counterparts; Female workers rarely earned more than 50 percent of male wages. Many of these women were responsible for households and dependents, but the traditional male dominated household was considered the norm and the women were paid as if they were making “extra” money for the household (“American Women and WWII”).

Many women joined the military and other auxiliary services open to them. In May 1942, Congress approved the development of a Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) that would support the war efforts. The duty list for the WAAC included

stenographers, telephone operators, clerks, and other duties that the army considered to be “performed better by women than by men” (Merryman 16). The one restriction in the bill for women was they could not perform in combat roles (Merryman 37). This group was later militarized and became the Women’s Army Corps (WACS). Run by Ovetta Culp Hobby, the WACs were used in administrative capacities to support the armed services.

Wanting to serve her country and be a part of the war efforts as a pilot, Jacqueline Cochran began the groundwork for a female flying squadron. Cochran was a successful entrepreneur and owner of a cosmetic company. When her wealthy husband, Floyd Odum suggested she learn to fly to help with her business travel schedule, she loved the idea and immediately took flying lessons. Soon she flew her own plane in order to facilitate business meetings throughout the country. One of a small group of women pilots at the time, Cochran began to fly air races for fun and exposure and broke several speed records. (Keil 43). She quickly became friends with Amelia Earhart. Often a guest at her ranch in Indio, California, Earhart used the ranch for solitude. Earhart was the symbol of the new woman in America in 1935, fearless and able to take on what other women had not considered. After her disappearance in the South Pacific, Cochran tried to telepathically find her plane. Believing herself psychic at the time, Cochran tried to find Earhart’s plane using extra-sensory perception. Not being able to do so, Cochran stated that she never used her powers again, “They proved of no use to me or Amelia on July 2,

1937” (Cochran 143). Though Earhart was her fierce competitor in air shows and races, Cochran grieved her friends’ death for the rest of her life.

As the United States was readying for war, in a letter dated September 28, 1939, Cochran wrote First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt stating that using women pilots in the US could free up men for overseas combat duty (Granger 1). She said that women could be used in various situations, such as “flying ambulance planes, courier planes, and commercial transport planes” and the men doing those jobs could be utilized for military duty. (Rickman 61). She also said that “England, France, Russia and Germany were already using women pilots in their air forces” (Rickman 61). Eleanor Roosevelt, in her September 1, 1942, column “My Day” addressed the issue, stating “We are in a war and we need to fight it with all our ability and every weapon possible. Women pilots, in this particular case, are a weapon waiting to be used” (Roosevelt 1). By 1941, America had approximately 2,100 licensed women pilots, trained either through the Civilian Pilot Training program or private lessons at airfields.

Nancy Harkness Love, co-owner of sales and test pilot with Inner City Aviation also thought that women pilots could be useful to the country during the pilot shortage that was expected during the war. (Rickman 62) Her husband, Major Robert Love, agreed, and in a chance meeting with Colonel William H. Tunner opened the issue of recruiting woman pilots. Tunner was excited to know that he had a competent female pilot that he could approach with the idea. Love and Tunner drafted a plan for utilizing women pilots. Their original proposed qualifications included: 500 hours in the air, a

commercial license, age between 21 and 35, a high school diploma, a 200-horsepower rating, two letters of recommendation, and US citizenship. Sure that their proposal was going to pass, Tunner began working on securing living quarters for the women (Rickman 74). Soon this group, called the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS), was in the air.

During the development of the WAFS, Jacqueline Cochran was in England flying for the Ferry Command with a small group of female pilots from the United States. After a successful operation, she was ready to put the same process in place in America. "I was on my way home with a plan in mind to put American women pilots to work just as the British were doing" (Cochran 181). Upset that there was already a program in place, Cochran went into high gear with her plan. Both Nancy Harkness Love and Jacqueline Cochran presented proposals to use women pilots in the Army Air Force (AAF), though the structures of their plans were very different. Love "proposed the development of a small squad of women pilots specifically to ferry aircraft from factories to AAF bases, both in the US and overseas" (Merryman 12). Loves program required pilots to meet high standards and qualifications. She envisioned a group of women who would be auxiliary pilots with a very narrow scope, moving aircraft to bases from the factory. It was not intended to be militarized. Jacqueline Cochran's program had a much broader scope and was open to younger less experienced women that could be trained to fly as military pilots. She envisioned a group of women pilots who could be utilized at several different

locations and could move aircraft between bases, from factory to base, or wherever they needed to be delivered, as well as other flying assignment.

Nancy Love's Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) had twenty-eight experienced pilots who began moving small engine planes from the factory to flight training fields. Eventually she had several squadrons of women under her leadership and they trained on and flew all of the planes that needed ferrying from factory to base (Rickman 3). Considered civil service employees, the women did not receive military benefits, or recognition. Eventually, they combined with Jacqueline Cochran's to form the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP).

Cochran's group began as the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) and had more extensive training and expanded scope. When the groups merged, they all went through the same flight training in Sweetwater Texas. In her final report to the War Department on June 1, 1945, Cochran stated that,

The WASP did ferrying, target towing, tracking and searchlight missions, simulated strafing, smoke laying and other chemical missions, radio control flying, basic and instrument instruction, engineering test flying, administrative and utility flying. The WASPs flew during operational duties nearly every type of airplane used by the AAF, from the small primary trainer to the Superfortress (B-29), including the Mustang, Thunderbolt, B-17, B-26 and C-54. (Department of War, Cochran 2)

Training for the WASP was extensive and comprehensive. Changing the curriculum as their duties increased, the women were trained in twelve different areas: mathematics, physics, maps, charts and aerial photography, navigation, aircraft and principles of flight, engines and propellers, weather, code practice, instruments, forms and procedures, pilots information file, and communications (Merryman 19). Later they were trained in target towing, glider towing, radar calibration flights, copiloting bombers, and flying training missions (Merryman 20). The eventual scope of the WASP was to fill in virtually everywhere they were needed in the US to free up a pilot for combat flying. They were assigned to 125 bases during their service time (see Table 2).

The days of WASP training were long and hard, often starting at 6 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m. Though hired through civil service procedures, but not actually being civil service and not considered military, they were required to have their barracks clean for inspection, train in march and drill formation, attend ground school and fly. The original training school near Houston was not prepared to house women pilots and they stayed in hotels and cottages scattered around the base (Merryman 17). A large bus picked up the women and transported them to the airport early in the morning and delivered them back to their housing late at night. The airport also did not have adequate number of training planes for the women, and time was wasted as they waited their turn for training.

Avenger Field, in Sweetwater, Texas, was found a suitable site, and Cochran made plans to move the WASP training to this base. The first class of women at Avenger

field began in February, 1943, and was twenty-two weeks long. The people of Sweetwater were cautious and uncomfortable with the women trainees in their midst. Used to male cadets from the airfield that provided entertainment and socialization for the families of the town, the women were looked upon with suspicion, and not welcomed. In 1943, women living on a man's military base and flying planes were not considered very "ladylike." Though the town was small with only a few streets there were twelve churches. Practicing outreach as was their Christian duty, the citizens encouraged the women to attend services and invited them to their homes for dinner afterward. This seemingly generous gesture "proved to be half-hearted. Several trainees found themselves relegated to eat their meals alone in the kitchen" (Keil 170). They weren't welcome to join the family in the dining room. Hearing about this, Jacqueline Cochran did some public relations with the mayor of the town and invited the community to a day of songs and fun. Won over, the local paper *The Sweetwater Reporter* stated, "They are civilians, but men of the flying fraternity think they're the greatest little sisters that a group of Army fighting airmen ever possessed" (Keil 171). So, when they acted like girls, singing and dancing and showing they were no threat, they were accepted.

CHAPTER 4

MISSIONS, OPERATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS

The first graduates of the Women Airforce Service Pilots program were placed as ferrying pilots. On July 5, 1943, Jacqueline Cochran received a memo from Col. L.G. Fritz, Assistant Chief of Staff Operations, Headquarters of the Air Transport Command. In it Fitz begins by praising the sixty-five ferry pilots, noting that “their ground and flight training has been, in general, thorough and well-adapted to their duties as ferrying pilots. Their attitude and conduct have been generally excellent” (Grainger 135). He goes on to point out where additional training can be useful to the pilots, and Cochran made notes to use in her visit to Avenger Field.

Cochran intended to utilize the pilots for more than ferrying planes from factory to base. It was her intention to convince administration to allow the women to train as tow target pilots (Grainger 140). Soon the women were also training for and being used as co-pilots, test pilots and tracking pilots. At Camp Davis, and many other bases in the country, the women were not always welcomed or treated with respect. Concerned about the planes being given to them to fly at Camp Davis, one WASP pilot who had been a plane mechanic for years, befriended two of the young mechanics and soon saw that they were working on planes that were often unfit to fly, and they did not have proper parts to fix them. They also said they were concerned that the gas tanks often showed water in

them; too much for just basic water vapor and they were concerned about sabotage (Keil 219). In the investigation of crashes, the military primarily blamed equipment malfunction, pilot error or weather conditions. But the investigations did not always convey the extent of the “equipment malfunctions.” In a *Time* magazine article entitled *The Hidden Risk Faced by Female Pilots During World War II*, web published on February 7, 2017, author Olivia Waxman said that the women sometimes felt that the men were actually at war with them. WASP Geri Nyman declared that she had trouble in the air when her second engine did not start. When taking the engine apart, the inspector found it filled with rags. Though it was obviously sabotage, it was not reported as such (Waxman 2).

Another example of the shunning behavior toward the women pilots on the base was when they ate in the mess. Though polite and friendly, the women were greeted with “cat calls, non-admiring whistles and loud remarks” (Grainger 151). Making it more uncomfortable, the commander of the Tow Target squadron, Major Lovick L Stephenson, rationed the milk in the dining hall for the men only, saying that it was needed for the “fighting men.” He also rationed clean sheets, which the women did not get for three weeks after they arrived at the base (Grainger 152).

Jacqueline Cochran, in her autobiography entitled *Jackie Cochran, The Autobiography of the Greatest Woman Pilot in Aviation History* stated that she had three objectives in the development of the WASP program: “(1) to see if women could serve as military pilots and if so, to form the nucleus of an organization that could be rapidly

expanded; (2) to release male pilots for combat; (3) to decrease the Air Forces' total demands on the cream of the manpower pool" (Cochran 200). As the women were deployed to the 125 bases around the country, Cochran spent time working with issues at each base as they occurred. WASP Margaret Boylan met Cochran when she flew into the Houston training center in her personal plane. On the side of the plane were the words Wings to Beauty. Boylan made the mistake of saying that was a weird thing to have on the side of a plane. Hearing her, Cochran explained that her beauty company was named "Wings to Beauty" and asked her to meet with her. During the meeting, they chatted about the conditions at the base. When Boylan told her that the main issue the women faced was that they were "being taught by civilian instructors and then tested by Army Air Force Pilots and the training and testing are not consistent with each other. We're losing a lot of women because of this" (Cochran 202). Cochran dismissed her and asked her to return the next day. When she returned Cochran told her that she had looked at her record to see if the complaint was because she herself was going to wash out. Seeing that was not the case, she listened and worked on the issues.

After much debate and training, the women were finally flying the missions they had been trained for; towing targets for antiaircraft military practice. The pilots would "fly missions up and down the coast and up to 50 miles out over the U-boat patrolled Atlantic" (Keil 220). These missions took place during the day; soon they were required to also fly night target towing missions along the coast. Blackout orders were in place on the coastlines at night and the pilots had very difficult missions with no landmark

lighting. Though the women had trained for the target towing missions the reality of being shot at and hit by artillery from men in training to kill the enemy was a difficult situation to manage. The stress of these circumstances began to affect some of the women's health. Despite this, they obeyed orders. "When a few of the WASP's began losing their appetites, they merely blamed the heat" (Keil 221).

Soon they were also being utilized as test pilots on bases throughout the US. As Van Wagenen Keil states, "There was one job in the Training Command that men pilots often simply refused to do, one that was crucial on trainings bases across the country-- that of test pilot" (Keil 272). By flying planes that had been grounded for mechanical issues and repaired, the WASP became adept at hearing and seeing issues before they flew. Many of the maintenance mechanic units were overworked or undertrained and the pilots often were the oversight for the mechanics (Keil 273).

On even a more special and unusual mission, in January 1944, WASP Ann Baumgartner was sent from Camp Davis to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, to flight test new equipment designed for women. The equivalent to the modern-day Houston Space Flight Center, Wright Field soon had Ann involved with plans for rockets, jet propulsion systems and other exciting futuristic plans. When her time was finished, she asked to be reassigned to the base, and thought they told her she may be reassigned to the operations office at test stations and she may not be able to fly (Keil 283). She took the chance and soon became "part of the nation's most elite and daredevil teams of test pilots, experimenting with pressurization and oxygen systems, pursuit gun sights and other

prototype equipment” (Keil 283). From test pilots, to tow targets to equipment research and development, the WASP became a part of the infrastructure of the military. They were also used on “top secret missions that were involved with the Manhattan Project” (Merryman 26). In her book *On Final Approach*, Byrd Howard Grainger describes a Manhattan Project delivery:

October 25, 1944 (Alamogordo AFB) Additional WASPs report to help deliver the goods for the B-29 program. They fly as copilots on B-17’s and C-47’s and as 1st pilots on C-45’s. They fly three trips weekly between Alamogordo and Hamilton AFB near San Francisco, never knowing what the cargo is, always met at destination by guards armed to the teeth. The support cargos they help deliver to Hamilton are scheduled to be shipped to Saipan and Tinian in preparation for the top-secret atom bomb drops on Japan, a secret known to very few. (Grainger 429)

The WASP began to hear rumors about their disbandment. One WASP, who flew missions into the domestic theatre, described in her notes: “Buckingham AFB: Busy as they are the WASPs wonder where the notion came that women pilots aren’t needed. They copilot every day, working around the clock on eight hour shifts with no time off. The really exciting thing is that WASPs fly on missions out over the Caribbean, over Cuba, into a war zone. Oddly, the missions are termed ‘country runs’” (Grainger 428). When the WASP flew top-secret missions or war zone missions, they were not

documented as such. Not until the documents were declassified was this information correctly attributed to the WASP.

CHAPTER 5

IN THE LINE OF DUTY--THE 38

The Women's Airforce Service Program pilots (WASP) were considered civil service employees during their tenure in the military. This gave them no military recognition, protection or benefits. Thirty-eight women died in the service of their country, both during training and on missions and their contributions to the war efforts were not acknowledged or recognized. Much of the information in this chapter comes directly from the pilots, in their own words.

Their families were not allowed the comfort or the honor of having them acknowledged as dying in the line of duty. Many of the families were not even told where the women died, the missions being classified. Each of the women had a special reason for joining the WASP and their deaths were part of the cost of the war efforts. Though the death occurred in the United States, they are no less war heroes.

Many of the deaths that occurred during training were due to faulty equipment, weather, or sabotage. WASP Byrd Howell Grainger describes the reason why the ferrying pilot deaths were so high:

Some are attributable to careless production (at the factory). Far more go down sabotaged. Every plane lost, every pilot killed is a plus for the Axis. A disgruntled employee hired to safeguard planes on a factory field pulls up grass by the hands full and stuffs it into a fuel tank. Traitors in the ranks of mechanics cross fuel

lines with coolant lines. Sugar is poured into fuel. Tires are expertly slashed, not to blow on takeoff, but on landing. (Grainger 267)

Most of the male pilots and mechanics appeared to be uncomfortable working with women pilots and do not want them to become a permanent part of the system. Sabotage is one way for them to silently protest the women in their environment. Ann Carl, a WASP from class 43-5 spoke of the deaths in her book *A WASP Among Eagles*, talks about the deaths and the women who are left behind that never really know what happened to their fallen sisters. “We were never told exactly what happened. Perhaps no one knew. The plane had crashed and burned, or perhaps it was in the opposite order” (Carl 49).

Table 1

WASP Fatalities

T = Trainee A = Active Duty

Name	Status	Class	Date of Death	Plane	Place
Champlin, Jane	T	43-4	3 June 43	BT-15	Westbrook, TX
Clarke, Susan	A	44-2	4 July 44	BT-15	Columbia, SC
Davis, Margie	T	44-9	16 Oct 44	AT-6	Walnut, MS
Dussaq, Katherine	A	44-1	26 Nov 44	At-6	New Carlisle, OH
Edwards Marjorie	T	44-6	13 June 44	At-6	Near Childress, TX
Erickson, Elizabeth	T	44-6	16 April 44	PT-17	Near Sweetwater, TX
Fort, Cornelia	A	WAFS	21 Mar 43	BT-13	Merkel, TX
Grimes, Frances	A	43-3	27 Mar 44	A-24	Otis Field, MA
Hartson, Mary	T	43-5	14 Aug 44	BT-13	Near Perrin, TX
Howson, Mary	T	44-4	16 Apr 44	AT-6	Near Sweetwater, TX
Keene, Edith	A	44-1	25 Apr 44	BT-13	Near Mission, TX
Lawrence, Katheryn	T	43-8	3 Aug 43	PT-19	Near Sweetwater, TX
Lee, Hazel Ying	A	43-4	23 Nov 44	P-63	Great Falls, MT
Loop, Paula	A	43-2	7 July 44	BT-15	Medford, OR
Lovejoy, Alice	A	43-5	13 Sep 44	AT-6	Brownsville, TX
McDonald, Lea	A	44-3	21 June 44	A-24	Biggs AFB, TX
Martin, Peggy	A	44-4	3 Oct 44	BT-13	Marana, AZ
Moffatt, Virginia	A	43-2	5 Oct 43	BT-13	Ontario, CA
Moses, Beverly	A	44-5	18 July 44	AT-11	Near Las Vegas, NV
Nichols, Dorothy	A	43-2	11 June 44	P-39	Bismark, ND
Norbeck, Jeanne	A	44-3	16 Oct 44	BT-13	Shaw Field, SC
Oldenburg, Margaret	T	43-4	7 Mar 43	PT-19	Near Houston, TX
Rawlinson, Mabel	A	43-3	23 Aug 43	A-24	Camp Davis, NC
Roberts, Gleanna	T	44-9	20 June 44	PT-17	Lorraine, TX
Robinson Mitchell, Marie	A	44-2	2 Oct 44	B-25	Victorville, CA
Scott, Bettie Mae	A	44-3	8 July 44	BT-13	Waco, TX
Scott, Dorothy	A	WAFS	3 Dec 43	BC-1	Palm Springs, CA
Selp, Margaret	T	43-5	30 Aug 43	UC-78	Near Big Springs, TX
Severson, Helen	T	43-5	30 Aug 43	UC-78	Near Big Springs, TX
Sharon, Ethel	A	43-4	10 April 44	B-25	Tecumseh, NB
Sharp, Evelyn	A	WAFS	3 Apr 44	P-38	New Cumberland, PA
Tompkins Silver, Gertrude	A	43-7	18 Oct 44	P-51	Between Long Beach and Palm Springs, CA STILL MISSING
Stine, Betty	T	44-2	25 Feb 44	AT-6	Near Quartzite, AZ
Toevs, Marion	A	43-8	18 Feb 44	BT-13	San Jose, CA
Trebing, Mary	A	43-4	5 Oct 43	PT-17	Near Norman, OK
Webster, Mary	A	44-8	9 Dec 44	BT-15	Claremore, OK
Welz, Bonnie Jean	A	43-6	29 June 44	BT-13	Randado, TX
Wood, Betty Taylor	A	43-4	9 Sep 43	A-24	Camp Davis, NC

This table was taken from On Final Approach, Appendix Q and lists the names of the women who gave their lives for their country in WWII. One woman's body has never been found.

Jean Hascall Cole, in her book *Woman Pilots of WWII* gave a harrowing first person account of a crash she survived in a plane that was sabotaged.

I was up there doing maneuvers and all of a sudden, the plane just went completely out of control and flipped into an inverted spin. I stayed with it, I worked with it. I did everything possible. I stayed with it as long as I could, and then I tried to get out. That was a big surprise. It was difficult to get out of the plane because in this case I was underneath, being in an inverted spin, and in getting out one of my legs was hit by the rudder. I have a picture of my leg, bandaged, and that was the result of being hit. Then I counted “one-ten” and pulled the ripcord. No counting to ten. It was just one and ten. I was so close to the ground. Later they told me I had stayed with it too long. Kit saw the plane going down and she saw it crash, but she never saw my chute open. That’s how close I was. My chute had just barely opened when I hit the ground. I lay there for I don’t know how long. Then, all of a sudden, two cowboys came galloping up. One of them said, “oh, there’s the pilot.” He came over and pulled my helmet off and my long hair fell down, and he said, “my gosh it’s a little girl.” When he said that, I didn’t know if I was in shock or what, but I started to cry and he said “don’t cry, don’t cry.” The other cowboy went galloping off and came back with a branch of cotton to dry my eyes. It was a cotton field that I had landed in, and he said, “here, don’t cry, don’t cry. We’ll get help.” (Cole 40)

Later it was found that her rudder cables had been cut, just part way

through so that they would let go when she was in the air (Cole 41). The investigation of this incident occurred, but no one was ever held accountable for the sabotage.

Parachutes were also sabotaged, and Howell Granger describes one WASP who took her parachute to be inspected and a loose-stoppered vial of acid was found. Holes in the chutes do not make for safe parachute bail-outs (Grainger 267). It is a tense and uneasy time for the women, and though they are accepted and befriended by some of the male pilots, they are rejected and demeaned by many others. It is a dangerous job for the WASP, with the threat being internal as well as mechanical and external.

This is a description of a crash, written by WASP pilot Byrd Howell Grainger that resulted in the first WASP pilot death:

March 21, 1943: In the open sky over Texas, near Merkel, in the vicinity of Laredo, separate groups of the BT-13's are flying toward a basic flight training field. WAFS fly in one group, and male pilots in another. All are under instructions not to fly near each other; and, in their own group, to fly in a "formation which will keep at least 500" between planes. The pilots follow orders. All except one male pilot. That one perhaps thinks what fun it would be to scare one of those girls. He leaves his group and accelerates. In BT-13 No. 42-42432 the WAFS pilot sees his plane coming straight at hers. He speeds closer, gathering more speed. She maintains her course. Then he begins to slowly roll around her plane. He misjudges, badly. His wing cuts through the cockpit canopy. It strikes her. She dies almost instantly. But she lives long enough to reach out

and turn off the ignition switch. Crashing, she will not be consumed by flames.

The WAF pilot is Cornelia Fort. She is the first American woman to die on active duty. (Grainger 67)

Before she volunteered to be a WASP, Cornelia Fort was a flight instructor in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and was in the sky on December 7, 1941, during the attack at Pearl Harbor. This is her personal description of the events of the day, as written in an article for *Women's Home Companion* in July 1943 (Fort 19). Her experience on the day of the Pearl Harbor attack put her in the skies on the day she died.

At dawn that morning I drove from Waikiki to the John Rogers Civilian airport right next to Pearl Harbor, where I was a civilian pilot instructor. Shortly after six-thirty, I began landing and take-off practice with my regular student. Coming in just before the last landing, I looked casually around and saw a military plane coming directly toward me. I jerked the controls away from my student and jammed the throttle wide open to pull above the oncoming plane. He passed so close under that our celluloid windows rattled violently and I looked down to see what kind of plane it was. The painted red balls on the tops of the wings shone brightly in the sun. I looked again with complete and utter disbelief. Honolulu was familiar with the emblems of the Rising Sun on passenger ships but not on airplanes. I looked quickly at Pearl Harbor and my spine tingled when I saw billowing black smoke. Still I thought hollowly it might be some kind of coincidence or maneuvers, it might be, it must be, fore surely, dear God. (Fort 19)

She described being in tears as she stood at attention and watched bombers fly across the ocean, for that was what would keep America free. She was a true patriot.

The response to Cornelia Fort's death was as swift as it was questionable. Col. Nelson, the Romulus Army Air Base Commander on March 25, 1944, decreed the following: "Henceforth WAFS will fly only the lightest trainers and they will do so in directions differing from the routes being used by male pilots. Further, women will never be copilots to any male. And women absolutely will not fly either twin-engine or high-powered single engine planes" (Grainger 67). So not only were the women blamed for the accident, they were pulled back and limited to reduced missions and service due to their "effects" on the male pilots. Their gender was considered their fault. Nancy Love, having spent so much time putting the pilots through training and in place, went "on the warpath" (Grainger 67). By April 17, Headquarters sent the following announcement to all Ferrying Group Commanding Officers: "All pilots regardless of sex are to be privileged to advance to the extent of their ability in keeping with the progress of aircraft development and ... this policy is to apply in the ferrying of planes" (Grainger 67).

In the book *Nancy Love and the WASP Ferry Pilots of World War II*, Barbara Erickson London describes flying with Nancy Love to Cornelia Fort's hometown and meeting with her family.

Wednesday night (March 24) Major Dunlap, Nancy and I left Albuquerque about 10 p.m. and flew nonstop into Nashville and arrived there at 5:30 a.m. Thursday morning. It was fairly bad weather--rain, etc.--most of the way and Major D. did

most of the flying and Nancy and I alternated flying co-pilot and trying to sleep on the floor in the navigator's place. When we arrived, it took quite a while to finally get a hotel room as nearly everything was full, but finally did. We cleaned up, ate breakfast and by that time it was 8:30--so we called Mrs. Fort for we knew she was waiting to hear we all had arrived ok. From then on, the day was one terrible one. We went out to their home about 10 and met Mrs. Fort and all the family. Naturally, they wanted to know everything and we couldn't tell them anything. It gave me the creeps talking to all these bereaved people about something I didn't know anything about. (Rickman 118)

The loss of the only WASP who disappeared during a mission, Gertrude Tompkins Silver's death continues to be a mystery. Jean Merl, staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote about her disappearance in 1997. "She was 32 and a bride of just one month when her warplane disappeared during World War II after takeoff from what is now Los Angeles International Airport" (Merl 1). She was on a routine delivery of a P-51 D from Santa Monica to Newark, New Jersey where they would be bound for Europe. Many of the planes were right off the factory line and had never been flown. It was not noticed that Silver was missing for three days, despite the procedures put in place that included check in every evening by all WASP on flying missions. Many missions to find the plane and pilot have been initiated over the years, all with no success. No wreckage has been found in the water, and no wreckage has been found in the mountains between Santa Monica and Palm Springs, where Silver had planned to spend the night. Her family

helped with the search, her husband and father on the boats that searched Santa Barbara Harbor. The disappearance of Tompkins fascinates underwater aircraft wreck hunters, and they continue to look for her plane.

CHAPTER 6

MILITARIZATION FAILURE, DISBANDMENT AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE WASP PROGRAM

The women continued to fly throughout the United States, in any capacity they were needed. As was always her intention, in 1944 Jacqueline Cochran was ready to move the WASP into the military. During the time the WASP bill was submitted to congress for militarization, the Women's Army Corps (WACS), the Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services (WAVES), the Women's Coast Guard (SPARS), the Army Nurses Corp (ANC) and the Navy Nurses Corp (NNC) were all militarized. The WASP bill was the only women's service group to be denied, and though strongly supported by General Arnold, President Roosevelt, and Eleanor Roosevelt, it did not pass. Many issues were present at that time to make the WASP bill controversial and unpopular for passage. The culture of the time was part of the critical path to disbandment and the public was unsupportive of women doing what was traditionally considered a man's job. Many male pilots and mechanics also had trouble working with the WASP group due to their personal discrimination and prejudice toward women in the workforce, and the fear that they would take their jobs.

When Jacqueline Cochran and General Arnold lobbied for militarization of the WASP, resistance came from male pilots who felt they would be pushed out of the way to make room for the women. Fortunately, the United States did not lose the number of planes or pilots in Europe they had anticipated, and as the tide of the war turned toward

America, pilots started coming home (Merryman 62). Fearing for their jobs, pilots went to the newspapers and media coverage during this time became aggressive against the WASP and was the main reason they were not militarized. Fearing that their support base would falter during elections, the politicians also turned against the women.

In the beginning of the program, the publicity for the WASP was positive and interesting to the public. In an article by the *Washington Daily News* the program and women were treated favorably.

Women Air Service Pilots (WASP) are flying target-towing and tracking missions for anti-aircraft artillerymen here. Their job has been so satisfactory that their chief, Miss Jacqueline Cochran, deemed it need no longer remain a military secret. The famous woman flyer was on hand to show what her girls can do and insist it be treated "without glamour." Like WACS, WAVES, SPARS, and Marines, WASPs had to win their way here. Air Corps personnel assigned to this post were quite skeptical at first. Now most of them are in the cheering section. (Merryman 61)

The news coverage quickly turned against the WASP. The change in the support was partly because the Army and Navy gave notice that they were going to cancel the war training service under the Civil Aeronautics Administration. This change in status released over 900 male pilots from service and many of them stood to lose their deferred draft status and be drafted into the "walking army" (Merryman 64). Soon the press jumped on the bandwagon and published an article entitled "Army Passes Up Jobless

Pilots to Train WASPs: Prefers Women to Older, Experienced Flyers” and stated that 5,000 pilots were looking for jobs due to the ending of the Civil Aeronautic Commission’s pilot training program while the government is training more than 1,000 women for their jobs (Merryman 64). The difference in the number of pilots looking for jobs between the news report and the government report is telling, as is the magnifying glass placed on the women and their program. The original opposition to the bill came from the unemployed pilots, but they were soon joined by the returning pilots who saw the women as a threat.

During this time General Arnold also was part of a group developing the process to separate the Army Air Corps from the Army. This detached military branch would be called the Air Force. Bad press from the WASP attempts to militarize could hurt his chances to get the reorganization, and General Arnold reluctantly softened his support for militarization (Merryman 113).

Critical in the outcome of the congressional bill was the Ramspeck Report. The male civilian pilots approached Robert Ramspeck, Chairman of the Committee on the Civil Service. After hearing their complaints, he began to investigate the WASP program. The thirteen-page document produced addressed claims that the civilian pilots had against the WASP. Their concerns were that the Army Air Forces had unnecessarily developed a costly program to train women pilots and failed to utilize the male pilots already trained. They also, completely without proof, stated that the standards for female pilots were dangerously lower than male pilots (Merryman 83). Of note, the report did

not mention the male pilots of the Air Transport Command, who were recruited and trained as the WASP, and went on to be commissioned into the AAF. The report actually claimed discrimination against the male pilots and stated that the women were given preferential treatment (Merryman 84). The report gave the press all the ammunition they needed to move forward with scathing reports about the women, for daring to fill a role that belonged to men.

On June 22, 1944, House Resolution 4219 terminated the WASP program and the group was demobilized on December 20, 1944 (Roberts 31). After they were dismissed, the records of the WASP program were sealed and classified. Reasons for this are speculative, but it is clear that the military wanted the WASP program to disappear, and classification was the way to accomplish that and make way for the public focus on the development of the Air Force as a separate service branch of the United States military. The leaders of the time did not see a place in the structure of the Air Force that included women, no matter how talented they were.

Jacqueline Cochran, in her Final Report on Women Pilot Program to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces on June 1, 1945, asked the General to release the report she had written on the WASP program. In the report, she listed facts, conclusions and recommendations for the program (USAAF Cochran). Her facts included:

The WASP, according to the overwhelming opinion of station commanders where they were on duty, were as efficient and effective as the male pilots in most

classes of duties; and were better than the men in some duties, as for example towing of targets for gunnery practice. Almost uniformly the WASP were reported eager to learn, willing to work, and well behaved. The WASPs did ferrying, target towing, tracking and searchlight missions, simulated strafing, smoke laying and other chemical missions, radio control flying, basic and instrument instruction, engineering test flying, administrative and utility flying.

(Cochran)

Conclusions in her final report were that women meet the standards of physical exams for flying, can be trained as quickly and economically as men, and can safely fly all types of planes. She stated that the flying safety record of women pilots approximates that of male pilots, and the elimination rate for women cadets was the same as for men (Cochran). Even limiting the selection of women pilots to specific age and height groups, it would be possible to build up an effective women's Airforce as there were approximately thirteen million young women in the country between eighteen to twenty-eight years of age, and approximately six million of them were single (Cochran).

Cochran's recommendations in the report stated that "any further women pilot program should be militarized from the beginning" (Cochran). She also wanted the age limits to be eighteen to twenty-eight and the height weight limits should be at least sixty-four inches and 110 lbs. Her final and most poignant recommendation was that the WASP who died in service should "receive compensation comparable to what would have been received if the WASP had been on military status with insurance privileges

and benefits” (Cochran). The women who finished the program in good standing should also receive veteran’s rights and benefits (Cochran). Unfortunately, it would be over thirty years before this recommendation would be reality.

CHAPTER 7

OUT OF THE CLOUDS: THE WASP
SUCCEED IN MILITARIZING

The cultural and social climate for women changed drastically in the years between 1944 and 1977. At the end of World War II, woman had been encouraged to return home from the factories and the jobs they stepped into when the men went to war, and for the most part that is what they did. But they did not forget the freedom of flying, or the independence of a job outside the home. “Because of wartime restrictions on the WASP program, the story of their missions had never been told during the war; after the war, there was no interest in telling their stories” (Merryman 138). That all changed when in 1976 the United States Air Force Academy determined that women would be allowed into their program, and announced that “for the first time in history women were going to fly military aircraft.” WASP Katherine (Kaddy) Landry Steele read the announcement and said that “it really set a bomb under all of us” (Merryman 138). The WASP group used the media from this event to publicize that they were actually the first women to fly military planes. And the country was interested, and listening.

The WASP had a sympathetic ear in an era where women’s equality was a topic of conversation, and a legal issue. One of the newspaper articles stated “Thirty-two years after they flew for their country and sometimes died in flaming crashes, more than 950 former wartime fliers who had been attached to the United States Air Force feel they are not gone but that they are forgotten” (Merryman, 139). In 1977, a new bill was

introduced to militarize the WASP and again, the opposition was organized and vocal. The official resistance included The Veterans Administration, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and President Jimmy Carter (Merryman 140). Surprisingly, the first woman to head the Veteran's Administration benefits division opposed the bill because she believed the "WASP did not differ from other civilian groups who had supported the United States war effort and that if the WASP received veteran's benefits, those benefits would then likely have to be accorded to all other civilians who belonged to support organizations" (Merryman 140).

It was apparent that if the bill was to pass it would have to have the support of veterans and active armed service members. The WASP organized and created a WASP Public Affairs Office, working out of the Army-Navy Club in Washington, D.C. They arranged for media interviews, and provided fact sheets and photographs. Author Molly Merryman stated that "In 1944 the WASP had lost their bid for militarization because the public was both misinformed and uninformed about the missions performed by the WASP's and the impact caused by the lack of militarization. In 1977, the WASP, no longer under AAF orders to maintain their silence, were going to ensure that they were not overlooked this time" (Merryman 141).

The tide against the women began to turn when the June 16, 1977, issue of *Stars and Stripes* included a column from the National Association of Concerned Veterans. In this column, they stated,

It is shameful that these women who served their country honorably in time of war have been denied veterans' benefits. It is shameful that they must still fight for these benefits after 30 years. And it is shameful that not only must they convince Congress of their right but must also convince those with whom they served and who are now spokesmen for the veteran's organizations. There are certain facts which must be kept in mind. These women were assigned flight activities that were not assigned to other civilian pilots. They conformed to military discipline and military courtesy. They participated in physical training required at duty bases, were required to learn infantry drill, and they carried weapons. Under current law, a male reservist who serves on active duty for only two weeks and is injured while on active duty is eligible to apply for VA benefits. A woman who served her country in time of war, functioned in combat zones and served in essential areas when there existed a "manpower" shortage is not eligible to apply for VA benefits. The argument that granting WASPs veterans' benefits would set a dangerous precedent is an untenable position. There have been many civilian groups asking Congress for veterans' benefits. But, it is unfair to consider all these groups solely under the heading "civilian." Let each group be considered separately and on its own merit. (Merryman 143)

In September 1977, the military magazine *Stars and Stripes* further endorsed the WASP by allowing them a weekly column to tell their story. "The endorsement of the veteran's newspaper quickly resulted in other veterans' organizations offering public

support to the WASP. Local chapters of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars also issued statements in support of the bills, which were contrary to those issued by their national offices” (Merryman 141).

In 1944, the press was used as a weapon against WASP militarization. Now it was being used as an asset in their fight. Senator Barry Goldwater, a veteran and a strong supporter of the WASP militarization, submitted a newspaper article to the senate written by Paul Dean comparing the ten female pilot recruits of the Air Force to the 1074 WASP. In the article, Dean states,

The ten who graduate from Williams AFB are eligible, as they have been since signature at a recruiting office, for college on the GI bill, disability benefits, lifetime pensions and space-available air travel anywhere in the world once retired and full fringes from free treatment at veterans’ hospitals to the macabre moment of subsidized burial with a free flag on the casket. But the WASP’s of WWII? They received nothing beyond back pats when their service was disbanded in 1945. They have been given no benefits since. They are not considered veterans. They don’t have the authority to buy a BX aspirin to cure headaches earned at their occasional reunions at military airfields. Bills to bring veteran’s benefits to the WASP have been aborted by Congress since 1944. A new, stronger, unified tighter organized drive, with Senator Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., as pilot-in-command, continues to be jostled by Senate and House and their committees. So, Nyman, Kindig, Blake and Tamblin (the WASP Dean

interviewed) do not downgrade the efforts, proficiency, dedication and deserved status of the flying ladies of Williams. Nor are they seeking retroactive liberation. But they would like equity with today's military women. (Merryman 146)

William Randolph Hearst got into the fight with an article entitled "To Right a Thirty-Three-Year-Old Wrong." He called upon all Americans to urge their congressmen to approve the veteran's status of the WASP (Merryman, 146). Senator Barry Goldwater wrote and submitted a lengthy article called "WASP's: The Forgotten Warriors." In it he stated,

Some military pilots now wear lipstick instead of mustaches, just as some 18 women are now flying for 10 major US airlines. They aren't the first women to enter the world of professional aviation; only the first to be recognized for it." He went on to describe the missions and responsibilities of the WASP. He stated "The girl pilots were denied commissions as military officers for one reason alone--their sex. A law which the Air Corps wanted to use to bring women pilots into the service as regular officers was ruled by the Comptroller General as not applying to women. Horror of horrors, the interpretation of the law needed to authorize the commissioning of women and would have required considering them to be "persons" since the law permitted the Army Air Corps to grant temporary commissions to "qualified persons." The Comptroller General's ruling stated that this would be "revolutionary" to include women as "persons" and so the female pilots had to remain civilians. (Merryman 148)

Opponents of the WASP argued that they had received civil service benefits and should therefore be unqualified for veteran benefits. However, since the original intention of the Army Air Force was to “militarize the WASPs, the program was actually never given civil service standing” (Merryman 150). In opposition of the bill, The American Legion stated,

The American Legion cannot support this bill. Its enactment would in our judgement, jeopardize the entire concept upon which the program of veterans’ benefits have been constructed . . . We have read the record of how the (1944) bill failed of passage on the floor of the House, and perhaps the House should have, in fact, passed the bill at that time, possibly resulting in the militarization of the WASPS, and thus making this subject, now before the Committee, moot. But the bill was not passed, the WASPS were not militarized and the complete record of their service establishes that they functioned in a civilian capacity. The question, then, that must now be answered is whether as civilians, in the service of the Army for performance of a specific and limited task, admittedly involving appreciable risk to life and limb, the former members of the WASP should be accorded the same rights and benefits that appertain to honorable service in the Armed forces during World War II. The American legion firmly believes that this should not be done . . . Of all the points that can be made against them, the overriding one, in our judgement, is that to legislate such a grant of benefits would denigrate the term “veteran” so that it will never again have the value that

presently attaches to it. For once the precise definition of the term is breached, it will no longer be possible to defend it. (Merryman 152)

What the American Legion did not take into account was that the classified documents that had not been available to the senate in 1944 were now declassified and showed that the WASP did indeed fly missions, sometimes covert missions out of American airspace, wear uniforms, adhere to military rules, carry weapons and were honorably discharged at the end of their service. The point that by militarizing the women the men are depreciated and the veteran title would be diminished is a deeply held prejudice that women are of less value than men, and it is inconceivable that this belief still resonated over thirty years later.

Byrd Howell Grainger, a former commanding officer of a squadron of WASP out of Palm Springs, assembled 114 official documents that included orders, forms, discharges, and other papers. Entitled “Evidence Supporting Military Service by Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II,” the documents showed that the WASP were recognized by the AAF as having been in military service during the war (Merryman 155). Detailed in her book, *On Final Approach*, Grainger describes and has copies of the class lists, flight training curriculum, a detailed list of WASP base assignments and their duties at the bases (Table 1) the planes they flew and the uniforms they were required to wear. In the author’s note of her book, Grainger says “On Final Approach is the WASP’s story. It is time the world learns it the way it was. It is my privilege to tell it” (Grainger iv). These documents were instrumental in turning the tide for WASP militarization.

Grainger's official documents included items that refuted what had been assumed about their time in the service:

The assumptions that WASPs were free to come and go as they pleased was negated by orders of transfer, identification cards, and Army Instrument Pilot certificates that WASPs were required to have in their possession while on flight duty. In addition, WASP testimonials revealed that WASPs were on twenty-four-hour call rather than working civilian hours. Court-martial sentences of WASPs disproved the supposition that they were not subject to military discipline, while duty assignments revealed that the women participated in top-secret military missions. In another section, WASPs recounted firearms training and the requirements to carry and draw arms while guarding top secret planes and equipment, which were backed by Ordinance records. (Merryman 155)

The document that had the most impact on the Committee for Veterans affairs was not in Grainger's documents. It was an Army Honorable Discharge certificate issued to one of the WASP. General Arnold had given orders to the bases to issue the WASP on duty at the time of their disbandment a certificate of honorable discharge. Many of the bases simply used the same certificate they did for the men, thus many of the women held these certificates. It was one of the most important pieces of information that the committee received and was the "final piece of documentation the committee needed to make its decision" (Merryman 155).

On October 19, 1977, the Senate unanimously voted to add an amendment calling for WASP veteran's recognition to the GI Improvement Act. On November 3, 1977, the House voted to pass the WASP veteran status. On November 23, 1977, President Carter signed the bill into law. On March 8, 1979, Air Force Assistant Secretary Antonia Chayes signed the Department of Defense document that authorized the honorable official discharges of the WASP. The WASP were militarized, and finally recognized for their service to our country.

Since that time much has been done to tell the story of the Women's Airforce Service Pilot program. A website called Wings Across America documents the story of the WASP and has information and resources for those who are interested. Developed by WASP Deannie Parrish and her daughter Nancy, the website's mission statement is to "educate, motivate and inspire generations with the history of the pioneering WASP" (wingsacrossamerica.com). Inside the website is the list of WASP that have died in a page called WASP Final Flight. Sweetwater Texas has a museum at the airfield dedicated to the WASP (wasmuseum.org). It is the museum website that has information on the WASP reunions and updates on their exhibits and events. They have again come under fire when a WASP was recently denied burial at Arlington National Cemetery (Barakat 1). Evidently, they were running out of room for the men who had served. After a twenty-week ordeal, a new bill signed by Obama gave explicit orders that WASP are to be buried with full military honors in national cemeteries (Landdeck 1).

The WASP courageous story is one of dedication and valor. From target towing with live ammunition to test piloting planes right off the assembly line, the women of the WASP program did what was asked of them when the country was at war. They were treated with disrespect and disdain by many of the officers, servicemen and civilians of the time, but they were also appreciated and acknowledged by some of those that came to respect what they did and why they did it. The WASP are a cultural icon for the women of World War II, much like Rosie the Riveter. They became pilots in the military when there were not enough male pilots and kept the stateside transportation of planes from factory to base moving. They trained further in target towing, and test piloting, and ended up flying covert missions. Their service was buried in the archives of classified military history for decades, due to prejudice and political pressure. It was not until 2009 when the remaining living WASP received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama that they were publicly acknowledged and thanked for their service.

Table 2

Base Assignments for Women's Airforce Service Pilots

Base Name	Location	Mission	Dates of Deployment	Number of WASP Deployed
Alamogordo Army Air Base	Alamogordo, NM	Co-pilot, cargo carrying, search missions, flight checks	Sep 44-Dec 44	12
Aloe Army Air Field	Victoria, TX	Instrument instructor, target towing	Mar 44-Dec 44	25
Altus Army Air Field	Altus, OK	Engineering/test pilot, utility	Aug 44-Dec44	8
Asheville Weather Wing HQ – Army Airways Communications System HQ	Asheville, NC	Ferrying non-flying personnel, transporting documents and cargo, weather flights, established routes for B-29's	Nov 43-Dec 44	15
Atlanta Weather Wing	Atlanta, GA	Weather missions	Jan 44-Nov 44	1
Bainbridge Army Air Field	Bainbridge, GA	Basic flying training school, flight testing	Feb 44-Dec 44	12
Biggs Army Air Field	El Paso, TX	Target towing, high and low altitude; simulating strafing with sun at pilots back, diving to buzz troops and gunnery position. Searchlight and tracking missions, radar tracking and radio controlled target flying	Jan 44-Dec 44	26
Blackland Army Air Field	Waco, TX	Engineering, testing and maintenance; administrative duties	Sep 44-Dec 44	9
Blytheville Army Air Field	Blytheville, AK	Instrument check pilots, ferrying, utility/administration. Flight checks for returning overseas pilots	Jan 44-Dec 44	10

Table continued

Bryan Army Air Base	Bryan, TX	Instrument instructor school, graduates instructed on instruments and made decisions about fly/no fly when weather called for instrument flying	Aug 44-Dec 44 Instrument Instructor School Sep 44-Oct 44	15 on base, 16 additional in Instrument instructor school
Buckingham Army Air Field	Fort Myers, FL	Flexible gunnery school, copiloting with gunners using live ammunition fired at targets. Target towing, splash shooting	First Class Feb 44-Aug 44 Second Class Sep 44-Dec 44	8 11
Camp Davis Army Air Field	Camp Davis NC	Towing targets and flying at 1400 for anti-aircraft tracking guns. Night target towing and radar deception missions	July 43-Mar 44	52
Casper Army Air Field	Chico, CA	Copilot, administrative flights	Sep 44-Dec 44	1
Chico Army Air Field	Chico, CA	Pursuit training wing, engineering	Jan 44 -Apr 44	6
Childress Army Air Field	Childress, TX	Bombardier school	Nov 43-Dec 44	24
Clovis Army Air Field	Clovis, NM	Twilight weather checks, administrative and utility	Oct 44-Dec 44	5
Cochran Army Air Field	Macon, GA	Engineering, test	Feb 44-Dec 44	18
Coffeyville Army Air Base	Coffeyville, KS	Engineer, test	Unclear dates	2
Columbus Army Air Field	Columbus MS	Flight testing, ferrying, utility/administrative	Dec 43-Dec 44	11
Courtland Army Air Field	Courtland, AL	HQ AAF Pilot School	Mar 44-Dec 44	9
Craig Army Air Field	Selma, AL	Ferrying	Jan 44-Oct 44	14

Table continued

Deming Army Air Field	Deming NM	Target towing, simulating strafing, diving troops and gunnery position. Searchlight and tracking missions.	Nov 44-Dec 44	10
Dodge City Army Air Base	Dodge City, KS	Flight training, reassigned	Oct 43-Apr 44	61
Douglas Army Air Field	Douglas, AZ	Utility, administrative, engineering	Nov 43-Dec 44	21
Dyersburg Army Air Field	Dyersburg, TN	Tracking, copiloting	Oct 44-Dec 44	4
Eagle Pass Army Air Base	Eagle Pass, TX	Advanced Gunnery School, ferrying, administrative flying	Feb 44-Dec 44	32
Eglin Army Air Base	Homestead, FL	AAF Proving Ground Command, fixed gunnery tow target, engineering	May 44-Dec 44	10
Ellington Army Air Field	Houston, TX	Utility/administrative, including flying hospital plane. Co-pilot on navigation training flights	Aug 44-Dec 44	3
Enid Army Air Base	Enid, OK	Utility, administrative, engineering, testing, ferrying	Jun 44-Dec 44	18
Fairfax Field	Kansas City, MO	Copilot, ferrying	Mar 44-Oct 44	24
Fort Sumner Army Air Field	Fort Sumner, NM	Cargo transport, copiloting, post operations, utility pilot	Oct 44-Dec 44	2
Foster Army Air Field	Victoria, TX	Fighter gunnery school, instrument instruction, ferrying	Jun 44-Dec 44	22
Frederick Army Air Field	Frederick, OK	Administrative, engineering; flight checked returning pilots	Aug 44-Dec 44	6
Freeman Army Air Field	Seymour, IN	Engineering, maintenance, flight testing	Jan 44-Dec 44	9
Garden City Army Air Base	Garden City, KS	Engineering, utility, administrative, instrument safety pilots	Apr 44-Dec 44	6
Gardner Army Air Base	Taft, CA	Engineering, administrative, ferrying	Nov 43-Dec 44	27

Table continued

George Army Air Force Base	Lawrenceville, IL	Engineering, check piloting	Aug 44	3
Goodfellow Army Air field	San Angelo, TX	Instrument instruction, ferrying	May 44- Dec 44	18
Gowen Army Air Base	Boise, ID	Flying transition with B-26, flying attack curve, in formation with B26	Jun 44- Dec 44	14
Grand Island Army Air Base	Grand Island, NB	Utility, engineering, administrative, tracking and cargo transport	Jul 44 - Dec 44	6
Great Bend Army Air Base	Great Bend, KS	B-29 School, B-17 radar navigation training, engineering, administrative	Jun 44- Dec 44	6
Greenville Army Air Base	Greenville, MS	Utility, administrative, engineering	Feb 44 Dec 44	17
Greenwood Army Air Base	Greenwood MS	Engineering, ferrying for "mothballing"	Jul 44 – Dec 44	
Gunter Army Air Field	Gunter, AL	Utility/engineering, administrative instrument instructing	Dec 43-Dec 44	13
Half Moon Bay Flight Strip	Moss Beach, CA	"mother ship" radio controlling	Apr 44- Aug 44	3
Hamilton Army Air Field	Bakersfield, CA	Utility, administrative	Jun 44 Dec 44	7
Harding Army Air Field	Baton Rouge, LA	Administrative, instrument safety pilots	Aug 44-Dec 44	2
Harlingen Army Air Field	Harlingen, TX	First pilots of B-26, Flexible Gunnery School	Jan 44-Dec 44	8
Hondo Army Air Field	Hondo, TX	Navigation and engineering school	Nov 43- Dec44	23
Independence Army Air Field	Independence, KS	Utility/administrative piloting, engineering test flying and ferrying	May 44- Dec 44	10
Jackson Army Air Field	Jackson, MS	Utility/administrative, engineering test, instrument safety piloting	Feb 44-July 44	4
23 rd Regional Weather Headquarters	Kansas City, KS	Administrative, flying inspectors out of Fairfax Field, on tour of seven states weather stations	Dec 43-Dec 44	3

Table continued

Kelly Army Air Base	San Antonio, TX	Administrative, flying inspectors to weather stations in five state area	Jun 44-Dec 44	4
Key Army Air Field	Meridian MS	Flew C.O. cross country	Jul 44-Aug 44	1
Kingman Army Air Base	Kingman, AZ	Gunnery school, Copilot school	Aug 44-Oct 44	20
La Junta Army Air Field	La Junta, CO	Pilot Transition School, copilot, utility/administration	Jun 44-Dec 44	3
Laredo Army Air Base	Laredo, TX	Flexible gunnery School, engineering	Jan 44-Dec 44	9
Laredo Army Air Base	Laredo, TX	Copilot Transition School	Aug 44-Oct 44	11
Las Vegas Army Air Field	Las Vegas, NV	Flexible gunnery school, pursuit pilot proficiency	Feb 44-Dec 44	41
Lemoore Army Air Base	Lemoore, CA	Engineering, flying	Dec 43-Mar 44	2
Liberty Field	Hinesville, GA	Piloting radio-controlled aircraft	Oct 43-Mar 44	30
Liberty Field	Hinesville, GA	Radar tracking high tow target for anti-aircraft practice, night searchlight tracking, strafing	Mar 44-Dec 44	17
Lockbourne Army Air Base	Columbus, OH	B-17 school	Oct 43-Jan 44	17
Long Beach Army Air Base	Long Beach, CA	administrative	Feb 43-Dec 44	84
Love Field	Dallas, TX	Tow Targets, B26 school	Jan 43-Dec 44	128
Lubbock Army Air Base	Lubbock, TX	Engineering/test, administrative check pilots for WASPs reporting for duty	Aug 43-Dec 44	10
Luke Field	Goodyear, AZ	Engineering/test, administrative, ferrying	Aug 44-Dec 44	12
Majors Army Air Field	Greenville, TX	Engineering administrative	May 44-Dec 44	2
Malden Army Air Field	Malden, MO	administrative	June 44-Dec 44	1
Marana Army Air Field	Marana, AZ	Engineering administration	Nov 43-Dec 44	24
March Army Air Base	Riverside, CA	Tow target, searchlight missions, tracking	Jan 44-Dec 44	41

Table continued

Marfa Army Air Base	Marfa, TX	Engineering Administration	Aug 44-Nov 44	6
Marianna Army Air Base	Marianna, FL	Instrument instructing, test flying	Jan 44-Oct 44	4
Mather Army Air Base	Sacramento, CA	B-25 school	Nov 43-Dec 44	19
Maxwell Field	Montgomery, AL	Copilot, engineering, utility and administration	June 44-Dec 44	6 Temporary Duty 28
Merced Army Air Field	Merced, CA	Engineering/test, administrative	Nov 43-Dec 44	27
Minter Field	Bakersfield, CA	Engineering/test, utility piloting, administrative	Jan 44-Dec 44	24
Mitchell Field	Lynbrook, Long Island, NY	Transporting personnel, documents to Washington DC	Feb 44-May 44	1
Moody Army Air Base	Valdosta, GA	Instrument observers, utility and administration, ferrying, testing	Jan 44-Dec 44	11
Moore Army Air Base	Mission, TX	Administration, tow target, ferrying	Mar 44-Dec 44	25
Muroc Lake Bombing and Gunnery Range (Edwards Air Force Base)	Muroc, CA	To demonstrate a radio-controlling PQ-8 carrying a bomb	Oct 44	2
Napier Army Air Base	Dothan, AL	Engineering, administrative, instrument instructing, ferry	Jan 44-Dec 44	15
New Castle Army Air Base	Wilmington, DE	Ferrying, pursuit training	Sep 42-Dec 44	122 temporary duty 15
Newport Army Air Field	Newport AR	Ferrying, deactivation of base	May 44-Jun 44	1
Otis Army Air Base	Falmouth, MA	Radio controlled target drones	Jan 44-Apr 44	9
Palm Springs Army Air Base	Palm Springs, CA	Ferrying	Sep 43-Dec 44	42
Patterson Field	Fairfield, OH	Weather region headquarters	Nov 44	1
Pecos Army Air Base	Pecos, TX	Engineering/test, administrative, transporting freight	Nov 43-Dec 44	23

Table continued

Perrin Army Air Base	Sherman, TX	Engineering/test, instrument instruction, administration	Jun 44-Dec 44	19
Peterson Army Air Base	Colorado Springs, CO	Tow target, copilots, administrative, instrument instruction	Aug 44-Dec 44	21
Pocatello Army Air Base	Pocatello, ID	Co-pilot, instrument safety pilot, administrative	Sep 44-Dec 44	1
Pratt Army Air Base	Pratt, KS	Tracking and search, administrative, target towing with live ammunition, copilot	Oct 44-Dec 44	2
Pueblo Army Air Base	Pueblo, CO	Target towing, administrative	Apr 44-Dec 44	9
Randolph Army Air Base	San Antonio, TX	Flight instructor school, engineering/test, administrative	Mar 44-Jun 44	32
Romulus Army Air Base	Romulus, MI	Ferrying, copilots, pursuit training	Jan 43-Dec 44	120
Roswell Army Air Base	Roswell, NM	Engineering, administrative, copilots	Sep 44-Dec 44	3
Salinas Army Air Base	Salinas, CA	Radio controlled target, administrative	Jun 44-Dec 44	5
San Marcos Army Air Base	San Marcos, TX	Navigation school, pilots, copilots on training flights	Sep 44-Dec 44	6
Santa Ana Air Base	Ontario, CA	Evaluate utilization of WASP		6
Santa Monica Army Air Base	Santa Monica, CA	Weather region headquarters		1
Scott Army Air Base	Gary, IN	Radio and navigation school	Nov 43-Apr 44	3
Seattle Airport	Seattle, WA	Regional weather headquarters		1
Selman Army Air Field	Monroe, LA	Navigation school	Sep 44-Dec 44	2
Shaw Army Air Base	Sumter, SC	Engineering/test, administrative, ferrying, instrument instructing	Dec 43-Dec 44	17
Sioux Falls Army Air Base	Sioux Fall, SD	Technical radio school	Nov 43-Dec 44	6
Smoky Hill Army Air Base	Salina, KS	Freight transport, support	Oct 44-Dec 44	4
South Plains Army Air Base	Lubbock, TX	Advanced glider school, target towing	Oct 43-Feb 44	16

Table continued

Spence Army Air Base	Moultrie, GA	Engineering/test, administrative, ferrying	Jan 44-Dec 44	9
Stockton Army Air Base	Stockton, CA	Engineering/test, administrative	Mar 44-Dec 44	16
Strother Field	Winfield, KS	Administrative, ferrying	Sep 44-Nov 44	1
Stuttgart Army Air Base	Stuttgart, AK	Engineering, ferrying, courier flights	Feb 44-Dec 44	6
Turner Army Air Base	Albany, GA	Engineering/test, administrative	Jan 44-Sep 44	4
Tyndall Army Air Base	Panama City, FL	Copilots, target tow missions	Aug 44-Dec 44	20
Victorville Army Air Base	Victorville, CA	Engineering/test, calibration missions, pilots on training flights	Aug 44-Dec 44	14
Waco Army Air Field	Waco, TX	Engineering/test, administrative, ferrying, instrument instruction	Apr 44-Dec 44	16
Walker Army Air Base	Victoria, KS	Engineering/test, administrative, copilot, ferrying	Oct 44-Dec 44	5
Walnut Ridge Army Air Field	Walnut Ridge, AK	Advanced flying training school	Apr 44-Jul 44	1
Wendover Army Air Base	Wendover, UT	Cargo, personal transport and ferrying for atomic bomb project	Oct 44-Dec 44	2
Williams Army Air Base	Chandler, UT	Engineering, administrative, ferrying	Nov 43-Dec 44	14
Wright Field	Dayton, OH	Copilot, flight testing	Jan 44-Dec 44	4
Yuma Army Air Field	Yuma, AZ	Copilot instruction, target towing	Aug 44-Dec 44	10

This table represents the dates of deployment and number of female pilots assigned to various bases. It also gives a brief description of their assignments. This information was compiled by WASP Byrd Howell Grainger in her book "On Final Approach." The table shows the diversity and responsibility of the pilots at the bases. Some of the women served at more than one base and were reassigned as necessary.



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APPENDIX
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAF	Army Air Forces
AAB	Army Air Force Base
ANC	Army Nurse Corp
ATA	Air Transport Auxiliary
ATC	Air Transport Command
CAA	Civil Aeronautics Administration
NNC	Navy Nurse Corp
OWI	Office of War Information
SPARS	Semper Paratus –Women’s Coast Guard
WAC	Women’s Army Corp
WAFS	Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron
WASP	Women’s Airforce Service Pilots
WAVES	Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service