

Women Win Their Wings

By Genevia I. Cole
SIX months before the Wright brothers made their historic flight at Kitty Hawk, an American woman in France navigated a powered airship.

The chief of the world's first air force was a woman. As early as the 18th century a woman, Madame Thibaud, took to the air in a balloon.

Today aviation experts estimate that more than 500,000 women will be needed in post-war aviation. Thus it can be seen that since these first fledgling flyers, women have grown wings that are broad and strong.

The woman who led the world's first air force was Mme. Marie Madeleine Sophie Blanchard, a balloonist. Napoleon appointed her in 1804. Nearly 100 years later Aida de Acosta made the flight at Bagatelle that jumped the gun on the Wright brothers.

The first American woman to soar through the air alone at the controls of an airplane was Dr. Bessica Faith Raiche, a physician. She did so, in September, 1910, in an ugly biplane, which her husband had made, using for power a rebuilt two-cylinder boat motor.

With her husband, Bessica Raiche contributed much to the design and construction of early planes. When Congress awarded the Wright brothers a gold medal for their work, Orville and Wilbur Wright had a bronze replica of it made and presented it to her. She is credited with first using piano wire, bamboo, and Chinese silk to make "crates."

Harriet Quimby, who was the first woman to fly the English Channel alone, was the first woman to be given a license for flying.

During World War I Katherine and Marjorie Stinson and Ruth Law taught many of the boys, who later went across, at the Stinson Aviation School at San Antonio, Tex. Both Katherine Stinson and Ruth Law wished to fly for Uncle Sam, but the government rejected them.

In a biplane in which she had only five minutes practice, Katherine Stinson, in the summer of 1917, made a Red Cross tour from Buffalo to Washington. Later she went to France as an ambulance driver.

Ruth Law was enlisted by the Red Cross on the declaration of war. She flew all over the country giving exhibitions and speaking for the Red Cross. She was the first woman to carry mail. Katherine Stinson was the first to do sky writing.

Today in World War II, many women are using their wings to help win the war. In the U. S. A. there are 2173 licensed women pilots. Thanks to Civil Aeronautics Administration there are three times as many as in 1938. Forty-two are certified instructors in the Civilian Pilot Training program. They are co-operating with the Army and Navy Air Forces, by giving preliminary training to thousands of young men who will soon be flying military planes. Then there are Nancy Harkness Love's WAFFS, now around 25 in number, who ferry liaison and training planes from factories to flying schools and air bases within the continental limits of the United States.

The former "nose-dive Annie," who was the glamor girl of the ski slopes, now has turned to flying. Anne of Vermont. In private life she is Mrs. Anne Cooke, and the mother of two children.

When war was just around the corner, she turned from skiing to flying. Not long before Pearl Harbor, she received her first license. Then came other examinations and she was soon wearing instructor's wings. She has 575 hours of solo flight. And she has studied hours upon end on meteorology, navigation, aerodynamics and air regulations.

Now she is a CAA War Training Service Instructor in Vermont, training Army and Navy men. She puts in seven days a week from morning till night. She has an average of five students, who get 40-minute periods for eight weeks.

Annie says, "Airplanes will replace the family automobile after the war. Then I hope to sell planes to women and teach them to be pilots."

ONE proud father in America is giving three girls with wings to Uncle Sam. He is Jesse Jones of Lancaster, Pa., a test pilot, and wing commander of Pennsylvania's Civil Air Patrol. All three girls soloed on their 16th birthday anniversary. Pop taught them to fly before he taught them to drive a car. He said they'd make better drivers, if they could fly.

Helen has been a CAP instructor for two years. Then the Navy selected the Lancaster field for preliminary flight training for cadets. So Helen started teaching them. Helen says, "Somebody has to teach them, and it might as well be a girl!" One of her students says he'd rather have a girl teach him, because she demands respect. All of her pupils echo his feelings.

Jessie, called "Junior," wants to be an instructor, too. But she's also pleased with what she's doing now—ferrying planes for the Army.

Caroline, now 16, is piling up hours, so she can join her sisters in serving her country.

An all-woman maintenance crew at Ellington Field, Texas, expertly repairs damaged planes.



WRENCH WIELDER, first class, this girl mechanic is one of an all woman maintenance crew that keeps 'em flying at Ellington Field, Tex.

time an all-woman crew, with a woman for boss, has been permitted to do the job alone.

IN Chicago, at the pilot training school of American Airlines, Inc., five young women, in-

the U. S. Army, is employed as Link trainer instructor. The Link trainer is a complex machine capable of simulating every condition a pilot may encounter in flight. It has a set of instruments exactly the same as those on a real airplane and controls to which the instruments respond.

At Springfield, Mass., Miss Isabel Fenton teaches aeronautics under the CAA at American International College and Springfield Airport. In 1939 when the government launched the CAA flying program she promptly enlisted. The rest of the class of 60 were boys. But it was Isabel who was the first to solo in advanced aerobatics. Miss Fenton claims that practically everyone can learn to fly—at least 75 per cent.

After working for an airplane company, she did some flying for the board of patrol in connection with the immigration service. She teaches eight or nine courses a day in plane identification, the theory of flight, navigation, and other branches of aeronautics.

MaJ. Earl Johnson, commanding officer of 2500 American women pilots, members of the Civil Air Patrol, says: there are more good pilots in a group of

100 women (in CAP) than in a similar group of men. He says they work harder, are more serious about their work, and carry through better on details.

The Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, created by the War Department Sept. 10, 1943, is proving a success. The squadron now has four units. Each unit has a squadron leader, with headquarters at different Army bases. Nancy Harkness Love is the senior squadron leader.

THE WAFFS are releasing men for combat service and heavier work. To be a WAF, the woman flyer must be able to handle a plane well. She must have a good physique. She must be able to endure hard work, as proved by her past experiences. They pilot military planes for the Army Air Forces. But they are not a military group. The WAFFS are civil service employees.

So that there will be women flyers to insure the growth of the WAFFS, the War Department started an experimental Women's Flying Training program. Miss Jacqueline Cochran was appointed director. She trains probable future WAFFS at the Howard Hughes Airfield, Houston, Tex.



WAFFS are instructed by Jacqueline Cochran.



LEADER of WAFFS is Nancy Harkness Love.

Everyone has to admit they are doing a grand job. Perhaps even better than any soldier mechanic ever did. Women mechanics have been hired at Ellington Field before: but this is the first

cluding Marie Michell, teach student pilots instrument flying preparing men for assignment as flight officers.

Marie Michell, 18-year-old daughter of a lieutenant colonel



WAR RECRUITS, all civilian pilots, arrive at a training base to learn how to handle Army planes.



CHINESE AVIATRIX Lee Ya Ching typifies the air-mindedness of many women of her nation.



LINK TRAINER simulates real flight conditions, trains this girl to become an instructor herself.



WUSSIE WOMEN, members of the WAAAF, collect and send out weather data for the air force.



GIRL MECHANICS at Ellington Field, Tex., are filling the shoes of male "grease monkeys."



TEN A DAY is the clean up record of these busy Arizona girls who formed an airplane maintenance crew at Falcon Field, near Phoenix.