

women in aviation international

Aviation for Women
MAGAZINE

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1997 Pioneer Hall of Fame

Amelia Earhart began flying at the age of twenty-three. She obtained her license with money she saved from her salary as a nurse. In April 1928, she joined a transatlantic flight as the first woman passenger and became a national heroine. She later flew across the Atlantic and the Pacific making her the first woman to do so. Earhart participated in the first Women's Air Derby and was a founder of the 99's. She also helped start the airline that later became TWA. In addition, she was the aviation editor at Cosmopolitan magazine. Her biggest challenge was an around-the-world flight at the Equator, something that had never been attempted. Unfortunately, the plane with Earhart and her navigator vanished near Howland Island in the Pacific Ocean in 1937.

Betty Skelton Frankman began flying at an early age and soloed "legally" on her sixteenth birthday. She became internationally famous after winning acrobatic championships, races and setting records. She worked for Eastern Airlines while also obtaining her commercial, flight instructor, single-engine land and sea, and multi-engine ratings. Active in the Civil Air Patrol since its beginning in the early forties, she held the rank of Major. She became a test pilot, occasionally flew helicopters, jets, blimps and gliders. In 1948, Frankman purchased a Pitts Special experimental bi-plane, a single-seater open cockpit airplane weighing only 544 pounds. Her air race victories resulted in her plane, "Little Stinker," becoming the most famous acrobatic aircraft in the world. It is now displayed in the National Air and Space Museum.

Patty Wagstaff flies one of the most thrilling acrobatic performances in the world. She is a three-time U.S. National Acrobatic Champion and six-time member of the U.S. National Aerobatic Team. The airplane that Wagstaff first flew to victory in the 1991 U.S. National Aerobatic Championship, the prototype BFGoodrich Aerospace Extra 260, was inducted into the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, DC. One of the few pilots in the world who combines professional airshow flying with competitive aerobatics, Wagstaff's remarkable skill and artistry in the air are admired by judges and spectators throughout the world. She has performed for audiences in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, England, France, Switzerland and Russia.

Navy Women Navigators of WWII During World War II, many women became WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). The WAVES were part of the Navy and were similar to the WAFS/WASP in that they served their country during the war. The Navy had women officers as Air Navigation Instructors, some of whom received flight pay and wore wings. These women were sent for celestial navigation training to replace the men for combat or Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) duty. They were generally assigned in pairs to various bases around the country after satisfactory completion of training.

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