

W.A.S.P.s: the Fly-Girls of WWII

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Individual Website

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How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?

I knew exactly what topic I wanted to research for my NHD project since June 2023, even without knowing the 2024 theme. I was deeply intrigued by the Women's Airforce Service Pilots Program, an interest that started when my teacher gave us an assignment last year related to a documentary about the role of women in the Pacific Northwest and their effects upon WWII. One of the programs it covered was the W.A.S.P. Program and I was in love with it. Instantly I knew that I would find a way to connect this topic to any NHD theme.

How did you conduct your research?

My school has access to a catalog of academic databases, different reliable sites, and sources through our regional library system, and one of the sources that I used the most is JSTOR, which contains academic journals. Almost all my photos came from articles in JSTOR, with some of my primary sources providing plentiful invaluable information. Many questions came up when researching my topic, so I searched for them by simply searching my question in a Google search bar and locating reliable sources from multiple organizations to find the answers

How did you create your project?

I created my website by planning what I wanted to be on each separate page and what I wanted to research further, so I could cover all key parts of my project. I used the knowledge and skills that I gained by creating a website for last year's NHD competition to create the best project possible. One key element of my website was choosing a color scheme to create a nice visual presentation. I chose a black and yellow scheme as a play on the WASP as a play on the acronym being the word "wasp" and wasps being black and yellow.

What is your historical argument?

My historical argument is that the WASP Program was integral to the American participation in WWII. The WASPs replaced the jobs of men for nearly two years to provide an opportunity for more men to fly in combat. This was a truly exceptional *turning point* for women since in the 1940s the capabilities of outside of the home women were constantly underestimated.

In what ways is your topic significant to history?

My topic is significant to history, especially the history of women, as it marked the first time women were allowed to fly military planes for the U.S. This broke stereotypes and proved that women could do jobs that were previously only done by men, and turned perspectives all across the U.S. about women flying military aircraft. The work done by the WASPs marked a *turning point* in history for future generations to look back on to see how women could serve as pilots in the US military branches today.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Air Force Association Pin. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387545>.

I found a photo of an Air Force Association pin on the Military Recognition page to add more visual interest to my website.

Airman Identification Card, 1941. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387582>.

A photo of Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan's Airman ID card to add more visual interest to my website.

Arnold, Henry. 1943. "Memo regarding Incorporation of Women Civilian Pilots and Trainees into Army Air Force, June 14, 1943 [Jacqueline Cochran Papers, WASP Series, Box 5, Militarization (2); NAID #12004191]." June 14, 1943. <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/jacqueline-cochran-and-womens-airforce-service-pilots-wasps>.

This is a memo to appoint Jacqueline Cochran director of W.A.S.P. and to suggest militarizing the W.A.S.P. program. I use this information on my Jacqueline page and my military recognition page.

Boboltz, Sara. "21 Photos That Show Just How Badass American Women Were During WWII." The Huffpost, September 11, 2014. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/women-jobs-wwii-photos_n_5772976?ir=Women.

This provides a picture of Nancy Love for visual interest on my website.

Bulechek, Annelle Henderson. 44-W-2." n.d. wingsacrossamerica. http://wingsacrossamerica.us/web/bulechek_annelle_NEW.htm.

This website provided me with two quotes from Annelle Henderson Bulechek, one about how you can do what you set your heart to and that 1078 women pilots did it in WWII. The other is about how she is not a quitter and stays until the end despite the misogyny.

Capital News Service's Maren Wright, dir. 2009. *An interview with a veteran of the Women Airforce Service Pilots corp.* University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntQqDt6XPrE>.

This is an interview that I use to provide information directly from a W.A.S.P. veteran who talks about how they were forgotten after their service.

Colored Fifinella Patch, 1943. Image. Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan (1938) Papers. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387586>.

viewers can find this with the other memorabilia on my website. I added this piece because Fifinella was the mascot for the W.A.S.P.s but did not fit in with any of my pages.

Elizabeth McGeorge in WASP Dress Uniform. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387573>.

This image shows what Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan looked like while serving as a W.A.S.P., providing some visuals for my website.

Elizabeth McGeorge Wearing WASP Flying Training Uniform Posing besides Fairchild PT 19 Airplane. n.d. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387569>.

This picture shows what the W.A.S.P.s looked like on the field during training.

“Group of Civilians Who were the First Women to Fly U.S. Military.” *Corpus Christi Caller - Times*, August 1, 2011.

<https://fvrl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/history-takes-flight-alice-air-show/docview/2571554443/se-2>.

This interview from a newspaper with one of the women a part of the W.A.S.P. program gives an insight into the women who took part in this. This specific W.A.S.P., Maxine Flournoy, states that she thinks they were an experiment because the U.S. military/government did not know women could fly military aircraft.

“Jacqueline Cochran.” 2020. *Cosmetics and Skin*.

<https://www.cosmeticsandskin.com/companies/jacqueline-cochran.php>

I do not use any information from this source but I do use a picture of Cochran in front of a plane which is a primary source.

“Jacqueline Cochran | CAF RISE ABOVE.” *Caf Rise Above*. Accessed January 31, 2024.

<https://cafriseabove.org/jacqueline-cochran/>.

This source provides a quote featured on the home page of my website from Jacqueline Cochran.

“Jacqueline Cochran.” *New World Encyclopedia*. Accessed February 1, 2024.

https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Jacqueline_Cochran.

I do not use any information from this source but there is a great image of Jacqueline Cochran included in this source that I did use.

Jacqueline Cochran, WASP. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.34604413>.

This is an image of Jacqueline Cochran in an airplane, appearing to be fixing her shoes

Kanzler, North. "A missing pilot, a Mustang and an enduring mystery: What happened to this WASP aviator?" *Army Times*. 2019.

<https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/10/05/a-missing-pilot-a-mustang-and-an-enduring-mystery-what-happened-to-this-wasp-aviator/>.

I do not use any information from this website, but I do use the primary source photo of Gertrude Tompkins in my website.

Laclede, Kiersten. "National Museum of the United States Army." National Museum of the United States Army. Accessed February 1, 2024.

<https://www.thenmusa.org/biographies/nancy-harkness-love/>.

This is an image of Nancy Love in a plane for my page "Nancy Love."

Lynn, Capi. "Their Quiet Influence: Women Recall WWII Roles." *Statesman Journal*, November 10, 2013.

<https://fvrl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/their-quiet-influence-women-recall-wwii-roles/docview/144992177/se-2>.

This newspaper is an interview with multiple W.A.S.P.s talking about their personal experiences and their lives during their service as a W.A.S.P.

Matchbook from 30th Anniversary WASP Reunion in Sweetwater, Texas. 1972.

<https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387549>.

This image is found in the memorabilia section of my website. The matchbook features a picture of Fifinella, the W.A.S.P. mascot.

"Miss Cochran, Back, Urges U.S. to Train Woman Fliers for War: First of Sex to Ferry Warplane to Britain, She Tells how Girl Pilots are Relieving Men for Actual Combat Operations." *New York Times*. July 2, 1941.

<https://fvrl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/miss-cochran-back-urges-u-s-train-woman-fliers/docview/106060990/se-2>.

Viewers can find this image on The Jacqueline Cochran page of my website. The *New York Times* wrote about how women can ferry warplanes and how this benefits the U.S. and included a quote from Jackie trying to push her idea to the readers.

PBS America. "Flying Dreams: Women Airforce Pilots of WWII." 2018.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzJ5_awm2gs.

This Video I use to provide the foundational facts about the W.A.S.P. programming my website.

Souza, Pete. "Women Airforce Service Pilots." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Women-Airforce-Service-Pilots>.

This is an image of some W.A.S.P.s standing next to Barrack Obama while he signs the bill to award all W.A.S.P.s the Congressional Gold Medal.

“Suggested report to be released in response to unfavorable reports to proposed militarization of the WASPs, 1943 [Jacqueline Cochran Papers, WASP Series, Box 5, Militarization (2); NAID #12004190].” Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. 1943.1943.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/jacqueline-cochran-and-womens-airforce-service-pilots-wasps>.

This is a document proving that support for the W.A.S.P. program to be militarized was unfavored even though this document proved they were needed.

Tacoma Times. September 24, 1942, Page 7, Image 7. Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers.
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88085187/1942-09-24/ed-1/seq-7/>.

This site is an image on my website where an article in the *Tacoma Times* talks about how the W.A.S.P.s have not gained military status and are trying to in 1942.

"THESE WASPS ARE READY TO TAKE OVER." *New York Times*. January 22, 1944.
<https://fvr1.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/these-wasps-are-ready-take-over/docview/106948287/se-2>.

This is an image from the *New York Times* featuring W.A.S.P. pilots.

United States. Congress. House. “95th Congress, First Session, House Bill 3321.” February 9, 1977. <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph908560/>.

This is the bill that gained the W.A.S.P.s military recognition in 1977. This source is not only an image on my website but a source that I used to further my knowledge of the W.A.S.P. program and the journey to get that military recognition.

Valentine, Elizabeth R.. "NO. I WOMAN FLIER: JACQUELINE COCHRAN, WHO FLEW A BOMBER TO BRITAIN, ADVISES AMERICAN WOMEN TO FOLLOW A BRITISH EXAMPLE. JACQUELINE COCHRAN." *New York Times*. July 13, 1941.
<https://fvr1.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/no-i-woman-flier/docview/105553779/se-2>.

Jacqueline Cochran is one of the key women in the story of the W.A.S.P. program and this is a New York Times article written about her. This helps me understand who she was before becoming the director of the W.A.S.P. program.

War Department Office of the Chief of Air Corps. 1941. “[Jacqueline Cochran Papers, WASP Series, Box 2, Survey of Women Pilots July 1941; NAID #120044061].” (Washington D.C.), July 29, 1941.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/jacqueline-cochran-and-womens-airforce-service-pilots-wasps>.

This is the letter sent out to lady pilots with private pilot licenses to join the W.A.S.P. program. This helped me learn how Jacquelynn reached out to all the pilots that went through the program.

WASP Congressional Gold Medal. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. 2010-03. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387598>.

This image shows the W.A.S.P. Congressional gold medal. I chose this image because it relates to the military recognition the W.A.S.P.s eventually got.

W.A.S.P.s of WWII. “[Arguments for and against WASP organization name, membership, and structure options].” 197X. <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1296650/>.

This is a piece of text written by an unknown author during the 1970s that shows what the W.A.S.P.s valued when choosing a name for their organization. Overall it also shows how the name W.A.S.P.s of WWII is important to their organization. This document also shows the discussion involved in the process for members to vote and the structure of the organization.

“WASP on the WEB--HOME.” <http://wingsacrossamerica.us/>. <http://wingsacrossamerica.us/>.

This website gave me multiple perspectives surrounding the debate over whether or not the nation needs women pilots again. A quote states that women will respond and they will never have to prove that flying is not just a man’s job.

WASP Songbook. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387534>.

This is an image of the W.A.S.P. songbook featuring songs written by W.A.S.P. songs and U.S. Army songs adapted for W.A.S.P. experiences.

WASP Wings Charm Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387547>.

This is a picture of a W.A.S.P. wings charm that some of the women in the program wore.

Women Airforce Service Pilots Posing in Front of Aircraft. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387567>.

Viewers can see this source on the page, “Women of the Program.” This helps viewers picture the women who were in the program and what their uniforms were like. I also used the caption for the photo that was made by the source on my website because it accurately represented what was happening in the photo.

Women Airforce Service Pilot Wings Pin. 1943-10-09. Image. Wilson College Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan WWII Collection. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.16387596>.

This picture shows a pin all W.A.S.P. flight school graduates were given for the first seven classes to graduate.

Women Museum of Fort Lee, Virginia. "WASP." 302nd Airlift Wing. Accessed January 31, 2024. <https://www.302aw.afrc.af.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2000676022/>.

This is an image of four W.A.S.P. girls receiving their final instructions.

Secondary Sources

"AIR FERRY SCHOOL OPENS FOR WOMEN: HOUSTON COURSE OF TRAINING WILL BE CONDUCTED BY JACQUELINE COCHRAN." *New York Times* (1923-), Nov 24, 1942.

<https://fvrl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/air-ferry-school-opens-women/docview/106367763/se-2>.

This paper is an excerpt from the *New York Times* telling about Jacqueline Cochran and her personal life, but also her program before the W.A.S.P.s known as the W.A.F.s.

Air Force Historical Support Division. "Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)." Air Force Historical Support Division. 2010.

<https://www.afhistory.af.mil/FAQs/Fact-Sheets/Article/458964/womens-airforce-service-pilots-wasp/>

This source provided great information for my website on the military side of my research and provided specific details for my website.

Airforce TV. "Yesterday's Air Force: Women Air Force Service Pilots." 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Je1p0yYmysM>.

This video has a couple of facts about the W.A.S.P. program but it also shows the impacts the W.A.S.P program has on the world today.

Blum, Julia. "Part I: Nancy & Jackie Before the WASP: Nancy Love by Julia Blum – National WASP WWII Museum." National WASP WWII Museum. 2022.

<https://www.waspmuseum.org/avenger-news/part-i-nancy-jackie-before-the-wasp-nancy-love-by-julia-blum/>.

This website helped me research how Nancy Love and Jacqueline Cochran met, a component of an ongoing question in my research.

Cochrane, Dorothy. "Flying on the Homefront: Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)." National Air and Space Museum. 2020.

<https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/flying-homefront-women-airforce-service-pilots-wasp>.

This website has great information on the program and a great quote that features on the impact page of my website.

Hailey, Andy. "Gertrude V. Tompkins Silver - Missing In Service -." Women Airforce Service Pilots. 2013. <https://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/gertrude-missing.html>

This website provided most of the information I have on Gertrude Tompkins and the photo I have of the 1944 search map of the search for her. This is a great source for information on the investigation and search for Gertrude Tompkins.

“Jacqueline Cochran | Who2.” Who2 Biographies. Accessed January 26, 2024.
<https://www.who2.com/bio/jacqueline-cochran/>

This source provided basic information about the life of Jacqueline Cochran, helping with the storytelling of my website.

Johnson, Ann R. “THE WASP OF WORLD WAR II.” *Aerospace Historian* 17, no. 2/3 (1970): 76–82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44522390>.

This information helped me understand more about what the W.A.S.P. program was and why it happened and more general knowledge about the W.A.S.P. program like the time frame it happened.

Klick, John R. “WASP with a ‘Fifinella Heart.’” *Aerospace Historian* 29, no. 1 (1982): 31–33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44523688>.

This article provided a short history lesson. It has basic information that helped me understand the foundation of who the W.A.S.P.s are.

Landdeck, Katherine S. “Jacqueline Cochran: Pilot, Leader, Myth (Earhart Lecture).” The National Air and Space Museum. 2023.
airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/meet-jacqueline-cochran.

A video all about Jacqueline's life and how she got to be the person people read about. This video goes in-depth about her life even before being director of W.A.S.P.

“National Museum of the United States Army.” n.d. National Museum of the United States Army. Accessed April 29, 2024.
<https://www.thenmusa.org/articles/women-air-service-pilots-wasp/>.

This website provided me with information about the pushback against the W.A.S.P. program and male pilots' attitudes toward the girls.

“The Leaders | WASP History | Women Airforce Service Pilots TWU.” Texas Woman's University. Accessed February 1, 2024.
<https://twu.edu/library/womans-collection/collections/women-airforce-service-pilots-official-archive/history/the-leaders/>.

This source provides biographical information about Nancy Love and an image of her for my website.

Pyle, Micheala. “Female WASPS flew warplanes.” *The Sentinel* (Carlisle). February 23, 1991. <https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-sentinel-wasp/26891393/>.

This newspaper article has information on Elizabeth McGeorge Sullivan that I was unable to find anywhere else. This source also provided information from an interview with Elizabeth.