



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Mary Charles Collection - Scrap Book - "Capt. Mary Charles"

Extracted on Apr-23-2024 04:36:21

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

Today's Woman
Edited by Vera Connolly

The Daughters of the Eagle Have Wings

In an Emergency Women Fliers Would Be Needed - Today Many Are
Busily Training
By Dorothea J. Lewis
Written for The Christian Science Monitor

Women fliers throughout America are preparing for preparedness - and doing it on their own!
In spite of all the national defense activity and agitation with its especial emphasis on flying, as far as we can discover no official request has gone out from Washington to women with wings, asking their services or co-operation in any specific program.
A number of major powers of the world have provided a place for women fliers actually within their military forces. The women parachutists of the Russian air corps are widely known, and Germany has at least one full ranking woman air captain in Hannah Reitsch, a tiny, five-foot, 100-pound flier who greatly impressed America in her feats at the Cleveland air races in 1938. she instructs officers in flying; handles gliders and all military craft.
In England, women have not entered the actual arena of battle - but have been rendering invaluable back-line service to their country by ferrying planes from the factories to the R. A. F. airports, thus releasing men for combat service.

Government Seems Indifferent

Little of this government interest in women pilots and their potential value in defense is evidenced in the United States. The Civil Aeronautics Authority is just about the only Federal agency that has taken any notice of them, and what notice it has taken seems rather in the nature of an afterthought. In its civilian pilot training program being given to 15,000 students at hundreds of airports, in every State of the Union and in the territories, the CAA now admits one girl student flier for every 14 men. And this only after some agitation and against much opposition. In spite of this uneven ratio, when seven national finalists in an air scholarship contest growing out the training arrived in Washington recently one was a very pretty young miss, Barbara Jane Erickson, from Seattle.

With such a situation confronting them, America's flying ladies might well feel neglected. However, being true daughters of the Eagle, they are not sitting back and waiting for engraved invitations from Uncle Sam. They have always had to make their way, and can again. They know that when the national emergency becomes sufficiently grave they will be needed. So they are getting ready, through their own organizations, to fill that need if and when it comes.

They are saying, "This is an air-minded generation for women as well as men. Little girls build model airplanes at work benches with their brothers, better models sometimes; their elder sisters study at Stanford, Purdue, M. I. T., New York and Chicago Universities to become aeronautical engineers; and 1,336 women in this country hold Federal certificates as airplane pilots. Surely this interest and knowledge can and should be enlisted in the national defense program. As women few of us will want to fight, even if war comes to us; but as fliers we can take the places of men pilots and ground technicians in civil and commercial lines and release them to fighting units. We can do everything in the air that women did in ground transport in the last war. But to do these



things, we must be ready! Let's get at it."

Women Eager to Learn

And are they getting at it! All over the country, more and more eager young faces are looking up at the sky as part of their world, to be tried and tamed. Among these feminine aspirants are the lucky one-in-fifteeners included in the CAA program; the many young women in small towns who are today scraping pennies together for lessons in old-fashioned ships at dinky airports; the adventurous youngsters making parachute jumps for funds to learn to pilot planes from which other girls can take jumps; and the girls in big cities, where training comes high, who have banded together in groups to cut costs. All of these air-minded young women are "going up," thrilling to the feel of the "stick," watching the gadgets on their instrument panels with knowing eyes, convinced that to be afraid of flying, in this day and age, would be as silly as the terrors their grandmothers may have felt at riding in horseless carriages. Women Fliers of America, the new organization of would-be pilots formed just last June, now has some 1,000 members and hopes to have 5,000 before so very long. Chapters have been set up in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Hartford, Conn., and are planned for Cleveland and Boston. By co-operative work, members are able to take lessons, including ground school and sufficient air hours for a private license (35 to 50 hours), for a bargain rate of \$275. In the first two months, approximately 50 girls have won their wings. The organization has already offered its services to General Arnold, chief of the Army Air Corps.

Expanding Their Membership

Other air groups that are expanding their membership and pointing their flying programs toward the national defensive good are: the famous 99 Club, pioneer organization of active, licensed women pilots planned by the great and beloved Amelia Earhart and Ruth Nichols in 1927 and formed in 1929 with the 99 charter members from whom it takes its name; the Aerial Nurses' Corps, whose story is told by its name; and, indirectly, Relief Wings. This latter organization is not a woman's group nor is it primarily a national defense unit, being designed instead to bring relief to civilians in all countries in all natural disasters-hurricanes, fires, floods, plagues, wrecks at sea-as well as in the man-made disaster of war. However, Ruth Nichols is its moving spirit and Executive Director; and women fliers will serve in it, as well as men fliers. Miss Nichols, a Quaker, is finding women eager to come into Relief Wings, and is glad because she feels that they, "looked upon as idealists and spiritual leaders in the home and the world, can best play their part in this constructive and healing side of defense, rather than in its destructive functions."

From talks with members of these groups and several Federal air experts-the latter speaking only of "possibilities"-a pretty comprehensive picture of a potentially great field of service for women in national air defense shapes up.

Women Instructors Needed

Perhaps the primary need, during the present preparatory period, is for women instructors-a field in which women have already demonstrated their ability and facility. In fact, they trained men for the Royal Air Force and the American Air Corps in the last World War; but more of that later. Only 11 of the hundreds of CAA instructors, now turning fledglings into fliers, are women. But this small number is probably more the fault of women fliers, who lack the requisite hours and training for instructorships, than discrimination on the part of the Authority, which would apparently be happy to have more of them to appoint. Two

famous women fliers, Louise Thaden and Jacqueline Cochran, are greatly interested in this work for women. And the 99 Club is urging its members to brush up on rusty techniques, acquire the necessary hours in the air, and study courses to obtain instructors' licenses or to be re-rated if they have let such licenses lapse.

In the replacement of men in commercial air jobs, a variety of possibilities is enlisting the attention of women fliers. Both the ferrying of great bombers from factories to Army and Navy airports, and the piloting of big transport planes, would require more experience, more hours in the air, and higher grade licenses than most women hold. However, there are some 73 women in the country with commercial licenses (minimum of 200 hours), and 26 with limited commercials, who might act as pilots of new aircraft on delivery. (Most male pilots of the airlines are reserve officers in the Air Corps; and their planes are also reserves in a way, being liable to government call to duty in times of grave emergency.)

Under the present CAA training program, young women are given only primary pilot training; while boys can go on to the basic and advanced courses and from them into the Army or Navy. Primary training doesn't provide sufficient experience for handling large, heavy craft, and Jackie Cochran is crusading to expand women's opportunities by opening advanced instruction to them. Women have proved their ability to handle "almost every type of plan," Miss Cochran says, adding, "horsepower and speed don't bother women any more than they do men."

A second article by Dorothea J. Lewis, which will appear on Friday, will discuss some of the non-flying jobs in the aviation industry which might well be filled with women-especially in these times of national defense preparation.

Perhaps Uncle Sam does not fully realize the importance of American women and girls being trained for air defense. But despite this attitude American women, being true daughters of the Eagle, are resolutely getting ready through their own flight organizations to serve their country in the air. In a number of colleges, also, earnest girl students are learning to construct, repair, and fly airplanes. 1-Here, at Marshall College, Huntington, W. Va., we see Student Pilot Sidney Mae Robertson working patiently on a cylinder head. 2-At the University of Detroit, Marjorie Balk receives last instructions before going aloft. Miss Balk is one of the few women being given a part in the CAA's civilian pilot training program. 3-Photographed beside her pane is C. P. T. P. Private Pilot Celeste Dervaes, being thanked by the first passenger she took up after becoming a pilot. Celeste was the only girl in a group of 20 student pilots. 4-Girls at Florida State College for Women, enrolled in the CAA program, receive flying instructions from Flight Operator Ivan Munroe.

Mary Charles Collection - Scrap Book - "Capt. Mary Charles"
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers
Extracted Apr-23-2024 04:36:21



Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)