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## **Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Writings: "A Mother Speaks," Newsday, 1940**

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Even as I write those last words-I know I cannot! Aviation and the Air Corps are in my blood. The very thought makes my spirit lift, my pulse quicken, and the blood leap in my veins with pride and joy.

I see the face of my son's aviator father, I smell the dirty leather jacket, the castor-oil spotted face, the goggles pushed back on his helmet, worn dog-eared as he climbs out of his "ship."

Do you remember those seventy-odd youngsters who with 35 Signal Corps officers were the only pilots in America when we entered the World War?

Uncle Sam, you needed 10,000 flying officers in 1917 and mighty quickly, too. The 70 boys, including my young husband, answered your call for flying instructors. You called these boys "Civilian Flying Instructors."

These boys had less than 25 hours of flying time, for they were the pioneers of aviation in this grand country of ours.

My husband had 2½ hours flying time when you accepted his gladly offered-non-drafted services. Aviation was truly dangerous then, and teaching flying and creating the now well-known stunts as they developed some system of flying training was all hazard.

You did not give these boys any war insurance and they could no get civil insurance. You did not give these boys a commission- nor a uniform to protect them from the slurs of "slacker" as they wore their civilian non-flying clothes in town, where they lived. But these

[[picture - Mrs. Hattie Meyers Junkin]]  
[[caption]]Mrs. Hattie Meyers Junkin[[/caption]]

boys did not complain. They found in their hazardous existence a glorious immunity from the trifles, from the "excess baggage" of earth-bound living. They found in their duty to you, Uncle Sam, a rare and splendid philosophy of the Way of Living. And my dear, I do not mean to complain either.

Rather I mean to reinforce my courage with recollection of the courage and quiet humility I found in that band of young aviators and to pass it on to those like me- with another conscription, another war in so short a span of years.

These lads gave you your 10,000 flying officers from the fall of 1917 through to the Armistice in 1918. Today my son and his contemporaries will give you your 50,000 brave young hearts for your 1940 Air Corps.

So, I tell my son (and his friends)-do your most potential duty for your country, Our Country-just as superbly as your father did.

I could say to my son, hurry and get a job with one of the manufacturing companies, especially aircraft, so you can be exempt from active duty.

But I say to my son, if you can do your most good for Uncle Sam by working in an airplane factory, work in one for that reason, not as an escape. And since aviation is my son's natural forte, he has specialized on aviation. However, like many boys, he has not had two years of college, for he is not good at "books," but he is an excellent pilot. He is a natural.

You know, Uncle Sam, if you get in a pinch on your pilot program, there are so many excellent natural pilots without college, that would fly and fight inspiredly for you.

I could live in a state of apprehension over the conscription, but I marvel at the anticipation with which I view it. I recall what Army training did for the youth of my day, the fellows who came out of service a size or two too large for their "civies" and the glowing health Army training gave them.

(signed) Mrs. Hattie Meyers Junkin



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