

21 January 1944

Mr. S. Ralph Cohen,
Associate Editor,
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS,
Washington, D.C.



Dear Mr. Cohen:

Thank you for asking me why the AAF is training the WASP and assigning WASPs to non-combat flying jobs, when qualified men pilots are still available.

The WASP program is justifiable, in my own opinion, for the following reasons:

Future necessities of war in the way of requirements of manpower and arms cannot be determined by wishful thinking. Sound strategy of defense provides against any element of surprise. Therefore, it is sound policy to discover and test all available resources of manpower against possible need. Manpower includes womanpower.

By training women pilots to perform non-combat routine flying duties, more men pilots may be used in combat flying. While a lack of men is not imminent today, it might be tomorrow. Accordingly, it seems farsighted for the Army to test every feasible way in which it could use women pilots. It is important to test training methods and relative endurance of women pilots. To acquire comparative data against a substantial sample is desirable in order to create reliable statistical information on which to base future decisions and provide for future necessity.

Young American women with an aptitude for flying have just as much right to donate their best skill to the war effort as have young men. Certainly Wasps have a justification of existence equal to that of the Wacs, the Waves, the Spars and the Women Marines. Industry as well as the armed services are trying to recruit more and more young women. The President and the Secretary of War, among others, have called for a national service act to include women as well as men.

Knowledge of what may be expected from the WASP is only beginning to emerge from its experimental status. Its service is at best supplemental, though an important factor in determining our every resource for air supremacy.

Wasps are not trained or utilized at the expense of the training

and experience needed by men pilots in the theaters of war. Although Wasps under the Ferrying Division, Air Transport Command, ferry 44 different types of aircraft, only two qualify for ATC class V, two for class IV, eighteen for class III.

Miss Jacqueline Cochran, Director of Women Pilots describes their jobs as "aerial dishwashing". Besides ferrying for the most part light liaison and training planes, they take meteorologists aloft in the AAF Weather Wing, perform a small part of the irksome task of tracking and target towing for the First, Third, and Fourth Air Forces, do courier flying, test out engines by slow-time flying, and some few fly multi-engine planes for the training of gunners and bombardiers under the Training Command.

The number of WASPs is small indeed compared to that of AAF pilots. Counting the 500 currently in training, Wasps number about 1000 in all. By June 31, 1944, the number may reach 1600. They have a good safety record, and are performing a vital service.

Since midsummer recruiting of WASP has been curtailed. Although re-evaluation of their accomplishments and objectives may be made at the close of the fiscal year. The value to the Army of the Women's Pilot Program, in its present status, is well established.

Sincerely yours,

HAZEL TAYLOR, Director
Women's Interest, AAF
WASP Public Relations;
Air Wac Liaison,
Air Forces Group.



HP:ms