



"This is not a time when women should be patient. We are in a war and we need to fight it with all our ability and every weapon possible. Women pilots, in this particular case, are a weapon waiting to be used."

- Eleanor Roosevelt, 1942

In this limited series documentary, WASPS explores the first women to fly U.S. military aircrafts,

"A League of Their Own" for aviation.

In what was initially deemed an "experiment" during World War II, the U.S. Army Air Forces tasked to train 1,100 civilian women in non-combat military flight and to move aircraft on the homefront to free up male pilots.

The women learned to fly each and every plane that the men flew.

When the "experiment" was deemed successful, they were disbanded and have been fighting for their status, benefits and recognition since.









### Disual Approach:

Restoring archival footage brings new life to the vibrant era.

Interviews with historians, original members, current military personnel and tours of the training facility/WASPS museum in Sweetwater, TX are interwoven with archival footage.

A cinematic approach to recreation scenes and b-roll when necessary.









# Story Buckets

Separated into individual quick bites of information, the documentary covers the following topics:

- **The State of the Nation:** an overview of the United States, typical societal role of women, why this idea was so groundbreaking.
- **Origins of "Fifinella":** the W.A.S.P logo, designed by <u>Walt Disney</u>
  - The movie rights were tabled because the logo design was based on a Roald Dahl character and it was unclear who would own the rights
- **Recruiting:** Application and training.
- **Style and Uniform:** Tailoring for female in a male dominated industry.
- Wings Across America: Producers to work closely with organization utilizing archival assets. (link here).







## Story Buckets (contd)

- **Characters:** Deep dive exploration of select members, their personalities, hopes, dreams and skills.
- Museum: National WASP WWII Museum. Sweetwater, Texas <a href="https://waspmuseum.org/">https://waspmuseum.org/</a>
- Recognition: Disbanding in December 20, 1944, no benefits, rank or recognition; in 2010 170 survivors of the Wasps were awarded Congressional Gold Medal by President Barack Obama.
- Fight: for Veteran status, finally granted 1977
- **Future:** The future of women in flight, how did this pave the way for female pilots
  - Blue Angels (first female pilot added in 2014)









# **Potential Featured WASPS**

In 2019 there were believed to be fewer than 30 original pilots remaining alive.

#### WASP: Marion R. Tibbets

Class: 43-W-6

Born January 5, 1915 in Whitman, MA, Marion joined the WASP in 1943. After graduation she was assigned to Romulus Army Air Base Michigan and later Greenville Army Air Base Mississippi.

After the WASP program was disbanded, Marion was one of eight WASP accepted into the Air Force where she served from 1950 –74, retiring with the rank of major. While stationed in Germany, she was Chief of Military personnel division of the 49th Tactical Flight Wing and later Combat Support Group with the 7149th. After the Air Force, she worked for the Red Cross until retiring again in Largo, FL. Marion never married; her exhibit showcases a life lived to the fullest with a collection of 290 letters of correspondence with lifelong friend Wayne Brewer, Red Cross Field Director, as well as postcards of her world-wide travels. The highlight of the exhibit is an original film of WASP training at Sweetwater Municipal pool circa 1943.



## WASP: Margaret Phelan Taylor

Margaret Phelan Taylor grew up on a farm in Iowa. She was 19, had just completed two years of college and was ready for adventure in 1943 when a *Life* magazine cover story on the female pilots caught her eye. Her brother was training to be a pilot with the Army. Why not her? She asked her father to lend her money for a pilot's license — \$500, a huge amount then.

But there was a problem. She was half an inch shorter than the 5-foot-2-inch requirement. "I just stood on my tiptoes," she says.

When she arrived at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas, where most of the WASP were trained, "Well, there were a lot of other short ones just like me, and we laughed about how we got in."

Short, tall, slim, wide, they all came in knowing how to fly. The military trained male pilots from scratch, but not the female civilian volunteers.

"They didn't want to bring in a bunch of girls who didn't know how to fly an airplane," says Katherine Sharp Landdeck, associate professor of history at Texas Woman's University, "so you have women who are getting out of high school and taking every dime they had to learn how to fly so they could be a WASP."



## WASP: Millicent "Millie" Joung

Young, born near Lodgepole, Nebraska, dreamed of flying since she was 6 when a pilot landed at her family's farm and told her "Don't touch that plane, little girl", according to her family.

She learned to fly at an airstrip in Ogallala, Nebraska, using money she earned growing wheat on land leased from neighbors.

She started taking lessons in 1943, inspired by the exploits of Evelyn Sharp, a pilot who was also from Nebraska, "I read an article on her and thought, 'If she can do it, I can do it."



