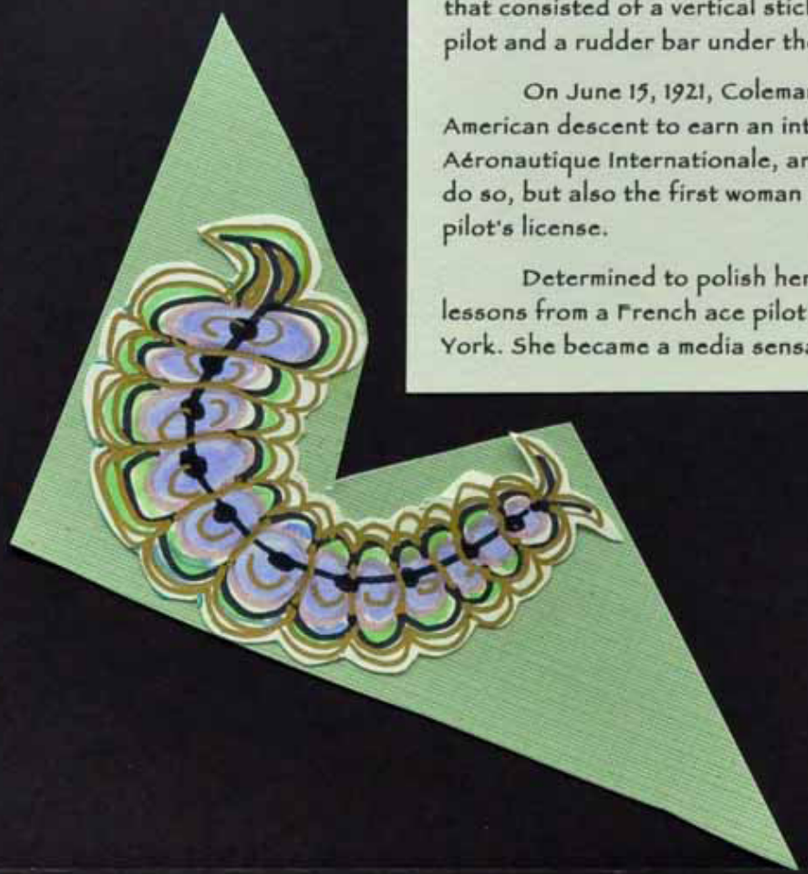
Flight

Bessie Coleman



BESSIE COLEMAN

Bessie Coleman was born on January 26, 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, the tenth of thirteen children to sharecroppers George, who was part Cherokee, and Susan Coleman. When Coleman was two years old, her family moved to Waxahachie, Texas, where she lived until age 23. Coleman began attending school in Waxahachie at age six and had to walk four miles each day to her segregated, one-room school, where she loved to read and established herself as an outstanding math student. She completed all eight grades of her one-room school. Every year, Coleman's routine of school, chores, and church was interrupted by the cotton harvest.

In 1901, Coleman's life took a dramatic turn: George Coleman left his family. He returned to Oklahoma, or Indian Territory as it was then called, to find better opportunities, but Susan and the children did not go with him. At age 12, Bessie was accepted into the Missionary Baptist Church. When she turned eighteen, Coleman took her savings and enrolled in the Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal University (now called Langston University) in Langston, Oklahoma. She completed one term before her money ran out, and she returned home.

In 1916 at the age of 23, she moved to Chicago, Illinois, where she lived with her brothers. She worked at the White Sox Barber Shop as a manicurist, where she heard stories from pilots returning home from World War I about flying during the war. She could not gain admission to American flight schools because she was black and a woman. No black U.S. aviator would train her either. Robert S. Abbott, founder and publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, encouraged her to study abroad. Coleman received financial backing from a banker named Jesse Binga and the *Defender*.

Coleman took a French-language class at the Berlitz School in Chicago, and then traveled to Paris on November 20, 1920 so she could earn her pilot license. She learned to fly in a Nieuport Type 82 biplane, with "a steering system that consisted of a vertical stick the thickness of a baseball bat in front of the pilot and a rudder bar under the pilot's feet."

On June 15, 1921, Coleman became not only the first woman of African-American descent to earn an international aviation license from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, and the first American of any gender or ethnicity to do so, but also the first woman of African-American descent to earn an aviation pilot's license.

Determined to polish her skills, Coleman spent the next two months taking lessons from a French ace pilot near Paris, and in September 1921 sailed for New York. She became a media sensation when she returned to the United States.

Coleman realized that in order to make a living as a civilian aviator she would need to become a "barnstorming" stunt flier and perform for paying audiences. However, to succeed in this highly competitive arena, she would need advanced lessons and a more extensive repertoire. Returning to Chicago, Coleman couldn't find anyone willing to teach her. In February 1922, she sailed again for Europe. She spent the next two months in France completing an advanced course in aviation. She then left for the Netherlands to meet with Anthony Fokker, one of the world's most distinguished aircraft designers. She also traveled to Germany, where she visited the Fokker Corporation and received additional training from one of the company's chief pilots. She returned to the United States with the confidence and enthusiasm she needed to launch her career in exhibition flying.

"Queen Bess," as she was known, was a highly popular draw for the next five years. Invited to important events and often interviewed by newspapers, she was admired by both blacks and whites. She primarily flew Curtiss JN-4 "Jenny" biplanes and army surplus aircraft left over from the war. She made her first appearance in an American airshow on September 3, 1922, at an event honoring veterans of the all-black 369th Infantry Regiment of World War I. Held at Curtiss Field on Long Island near New York City. Sponsored by her friend Abbott and the *Chicago Defender* newspaper, the show billed Coleman as "the world's greatest woman flier." It also featured aerial displays by eight other American ace pilots, and a jump by black parachutist Hubert Julian.

Six weeks later she returned to Chicago to deliver a stunning demonstration of daredevil maneuvers—including figure eights, loops, and near-ground dips—to a large and enthusiastic crowd at the Checkerboard Airdrome (now Chicago Midway Airport).

However, the thrill of stunt flying and the admiration of cheering crowds were only part of Coleman's dream. Coleman never lost sight of her childhood vow to one day "amount to something." As a professional aviator, the press criticized Coleman for her opportunistic nature and the flamboyant style she brought to her exhibition flying. Yet she also gained a reputation as a skilled and daring pilot who would stop at nothing to complete a difficult stunt.

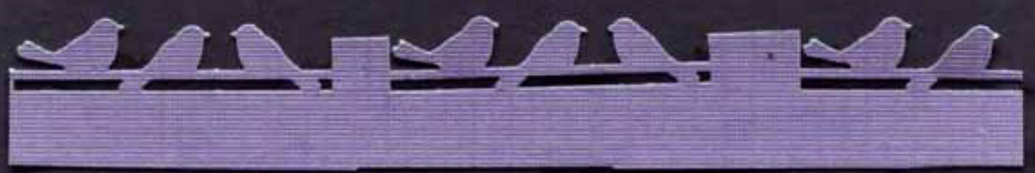
In Los Angeles, she broke a leg and three ribs when her plane stalled and crashed on February 22, 1923.

Through her media contacts, she was offered a role in a feature-length film entitled *Shadow and Sunshine*, to be financed by the African American Seminole Film Producing Company. She gladly accepted, hoping the publicity would help to advance her career and help her gain the finances she needed to establish her own flying school. But upon learning that the first scene in the movie required her to appear in tattered clothes, with a walking stick and a pack on her back, she

refused to proceed. She would not promote black stereotypes.

Coleman would not live long enough to fulfill her dream of establishing a school for young black aviators, but her pioneering achievements served as an inspiration for a generation of African American men and women.

On April 30, 1926 Coleman was in Jacksonville, Florida. She had recently purchased a Curtiss JN-4 (Jenny) in Dallas. Her mechanic and publicity agent, William Wills, flew the plane from Dallas in preparation for an airshow but had to make three forced landings along the way due to the plane being so poorly maintained and worn out. Coleman did not put her seatbelt on because she was planning a parachute jump for the next day and wanted to look over the cockpit sill to examine the terrain. About ten minutes into the flight, the plane unexpectedly dived, then spun around. Coleman was thrown from the plane at 2,000 ft. and died instantly when she hit the ground. William Wills was unable to gain control of the plane and it plummeted to the ground. Wills died upon impact and the plane burst into flames. It was later discovered that a wrench used to service the engine had slid into the gearbox and jammed it. Coleman was 34 years old.



Faith Ringgold

FAITH RINGGOLD

Faith Ringgold was on born October 8, 1930 in Harlem, New York. Her birth name was Faith Willi Ann Jones. She was raised in Harlem and educated at the City College of New York, where she studied with Robert Gwathmey and Yasuo Kuniyoshi.

After receiving a Bachelor's Degree, she taught in the public school system in New York. She received an M.A. from the college in 1959.

In 1970, Ringgold began teaching college level courses. She is the professor emeritus in the University of California, San Diego visual art department.

She was greatly influenced by the fabric she worked with at home with her mother, Willi Posey, who was a fashion designer. Ringgold has used fabric in many of her artworks. She is especially well known for her painted story quilts, which blur the line between "high art" and "craft" by combining painting, quilted fabric, and storytelling.

During the 1960s, Ringgold painted flat, figural compositions that focused on the racial conflicts. These paintings depicted everything from riots to cocktail parties. These resulted in her "American People" series, showing the female view of the Civil Rights Movement.

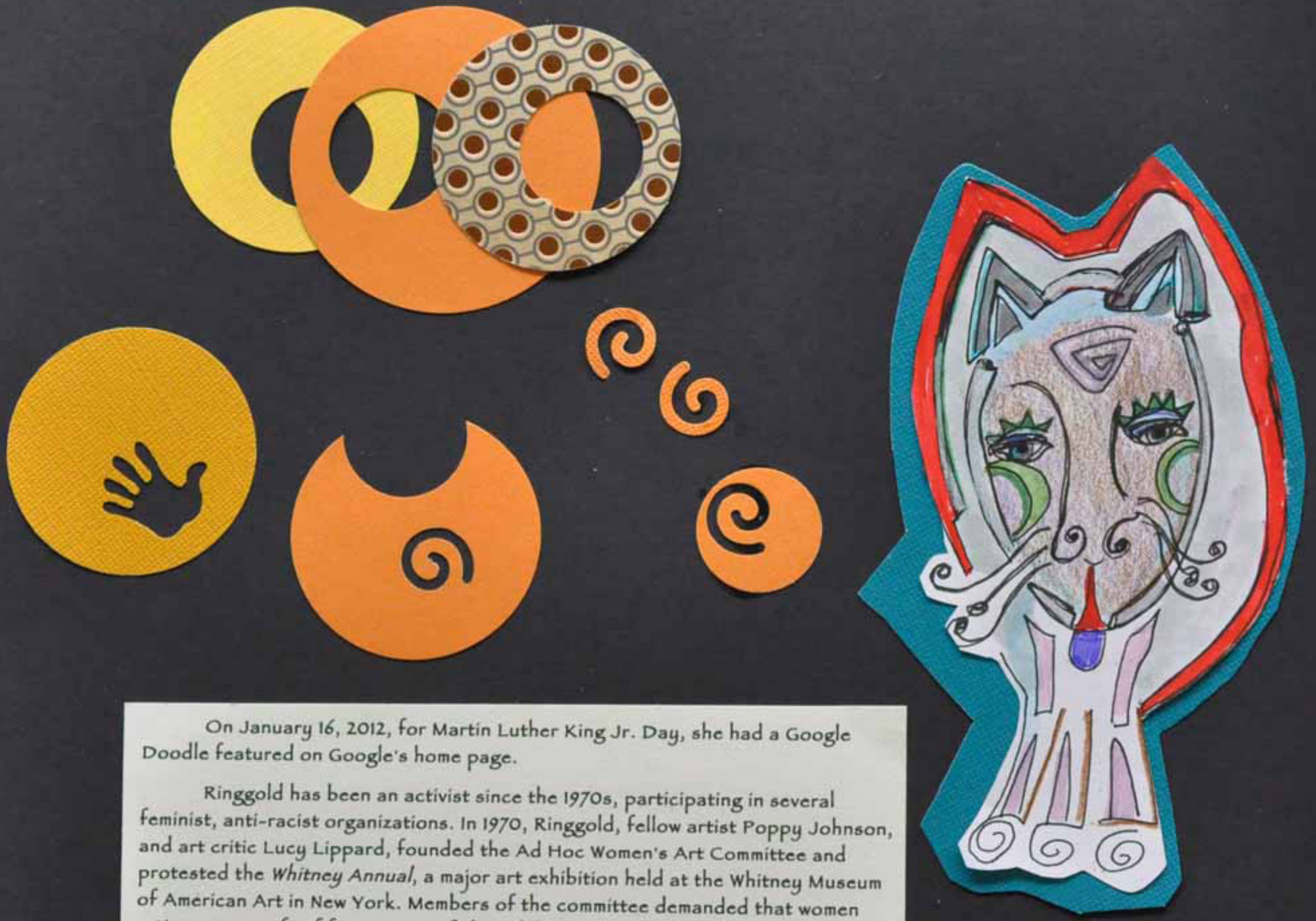
In the 1970's she moved into the sculptural figures that were used for fictional slave stories as well as contemporary ones.

Ringgold began quilted artworks in 1980. Her first quilt was "Echoes of Harlem." She quilted her stories in order to be heard, since she was unable to get her autobiography published.

"Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?" (1983), is a quilt showing the story of Aunt Jemima as a matriarch restaurateur. Ringgold modeled her "story quilts" on the Buddhist Thangkas, lovely pictures painted on fabric and quilted or brocaded, which could then be easily rolled up and transported. She has influenced numerous modern artists, including Linda Freeman, and known some of the greatest African-American artists personally, including Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, and Betye Saar.

Ringgold's work is in the permanent collection of many museums including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and other museums, mostly in New York City.

In addition, she has written and illustrated seventeen children's books. Her first book, *Tar Beach*, won the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration and the Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award.



On January 16, 2012, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, she had a Google Doodle featured on Google's home page.

Ringgold has been an activist since the 1970s, participating in several feminist, anti-racist organizations. In 1970, Ringgold, fellow artist Poppy Johnson, and art critic Lucy Lippard, founded the Ad Hoc Women's Art Committee and protested the *Whitney Annual*, a major art exhibition held at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Members of the committee demanded that women artists account for fifty percent of the exhibitors and created disturbances at the museum by leaving raw eggs and sanitary napkins on its grounds and by gathering to sing, blow whistles, and chant about their exclusion. Ringgold and Lippard also worked together during their participation in the group Women Artists in Revolution (WAR). That same year, Ringgold and her daughter, the writer Michele Wallace, founded Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL). Around 1974, Ringgold and Wallace were founding members of the National Black Feminist Organization. Ringgold was also a founding member of the "Where We At" Black Women Artists, a New York-based women art collective associated with the Black Arts Movement.

Margaret Brent

MARGARET BRENT

Margaret Brent was born 1601 in Gloucestershire, England. She was one of six daughters (of a total of thirteen children) of the Lord of Admington and Lark Stoke, Richard Brent, and his wife Elizabeth Reed (daughter of Edward Reed, Lord of Tusburie and Witten).

Although Richard Brent served as the local sheriff, and the family was at least nominally part of the Church of England, their religion and political loyalty became suspect when one daughter proclaimed her return to the Catholic Church and immigrated to Belgium.

Margaret, her sister Mary, and her brothers Giles and Fulke Brent sailed together from England and arrived at St. Mary's, Maryland on November 22, 1638, where they hoped to improve their fortunes. In England the father's estate went to the eldest son, and the remainder of the children had to make their own ways. Margaret Brent was about 37 and unmarried.

In the colony, the Brents secured large land grants and corresponding political offices due to their prestigious ancestry and or political affiliations.

On October 4, 1639, Margaret Brent became the first Maryland female landowner. She obtained the first recorded land grant in St. Mary's, a 70.5-acre patent, with which she and her sister Mary established the "Sister's Freehold", and an adjacent 50 acres titled St. Andrew's. Their initial entitlement was enlarged to 800 acres per sister. Later, Giles Brent transferred a 1,000-acre land tract on Kent Island, Maryland to Margaret as payment of a debt he owed his sister.

Margaret Brent also received credit or head rights for the five men and four women servants she had brought with her, and additional head rights for indentured servants she later imported. The colony's Proprietor issued head rights to encourage the gentry and sea captains to transport workers for labor in the growing colony. However, records concerning her trading or exercise of the head rights are missing.

Brent became an ally of the governor, Leonard Calvert. Together they became guardians of seven-year-old Mary Kittamaquund, the daughter of a Piscataway. The colonists promised to educate the young girl in English language and culture. In 1644, Giles Brent married Mary Kittamaquund. Upon her father's death, he asserted his rights to tribal lands, contrary to both tribal custom and Governor Calvert's own claims.

Meanwhile, by the mid-1640s, the English Civil War spilled over to Maryland. Protestant sea captain Richard Ingle raided the colony and burned down structures in early 1645. Ingle was an ally of Virginia trader William Claiborne who disputed Catholic Giles Brent's establishment of a rival trading post on Kent Island. Ingall took Acting Governor Giles Brent and both Jesuit priests as prisoners back to England.

Governor Leonard Calvert, when he returned, recruited armed men from

across the Potomac River in the nearby colony of Virginia for help against the raiders. The raiders were repulsed. However, the colony had been reduced to about 100 residents, and Calvert fell sick and died before paying the mercenaries. The dying man reportedly told his sister-in-law Margaret Brent, whom he named his executrix, "Take all, spend all."

Brent liquidated his estate to pay the soldiers who had saved the colony, which later caused a controversy with the governor's surviving brother, Lord Baltimore, leading to his ordering Brent and her family to leave the Maryland Colony.

Lord Baltimore had always managed his proprietorship from England, where he worked to keep political support for the colony, as well as to prove his loyalty to the new government of Protestants. He had appointed his brother as governor and to manage his lands. During the emergency after Calvert's death, the Provincial Court on January 3, 1648 appointed Brent attorney-in-fact for Lord Baltimore, as there was no time to contact him about financial matters, and he had not appointed a successor to Calvert. She collected his rents and paid his debts.

Thus, as Lord Baltimore's representative (as well as Calvert's executrix and a landowner in her own right), on January 21, 1648, Brent attended the provincial assembly, where she requested a voice in the council, as well as two votes in its proceedings; one as an independent landowner and the other as Lord Baltimore's attorney. Governor Thomas Greene refused her request, as the assembly at the time considered such privileges for women to be reserved for queens. Brent left but said that she "Protested against all proceedings ... unless she may be present and have vote as aforesaid."

That same day, Brent called for corn to be brought from Virginia to feed the hungry troops camped at St. Mary's. Some accounts suggest that she had spent all of Leonard Calvert's personal estate by this time, and proceeded to sell Lord Baltimore's cattle to pay the soldiers' wages. English law would not permit the sale of such possessions without a court order or a special act of the legislature. But Calvert's lands and buildings were added into the inventory of his estate. Brent and then Governor William Stone also disagreed upon the act of a sale of a 100-acre land tract entitled "The Governor's Field".

Brent appeared at the assembly a final time as Lord Baltimore's attorney, on February 9, 1648 in a case against Thomas Cornwallis.

From England, Lord Baltimore wrote to the assembly objecting to the sale of any of his property after the death of his brother. He may have been suspicious of Brent's motives in managing his assets, or not realized that the colony had been in danger of extinction, had the mercenaries not been paid to leave. While the assembly had refused to give Margaret Brent a vote, it defended her stewardship of Lord Baltimore's estate, writing to him on April 21, 1649, that it

"was better for the Colony's safety at that time in her hands than in any man's ... for the soldiers would never have treated any others with that civility and respect...".

Given Lord Baltimore's (and Governor Stone's) hostility to the Brent family, Giles and his young wife Mary moved to Chopawamsic Island in the Potomac River in 1649, then to Virginia's Northern Neck in 1650. The two sisters, Margaret and Mary Brent, also bought Virginia land starting in 1647, and they moved by 1650. They lived on a plantation called "Peace" in what was then Westmoreland County, Virginia.

No records exist of her practice as an attorney in Virginia, but records do exist of her large land investments, including in what would became Old Town Alexandria, Virginia and Fredericksburg, Virginia. She also held George Washington's Mt. Vernon.

Neither she nor her sister Mary ever married; they were among the very few unmarried English women of the time in the Chesapeake colony, when men outnumbered women there by 6:1.

In 1658 Mary Brent died, leaving her entire estate of 1000 acres to her sister. In 1663 Margaret Brent wrote her will. In 1670 she assigned one half of her 2,000 acres in Maryland to her nephew, James Clifton. Most of the remainder went to her brother Giles and his children. She died at "Peace", in the newly created Stafford County, Virginia in 1671. Her will was admitted into probate on May 19, 1671.

Margaret Brent became the first woman in the English North American colonies to appear before a court of the Common Law. She was a significant founding settler in the early histories of the colonies of Maryland and Virginia.

With Anne Hutchinson, Brent ranks among the most prominent women figures in early Colonial American history. However in the male dominated world of the colonies, her stance for her rights and her independence was unusual in actual practice.

Martha Matilda Harper

MARTHA MATILDA HARPER

Martha Matilda Harper was born in Ontario, Canada, on September 10, 1857. Harper's father sent her away at age seven to become a domestic servant for relatives in Orno, Ontario. She worked in that profession for 22 years before moving to the United States to work as a servant in Rochester, New York.

While a servant, Harper developed a hair tonic after becoming concerned that the hair products on the market did more harm than good. She saved enough money to begin producing the hair tonic full-time, and, upon leaving domestic service three years after her immigration to the United States, opened the first public hair salon in the region in order to help market it.

Harper's salon, The Harper Hair Parlor, and many of her innovations, including the Harper Method, underlie the modern concept of the hair salon. Her floor-length hair also served as an effective marketing tool and appeared in many advertisements for her products.

In 1891, she became one of the first businesspeople in America to start franchising, allowing franchisees to open salons under the Harper name. She would train the franchisees and inspect their salons to ensure quality.

Emphasizing customer service and comfort, Harper invented reclining shampoo chairs, which became a common feature of salons worldwide. The salons offered scalp massage and childcare, and they provided evening hours. The hair products her company produced were intended to be healthier than those widely available at the time and were made with natural products. Harper salons did not carry synthetic dyes or do chemical perms.

At the height of its success, her company had 500 franchises and produced a full line of hair care and beauty products. Among the Harper customers were Susan B. Anthony, Woodrow Wilson, Grace Coolidge, and Jacqueline Kennedy.

The Harper Method Inc. has operated under a variety of different owners. In June 1956, Robert McBain, Harper's husband, sold the enterprise to Earl Freese and Gerald Wunderlich who then made three different attempts to sell the business throughout the 1960s and 70s.

In 1971, Robert Prentices, then manager of the Harper manufacturing center in St. Catharine's, Canada, purchased the factory assets along with Harper manufacturing and distribution rights, renaming the company Niagara Mist Marketing Ltd, also known as The Soap Factory.

On March 10, 1972, other Harper Method Inc., assets were bought by PEJ Beauty Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Wilfred Academy. At the time, PEJ was one of the largest operators of trade schools in America. According to Philip Jakeway, then President of the Wilfred Academy, he hoped to expand his operation by marketing the Harper products and shops. An agreement was reached whereby Prentice would supply Harper products to Jakeway for U.S. distribution. Jakeway was unsuccessful.

As for The Harper Method Founder's Shop, it continues to operate in Rochester, New York as the country's oldest, and longest running, beauty shop.

Martha died on August 3, 1950, one month short of her 93rd birthday, survived by her husband Robert MacBain, who later died on April 30, 1965, at the age of 83.

Ruth Rowland Nichols

RUTH ROWLAND NICHOLS

Ruth Rowland Nichols was an aviation pioneer. She was the only woman yet to hold simultaneous world records for speed, altitude, and distance for a female pilot.

Nichols was born February 23, 1901 in New York City to Erickson Nichols and Edith Haines. Her father was a member of the New York Stock Exchange, and had been a member of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. Ruth was sent to the Masters School, a private preparatory school for young women. On her graduation from high school, her father's graduation present to her was an airplane ride with "Eddie" Stinson, Jr., ace World War I pilot. This spurred her interest in becoming a pilot. After her graduation from the Masters School, she attended Wellesley College, studied pre medical, and graduated in 1924.

While a student at Wellesley College, Nichols secretly took flying lessons. Shortly after graduation, she received her pilot's license. She became the first woman in the world to obtain a hydroplane license. She first achieved public fame in January 1928, as co-pilot for Harry Rogers, who had been her flying instructor, on the first non-stop flight from New York to Miami, Florida. Due to her socialite upbringing and aristocratic family background, Nichols became known in the press as the "Flying Debutante", a name she hated. After this remarkable achievement, Nichols was hired as a sales manager for Fairchild Aviation Corporation.

In 1929, she was a founding member, with Amelia Earhart and others, of the Ninety-Nines, an organization of licensed women pilots.

During the 1930s, while working for Fairchild and other aviation companies, Nichols made several record-setting flights. In 1930, she beat Charles Lindbergh's record time for a cross-country flight, completing the trip in 13 hours, 21 minutes. In March 1931, she set the women's world altitude record of 28,743 feet. In April 1931, she set the women's world speed record of 210.7 miles per hour. In June 1931, she attempted to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, but crashed in New Brunswick and was severely injured.

Following her recovery, in October 1931, she set the women's distance record with a flight from Oakland, California to Louisville, Kentucky, 1,977 miles.

On February 14, 1932, Nichols set a new world altitude record of 19,928 feet for diesel-powered aircraft at Floyd Bennett Field, NY while flying in a Lockheed Vega. On December 29, 1932 Nichols became the first woman pilot of a commercial passenger airline, flying for New York and New England Airways.

On October 21, 1935, Nichols was critically injured in a crash during a private flight in Troy, New York. The flight was to be an airborne wedding for two couples over New York City, but the plane, a Curtiss Condor, crashed shortly

after takeoff, killing the pilot. Nichols received a broken left wrist, ankle and nose, contusions, burns and "possible internal injuries", according to newspaper accounts of the crash. She was unable to fly for nearly a year after.

When she returned to flying, Nichols went to work for the Emergency Peace Campaign, a Quaker organization that sought to promote peaceful resolution to international conflicts then brewing. In 1939, she headed Relief Wings, a civilian air service that performed emergency relief flights and assisted the Civil Air Patrol during World War II. Nichols would eventually attain the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Civil Air Patrol.

Following the war, Nichols became involved in other humanitarian efforts, using her celebrity to bring attention to causes and to raise funds. She organized a mission of support for UNICEF, including piloting a round-the-world tour in 1949. In the 1950s, she served as director of women's activities for Save the Children, director of the women's division of the United Hospital Fund, and field director for the National Nephritis Foundation.

In 1958, after lobbying the United States Air Force for permission, she co-piloted a TF-102A Delta Dagger and reached 1,000 miles per hour and an altitude of 51,000 feet, setting new women's speed and altitude records at age fifty-seven.

In 1959, as [NASA]'s Mercury program was preparing for missions to the moon, Nichols underwent the same isolation, centrifuge, and weightlessness tests that had been devised for the astronaut candidates. USAF Brigadier General Donald Flickinger conducted the tests at the Wright Air Development Center in Dayton, Ohio. Flickinger and his mentor Randy Lovelace (the bioastronautics pioneer who performed the medical selection of the Mercury Seven), had a far-reaching interest in research on the suitability of women as astronauts. However, no official records of the Air Research and Development Command, the experimental wing of the Air Force trying to get America into space, survive to document how or why this came about.

Although she didn't pass all the Phase I tests that her female peers did (the Mercury 13), Nichols performed well enough on the tests and urged Air Force scientists to include women in their spaceflight plans. The scientists at Wright "thought of this with horror, and they said under no circumstances," according to an oral historian to whom Nichols relayed the story. The test results were leaked to the media which, according to Flickinger, "turned the tide" against Air Force sponsorship of research into female astronaut candidates. Ultimately only Jerrie Cobb was able to complete all three phases of tests before NASA officially pulled the plug on the program.

She died at her home in New York City on September 25, 1960. She was interred at The Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York.

During the course of her career, Nichols flew every type of aircraft developed, including the dirigible, glider, autogyro, seaplanes, biplanes, triplanes, transport aircraft, and a supersonic jet. Nichols was posthumously inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 1992. A propeller from her 1930s Lockheed Vega is displayed in the National Air and Space Museum's Golden Age of Flight gallery.

Margaret Bourke-White

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE

Margaret White was born on June 14, 1904 in the Bronx, New York to Joseph White and Minnie Bourke. She grew up in Bound Brook, New Jersey, and graduated from Plainfield High School in Union County. "From her naturalist father, an engineer and inventor, she claims to have learned perfectionism; from her "resourceful homemaker" mother, she claims to have developed an unapologetic desire for self-improvement."

Margaret's interest in photography began as a young woman's hobby, supported by her father's enthusiasm for cameras. Despite her interest, in 1922, she began studying herpetology at Columbia University, only to have her interest in photography strengthened after studying under Clarence White. She left after one semester, following the death of her father. She transferred colleges several times, including: University of Michigan, Purdue University in Indiana; and Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Bourke-White ultimately graduated from Cornell University with her B.A. in 1927, leaving behind a photographic study of the rural campus for the school's newspaper, including photographs of her famed dormitory Risley Hall.

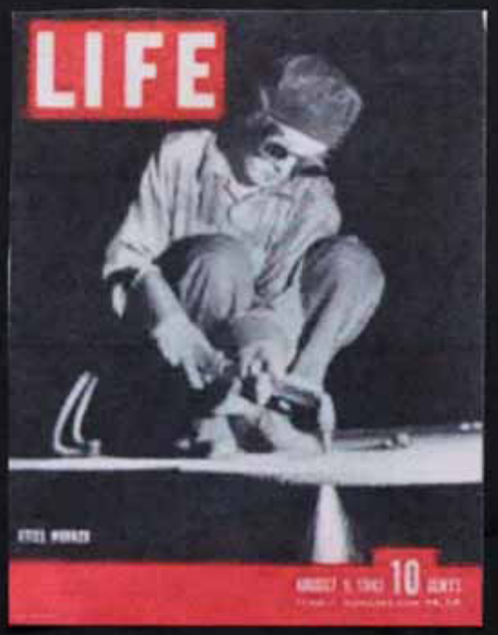
A year later, she moved from Ithaca, New York, to Cleveland, Ohio, where she started a commercial photography studio and began concentrating on architectural and industrial photography.

Margaret White added her mother's surname, "Bourke" to her name in 1927 and hyphenated it.

One of Bourke-White's clients was Otis Steel Company. Her success was due to her skills with both people and her technique. Her experience at Otis is a good example. As she explains in *Portrait of Myself*, the Otis security people were reluctant to let her shoot for many reasons. First, steel making was a defense industry, so they wanted to be sure national security was not endangered. Second, she was a woman, and in those days people wondered if a woman and her delicate cameras could stand up to the intense heat, hazard, and generally dirty and gritty conditions inside a steel mill. When she got permission, technical problems began. Black-and-white film in that era was sensitive to blue light, not the reds and oranges of hot steel—she could see the beauty, but the photographs were coming out all black. She solved this problem by bringing along a new style of magnesium flare (which produces white light) and having assistants hold them to light her scenes. Her abilities resulted in some of the best steel factory photographs of that era, and these earned her national attention.

In 1929, Bourke-White accepted a job as associate editor and staff photographer of *Fortune* magazine, a position she held until 1935. In 1930, she became the first Western photographer allowed to take photographs of Soviet industry.

Henry Luce hired her as the first female photojournalist for *Life* magazine



OVER THERE

in 1936. Her photograph of the Fort Peck Dam construction appeared on its first cover on November 23, 1936. She held the title of staff photographer until 1940, but returned from 1941 to 1942, and again in 1945, where she stayed through her semi-retirement in 1957 (which ended her photography for the magazine) and her full retirement in 1969.

Her photographs of the construction of the Fort Peck Dam were featured in *Life*'s first issue, dated November 23, 1936, including the cover. This cover photograph became such a favorite that it was the 1930s' representative in the United States Postal Service's *Celebrate the Century* series of commemorative postage stamps.

During the mid-1930s, Bourke-White, like Dorothea Lange, photographed drought victims of the Dust Bowl. In the February 15, 1937 issue of *Life* magazine, her famous photograph of black flood victims standing in front of a sign that declared, "World's Highest Standard of Living", showing a white family, was published. The photograph later would become the basis for the artwork of Curtis Mayfield's 1975 album, *There's No Place Like America Today*.

Bourke-White and novelist Erskine Caldwell were married from 1939 to their divorce in 1942, and they collaborated on *You Have Seen Their Faces* (1937), a book about conditions in the South during the Great Depression.

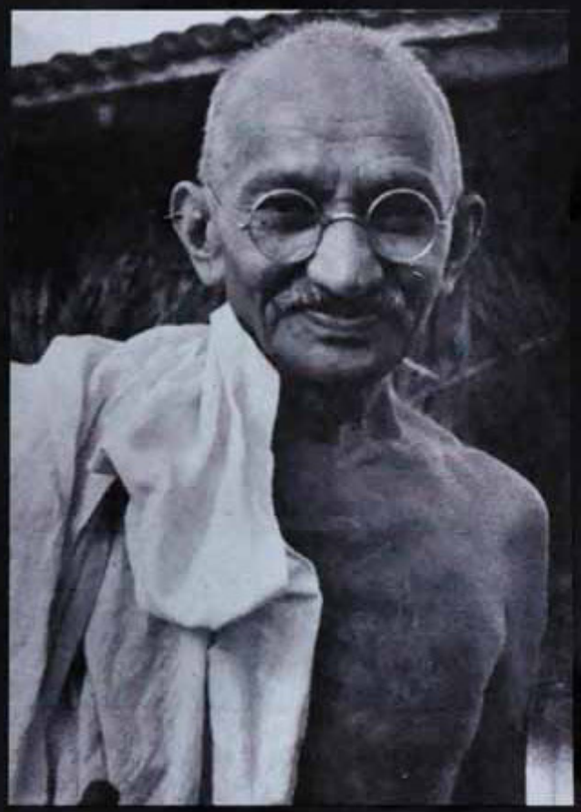
She also traveled to Europe to record how Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were faring under Nazism and how Russia was faring under Communism. While in Russia, she photographed a rare occurrence, Joseph Stalin with a smile, as well as portraits of Stalin's mother and great-aunt when visiting Georgia.

Bourke-White was the first female war correspondent and the first woman to be allowed to work in combat zones during World War II. In 1941, she traveled to the Soviet Union just as Germany broke its pact of non-aggression. She was the only foreign photographer in Moscow when German forces invaded. Taking refuge in the U.S. Embassy, she then captured the ensuing firestorms on camera.

As the war progressed, she was attached to the U.S. Army Air Force in North Africa, then to the U.S. Army in Italy and later in Germany. She repeatedly came under fire in Italy in areas of fierce fighting.

"The woman who had been torpedoed in the Mediterranean, strafed by the Luftwaffe, stranded on an Arctic island, bombarded in Moscow, and pulled out of the Chesapeake when her chopper crashed", was known to the *Life* staff as 'Maggie the Indestructible.'" The incident in the Mediterranean refers to the sinking of the England-Africa bound British troopship *SS Strathallan* that she recorded in an article, "Women in Lifeboats", in *Life*, February 22, 1943.

In the spring of 1945, she traveled throughout a collapsing Germany with Gen. George S. Patton. She arrived at Buchenwald, the notorious concentration camp, and later said, "Using a camera was almost a relief. It interposed a slight



LOOK AT THIS

barrier between myself and the horror in front of me."

After the war, she produced a book entitled, *Dear Fatherland, Rest Quietly*, a project that helped her come to grips with the brutality she had witnessed during and after the war.

"To many who got in the way of a Bourke-White photograph — and that included not just bureaucrats and functionaries but professional colleagues like assistants, reporters, and other photographers — she was regarded as imperious, calculating, and insensitive."

Bourke-White is known equally well in both India and Pakistan for her photographs of Gandhi at his spinning wheel and Pakistan's founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, upright in a chair.

She also was "one of the most effective chroniclers" of the violence that erupted at the independence and partition of India and Pakistan, according to Somini Sengupta, who calls her photographs of the episode "gut-wrenching, and staring at them, you glimpse the photographer's undaunted desire to stare down horror."

She recorded streets littered with corpses, dead victims with open eyes, and refugees with vacant eyes. "Bourke-White's photographs seem to scream on the page," Sengupta wrote.

The photographs were taken just two years after those Bourke-White took of the newly captured Buchenwald.

Sixty-six of Bourke-White's photographs of the partition violence were included in a 2006 reissue of Khushwant Singh's 1956 novel about the disruption, *Train to Pakistan*. In connection with the reissue, many of the photographs in the book were displayed at "the posh shopping center Khan Market" in Delhi, India.

"More astonishing than the images blown up large as life was the number of shoppers who seemed not to register them," Sengupta wrote. No memorial to the partition victims exists in India, according to Pramod Kapoor, head of Roli, the Indian publishing house coming out with the new book.

She had a knack for being at the right place at the right time: she interviewed and photographed Mohandas K. Gandhi just a few hours before his assassination in 1948. Alfred Eisenstaedt, her friend and colleague, said one of her strengths was that there was no assignment and no picture that was unimportant to her. She also started the first photography laboratory at *Life* magazine.

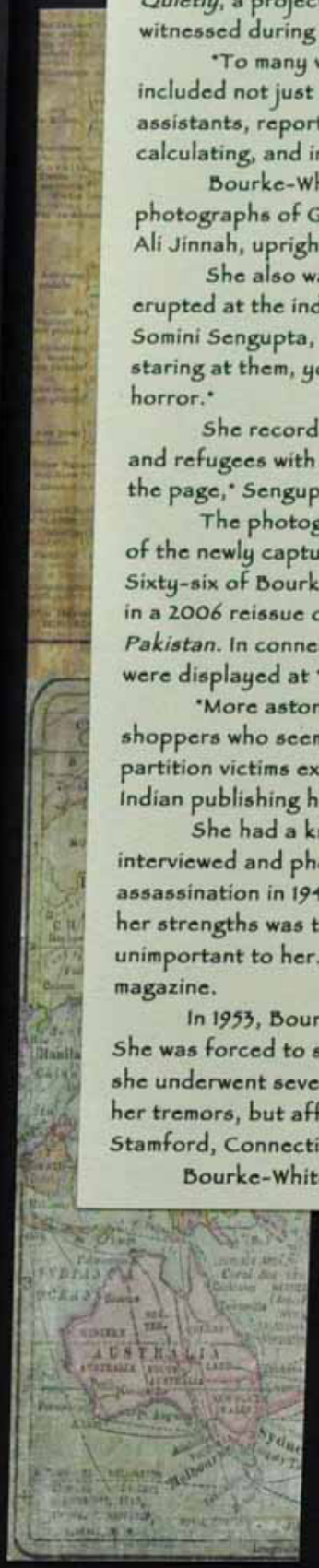
In 1953, Bourke-White developed her first symptoms of Parkinson's disease. She was forced to slow her career to fight encroaching paralysis. In 1959 and 1961, she underwent several operations to treat her condition, which effectively ended her tremors, but affected her speech. In 1971 she died at Stamford Hospital in Stamford, Connecticut, aged 67, from Parkinson's disease.

Bourke-White wrote an autobiography, *Portrait of Myself*, which was published in 1963 and became a bestseller, but she grew increasingly infirm and isolated in her home in Darien, Connecticut. In her living room there "was wallpapered in one huge, floor-to-ceiling, perfectly stitched together black-and-white photograph of an evergreen forest that she had shot in Czechoslovakia in 1938". A pension plan set up in the 1950s "though generous for that time" no longer covered her health-care costs. She also suffered financially from her personal generosity and "less-than-responsible attendant care."

Bourke-White's photographs are in the Brooklyn Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the New Mexico Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York as well as in the collection of the Library of Congress.

Many of her manuscripts, memorabilia, photographs, and negatives are housed in Syracuse University's Bird Library Special Collections section.

Portrayals in popular culture.



Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart

Amelia Mary Earhart was an American aviation pioneer and author. Earhart was the first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She received the U.S. Distinguished Flying Cross for this record. She set many other records, wrote best-selling books about her flying experiences and was instrumental in the formation of The Ninety-Nines, an organization for female pilots. Earhart joined the faculty of the Purdue University aviation department in 1935 as a visiting faculty member to counsel women on careers and help inspire others with her love for aviation. She was also a member of the National Woman's Party, and an early supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment.

During an attempt to make a circumnavigation flight of the globe in 1937 in a Purdue-funded Lockheed Model 10 Electra, Earhart disappeared over the central Pacific Ocean near Howland Island. Fascination with her life, career and disappearance continues to this day.

Amelia Mary Earhart, daughter of Samuel "Edwin" Stanton Earhart and Amelia "Amy" Otis Earhart, was born on July 24, 1897 in Atchison, Kansas. Amelia was the second child of the marriage.

A spirit of adventure in the child caused her to be seen as a tomboy.

In 1907 Earhart's father was transferred to Des Moines, Iowa. The two sisters, Amelia and Muriel remained with their grandparents in Atchison.

In 1909, the family was reunited. The family's finances improved for a short time, but Edwin was an alcoholic. Although he attempted to rehabilitate himself, he could not reclaim his job.

At about this time, Earhart's Grandmother, Amelia Otis died. She left her daughter a substantial estate but placed it in trust, fearing that Edwin's drinking would drain the funds.

Earhart's father found work in St. Paul, Minnesota and Earhart entered Central High School as a junior. Edwin lost his job that same year. Amy Earhart took her children to Chicago. Earhart was enrolled in Hyde Park High School and graduated from there in 1916.

In 1917, World War I had been raging and Earhart received training as a nurse's aide from the Red Cross. She began work at Spadina Military Hospital in Toronto. When the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic reached Toronto, Earhart became a patient herself, suffering from pneumonia and maxillary sinusitis. She was hospitalized in early November 1918.

In the hospital, in the pre-antibiotic era, she had painful minor operations to wash out the affected maxillary sinus, but without success. Chronic sinusitis was to affect Earhart's flying and activities in later life, and sometimes she was forced to wear a bandage on her cheek to cover a small drainage tube.

In Long Beach, on December 28, 1920, Earhart and her father visited an airfield where Frank Hawks gave her a ride that would forever change Earhart's

life. "By the time I had got two or three hundred feet off the ground," she said, "I knew I had to fly." After that 10-minute flight, she became determined to learn to fly. Working at a variety of jobs, she managed to save $1,000 for lessons. Earhart had her first lessons, in 1921, at Kinner Field. Her teacher was Anita "Neta" Snook, a pioneer female aviator.

Earhart's commitment to flying required her to accept the hard work and rudimentary conditions that accompanied the training. She chose a leather jacket and also cropped her hair short in the style of other female flyers. Six months later, Earhart purchased a secondhand bright yellow Kinner Airster biplane that she nicknamed "The Canary." On October 22, 1922, Earhart flew the Airster to an altitude of 14,000 feet, setting a world record for female pilots. On May 15, 1923, Earhart became the 16th woman to be issued a pilot's license by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale.

Her grandmother's inheritance finally became depleted. Consequently, Earhart sold the "Canary" as well as a second Kinner and bought a yellow Kissel "Speedster" two-passenger automobile, which she named the "Yellow Peril." Simultaneously, Earhart experienced an exacerbation of her old sinus problem.

Following her parents' divorce in 1924, she drove her mother in the "Yellow Peril" on a transcontinental trip from California to Boston. Earhart underwent another, more successful sinus operation. Lacking the funds to continue college, she moved to Medford, Massachusetts.

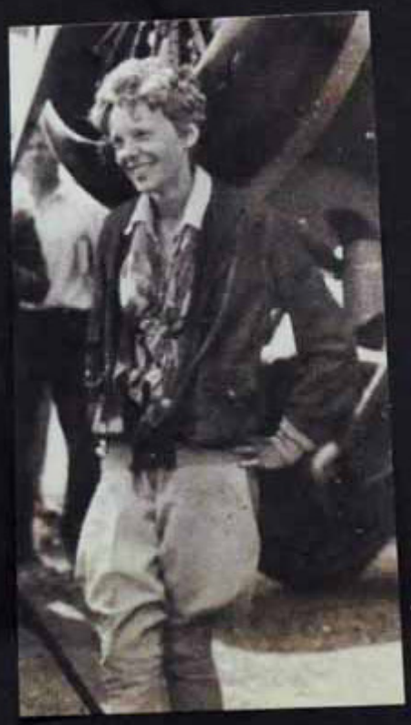
While there she became a member of the American Aeronautical Society's Boston chapter, was a sales representative for Kinner aircraft, and wrote local newspaper columns promoting flying. As her local celebrity grew, she laid out the plans for an organization devoted to female flyers.

In 1927, Amy Phipps Guest offered to sponsor the first woman to fly across the Atlantic. In April 1928, Earhart got a phone call asking her if she would like to be that woman.

The project coordinators (including book publisher and publicist George P. Putnam) asked Earhart to accompany pilot Wilmer Stultz and Louis Gordon on the flight, nominally as a passenger, but with the added duty of keeping the flight log. The team departed Trepassey Harbor, Newfoundland on June 17, 1928. They landed at Burry Port, in the United Kingdom, exactly 20 hours and 40 minutes later. Earhart did not pilot the aircraft. When interviewed after landing, she said, "Stultz did all the flying—had to. I was just baggage, like a sack of potatoes." She added, "...maybe someday I'll try it alone."

In England, Earhart received a rousing welcome. When the Stultz, Gordon and Earhart flight crew returned to the United States, they were greeted with a ticker-tape parade in New York followed by a reception with President Calvin Coolidge at the White House.

Trading on her physical resemblance to Lindbergh, whom the press had



dubbed "Lucky Lindy," some newspapers and magazines began referring to Earhart as "Lady Lindy." The United Press dubbed Earhart the reigning "Queen of the Air."

Meanwhile, Putnam had undertaken to heavily promote her in a campaign including publishing a book she authored, a series of lecture tours and using pictures of her in mass market endorsements for products including luggage, Lucky Strike cigarettes and women's clothing and sportswear.

The marketing campaign by both Earhart and Putnam was successful in establishing the Earhart mystique in the public psyche. Earhart actively became involved in the promotions, especially in women's fashions.

The "active living" lines that were sold in 50 stores such as Macy's in metropolitan areas were an expression of a new Earhart image. Her concept of simple, natural lines matched with wrinkle-proof, washable materials was the embodiment of a sleek, purposeful but feminine "A.E."

Accepting a position as associate editor at *Cosmopolitan* magazine, she turned this forum into an opportunity to campaign for greater public acceptance of aviation, especially focusing on the role of women entering the field. In 1929, Earhart was among the first aviators to promote commercial air travel through the development of a passenger airline service; along with Charles Lindbergh, she represented Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) and invested time and money in setting up the first regional shuttle service between New York and Washington, DC. (TAT later became TWA). She was a Vice President of National Airways, which conducted the flying operations of the Boston-Maine Airways and several other airlines in the northeast.

Although Earhart had gained fame for her transatlantic flight, she endeavored to set an "untarnished" record of her own. In August 1928, she set off on her first long solo flight that occurred just as her name was coming into the national spotlight. Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the North American continent and back.

In 1929, Earhart entered the first Santa Monica-to-Cleveland Women's Air Derby. In Cleveland, Earhart and her friend Ruth Nichols were tied for first place. Nichols was to take off right before Earhart, but her aircraft hit a tractor at the end of the runway and flipped over. Earhart ran to the wrecked aircraft and dragged her friend out. When she was sure that Nichols was unhurt Earhart took off but finished third. Her courageous act was symbolic of Earhart's selflessness.

In 1930, Earhart became an official of the National Aeronautic Association where she actively promoted the establishment of separate women's records and was instrumental in the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI) accepting a similar international standard. In 1931, she set a world altitude record of 18,415 feet in a borrowed company machine. Earhart was, with other female flyers, crucial to making the American public "air minded" and seeing it was not just for men.

During this period, Earhart became involved with the Ninety-Nines, an organization of female pilots providing moral support and advancing the cause of women in aviation. In 1929, she suggested a Women's Air Derby to the pilots. She then suggested the organization be named based on the number of its charter members. She was it's first president.

During this same time, Earhart and Putnam spent a great deal of time together. Putnam divorced in 1929 and sought out Earhart, proposing to her six times before she accepted. They married on February 7, 1931. Earhart referred to their marriage as "a partnership with duel controls."

Earhart kept her own name. Earhart and Putnam had no children.

At the age of 34, on the morning of May 20, 1932, Earhart set off from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland with the latest copy of a local newspaper. She intended to fly to Paris in her single engine Lockheed Vega 5B to emulate Charles Lindbergh's solo flight. Her technical advisor for the flight was famed Bernt Balchen . After a flight lasting 14 hours, 56 minutes during which she contended with strong northerly winds, icy conditions and mechanical problems, Earhart landed in a pasture at Culmore, north of Derry, Northern Ireland. When a farm hand asked, "Have you flown far?" Earhart replied, "From America."

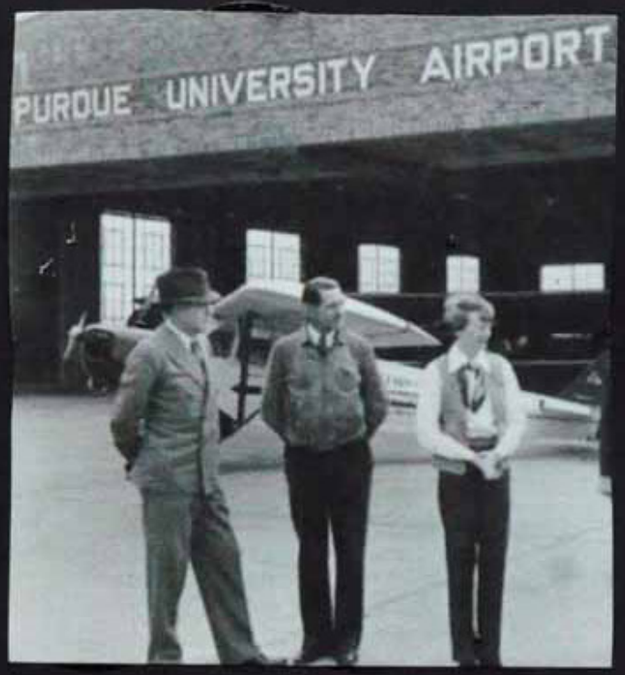
Between 1930 and 1935, Earhart had set seven women's speed and distance aviation records in a variety of aircraft. By 1935, Earhart contemplated, in her own words, "...a circumnavigation of the globe as near its waistline as could be." However, she would need a new aircraft.

Earhart joined the faculty of Purdue University in 1935 as a visiting faculty member. Early in 1936, Earhart started to plan the longest round-the-world flight, 29,000 miles, following a grueling equatorial route. With financing from Purdue, a Lockheed Electra 10E was built to her to specifications which included incorporating a large fuel tank

Earhart's intention was to circumnavigate the globe, gather raw material and public attention for her next book. Her first choice as navigator was Captain Harry Manning.

Fred Noonan was subsequently chosen as a second navigator because he of his experience in both marine and flight navigation. The original plans were for Noonan to navigate from Hawaii to Howland Island; then Manning would continue with Earhart to Australia and she would then proceed on her own. On March 17, 1937, Earhart and her crew flew the first leg with Noonan, Harry Manning and Mantz on board. Due to various problems, the aircraft needed servicing in Hawaii. The flight resumed later from Luke Field with Earhart, Noonan and Manning on board. During the takeoff run the aircraft was severely damaged.

While the Electra was being repaired Earhart and Putnam secured additional funds and prepared for a second attempt. This time she would fly west to east. After arriving in Miami, Florida, Earhart publicly announced her plans to



try again. Fred Noonan was Earhart's only crewmember. The pair departed June 1 and arrived at Lae, New Guinea, on June 29, 1937.

On July 2, 1937, Earhart and Noonan took off from Lae. Their intended destination was Howland Island, 2,556 miles away. The last known position report was near the Nukumanu Islands. The USCGC *Itasca* was assigned to communicate with Earhart and guide them to Howland.

The final approach to Howland Island was unsuccessful. During Earhart and Noonan's approach to Howland Island the *Itasca* received strong and clear voice transmissions from Earhart but she was couldn't hear voice transmissions from the ship.

At 6:14 am she requested the ship use its direction finder to provide a bearing for the aircraft. Radio operators realized their system could not tune into Earhart's.

At 7:42 am Earhart radioed, "We must be on you, but cannot see you—but gas is running low. Have been unable to reach you by radio. We are flying at 1,000 feet."

In her last known transmission Earhart broadcast "We are on the line 157 337. We will repeat this message. We will repeat this on 6210 kilocycles. Wait."

An hour after Earhart's last recorded message, the *Itasca* search north and west of Howland Island unsuccessfully.

A week after the disappearance, naval aircraft from the *Colorado* flew over several islands in the group including Gardner Island, which had been uninhabited for over 40 years. The subsequent report on Gardner read: "Here signs of recent habitation were clearly visible but repeated circling and zooming failed to elicit any answering wave from possible inhabitants and it was finally taken for granted that none were there."

The official search efforts lasted until July 19, 1937. Despite all official efforts no physical evidence of Earhart, Noonan or the Electra 10E was found.

Putnam financed a failed private search by local authorities.

Back in the United States, Putnam requested the seven-year waiting period for death be waived so that he could manage Earhart's finances. Earhart was declared legally dead on January 5, 1939.

Only two theories, among many after the disappearance of Earhart and have prevailed as likely.

The first is the Electra ran out of fuel and Earhart and Noonan ditched at sea. Navigator and aeronautical engineer Elgen Long and his wife Marie K. Long devoted 35 years of exhaustive research to the "crash and sink" theory, which is the most widely accepted explanation for the disappearance.

In 1988, The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR) began an investigation of the Earhart/Noonan disappearance and since then has sent ten research expeditions to Gardner Island. They have suggested Earhart

Ae

and Noonan may have flown without further radio transmissions for two and a half hours along the line of position Earhart noted in her last transmission, then found uninhabited Gardner Island, landed the Electra on an extensive reef flat near the wreck of a large freighter on the northwest side of the island, and ultimately perished.

For example, in 1940, Gerald Gallagher, a British officer and pilot, radioed his superiors that he had found a "skeleton ... possibly that of a woman," along with an old-fashioned sextant box, under a tree on the island's southeast corner. He was ordered to send the remains to Fiji, where in 1941, British authorities concluded they were from a male about 5 ft. 5 in. tall. In 1998, however, an analysis of the data by forensic anthropologists concluded that the skeleton had belonged to a tall white female of northern European ancestry. The bones in Fiji were misplaced.

Artifacts discovered by TIGHAR on Garland have included improvised tools, possibly from an Electra.

Earhart was an international celebrity. Her shyly charismatic appeal, independence, persistence, coolness under pressure, courage and goal-oriented career and the circumstances of her disappearance have driven her lasting fame in popular culture.

Georgia O'Keefe

GEORGIA O'KEEFE.

Georgia O'Keeffe was born on November 15, 1887, near Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Her parents, Francis and Ida O'Keeffe, were dairy farmers.

By age ten she had decided to become an artist, and she and her sister received art instruction from local watercolorist Sara Mann. In fall 1902 the O'Keeffes moved from Wisconsin to Peacock Hill in Williamsburg, Virginia. She completed high school as a boarder at Chatham Episcopal Institute in Virginia, and graduated in 1905.

O'Keeffe studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1905 to 1906. In 1907, she attended the Art Students League in New York City, where she studied under William Merritt Chase. In 1908, she won the League's William Merritt Chase still-life prize for her oil painting *Dead Rabbit with Copper Pot*. Her prize was a scholarship to attend the League's outdoor summer school at Lake George, New York.

O'Keeffe abandoned the idea of pursuing a career as an artist in the fall of 1908, claiming that she could never distinguish herself as an artist within the mimetic tradition, which had formed the basis of her art training. She took a job in Chicago as a commercial artist. She was inspired to paint again in 1912, when she attended a class at the University of Virginia Summer School. It was here that Alon Bement introduced her to the innovative ideas of Arthur Wesley Dow.

She attended Teachers College of Columbia University from 1914–15, where she took classes from Dow, who greatly influenced O'Keeffe's thinking about the process of creating art. She served as a teaching assistant to Bement during the summer from 1913–16 and taught at Columbia College, Columbia, South Carolina in the fall of 1915, where she completed a series of highly innovative charcoal abstractions. After further course work at Columbia in the spring of 1916 and summer teaching for Bement, she took a job as head of the art department at West Texas State Normal College from fall 1916 to February 1918 in Canyon, Texas.

Early in 1916, Anita Pollitzer took some of the charcoal drawings O'Keeffe had made in the fall of 1915, to Alfred Stieglitz at his *291* gallery. He told Pollitzer that the drawings were the "purest, finest, sincerest things that had entered *291* in a long while", and that he would like to show them. O'Keefe came to have high regard for Stieglitz and to know him in the spring of 1916, when she was in New York at Teachers College. In April 1916, he exhibited ten of her drawings at *291*. Stieglitz organized O'Keeffe's first solo show at *291* in April 1917, which included oil paintings and watercolors completed in Texas.

Stieglitz and O'Keeffe corresponded frequently beginning in 1916. In June 1918, she accepted Stieglitz's invitation to move to New York to devote all of her time to her work. The two were deeply in love, and shortly after her arrival, they began living together, even though the then-married Stieglitz was 23 years her senior. That year Stieglitz first took O'Keeffe to his family home at the village of

Lake George in New York's Adirondack Mountains, and they spent part of every year there until 1929, when O'Keeffe spent the first of many summers painting in New Mexico.

In 1924 Stieglitz's divorce was finally approved by a judge, and within four months he and O'Keeffe married. It was a small, private ceremony and afterward the couple went back home.

The marriage didn't seem to affect either one. They both continued working on their individual projects as they had before. For the rest of their lives together, their relationship was, as biographer Benita Eisler characterized it,"a collusion ... a system of deals and trade-offs, tacitly agreed to and carried out, for the most part, without the exchange of a word. Preferring avoidance to confrontation on most issues, O'Keeffe was the principal agent of collusion in their union."

Stieglitz started photographing O'Keeffe when she visited him in New York to see her 1917 exhibition. By 1937, when he retired from photography, he had made more than 350 portraits of her. Most of the more erotic photographs were made in the 1910s and early 1920s. In February 1921, forty-five of Stieglitz's photographs, including many of O'Keeffe, some of which depicted her in the nude, were exhibited in a retrospective exhibition at the Anderson Galleries and created a public sensation.

A remark she once made to Pollitzer about the nude photographs may be the best indication of O'Keeffe's attitude towards her being the subject. She said, "I felt somehow that the photographs had nothing to do with me personally." In 1978, she wrote about how distant from them she had become: "When I look over the photographs Stieglitz took of me-some of them more than sixty years ago-I wonder who that person is..."

Beginning in 1918, O'Keeffe came to know the many early American modernists who were part of Stieglitz's circle of artists. Strand's photography, as well as that of Stieglitz and his many photographer friends, inspired O'Keeffe's work.

Soon after 1918, O'Keeffe began working primarily in oil, a shift away from having worked primarily in watercolor in the earlier 1910s. By the mid-1920s, O'Keeffe began making large-scale paintings of natural forms at close range, as if seen through a magnifying lens. In 1924 she painted her first large-scale flower painting *Petunia, No. 2*, which was first exhibited in 1925. She also completed a significant body of paintings of New York buildings, such as *City Night* and *New York—Night*, 1926, and *Radiator Bldg—Night, New York*, 1927.

O'Keeffe turned to working more representationally in the 1920s in an effort to move her critics away from Freudian interpretations. Her earlier work had been mostly abstract, but works such as *Black Iris III* (1926) evoke a veiled representation of female genitalia while also accurately depicting the center of an

iris. O'Keeffe consistently denied the validity of Freudian interpretations of her art, but fifty years after it had first been interpreted in that way, many prominent feminist artists assessed her work similarly—in essential terms—such as Judy Chicago, who gave O'Keeffe a prominent place in her *The Dinner Party*. Although 1970s feminists celebrated O'Keeffe as the originator of "female iconography." O'Keeffe rejected their celebration of her work and refused to cooperate with any of their projects.

In 1922, the *New York Sun* published an article quoting O'Keeffe: "It is only by selection, by elimination, and by emphasis that we get at the real meaning of things."

Beginning in 1923, Stieglitz organized annual exhibitions of O'Keeffe's work. By the mid-1920s, O'Keeffe had become known as one of the most important American artists. Her work commanded high prices. In 1928, Stieglitz masterminded a sale of six of her calla lily paintings for $25,000, which was the largest sum ever paid for a group of paintings by a living American artist. Though the sale fell through, Stieglitz's promotion of the potential sale drew extensive media attention.

By 1929, O'Keeffe acted on her increasing need to find a new source of inspiration for her work and to escape summers at Lake George, where she was surrounded by the Stieglitz family and their friends. O'Keeffe had considered finding a studio separate from Lake George in upstate New York and had also thought about spending the summer in Europe, but opted instead to travel to Santa Fe, with her friend Rebecca Strand. Soon after their arrival, Mabel Dodge Luhan moved them to her house in Taos and provided them with studios. O'Keeffe went on many pack trips exploring the rugged mountains and deserts of the region that summer and later visited the nearby D. H. Lawrence Ranch, where she completed her now famous oil painting, *The Lawrence Tree*.

Between 1929 and 1949, O'Keeffe spent part of nearly every year working in New Mexico. She collected rocks and bones from the desert floor and made them and the distinctive architectural and landscape forms of the area subjects in her work.

Late in 1932, O'Keeffe suffered a nervous breakdown that was brought on, in part, because she was unable to complete a Radio City Music Hall mural project that had fallen behind schedule. She was hospitalized in early 1933 and did not paint again until January 1934. She returned to New Mexico in the summer of 1934. She visited Ghost Ranch, north of Abiquiu, and decided immediately to live there.

Known as a loner, O'Keeffe explored the land she loved often in her Ford Model A, which she purchased and learned to drive in 1929. She often talked about her fondness for Ghost Ranch and Northern New Mexico, as in 1943, when she explained: "Such a beautiful, untouched lonely feeling place, such a fine part of what I call the 'Faraway'. It is a place I have painted before . . . even now I must

do it again."

In the 1930s and 1940s, O'Keeffe's reputation and popularity continued to grow, earning her numerous commissions. Her work was included in exhibitions in and around New York. She completed *Summer Days*, a painting featuring a deer's skull adorned with various wildflowers, against a desert background in 1936, and it became one of her most famous and well-known works. During the 1940s O'Keeffe had two one-woman retrospectives, the first at the Art Institute of Chicago (1943), and the second in 1946 at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in Manhattan, the first retrospective MOMA held for a woman artist. O'Keeffe enjoyed many accolades and honorary degrees from numerous universities.

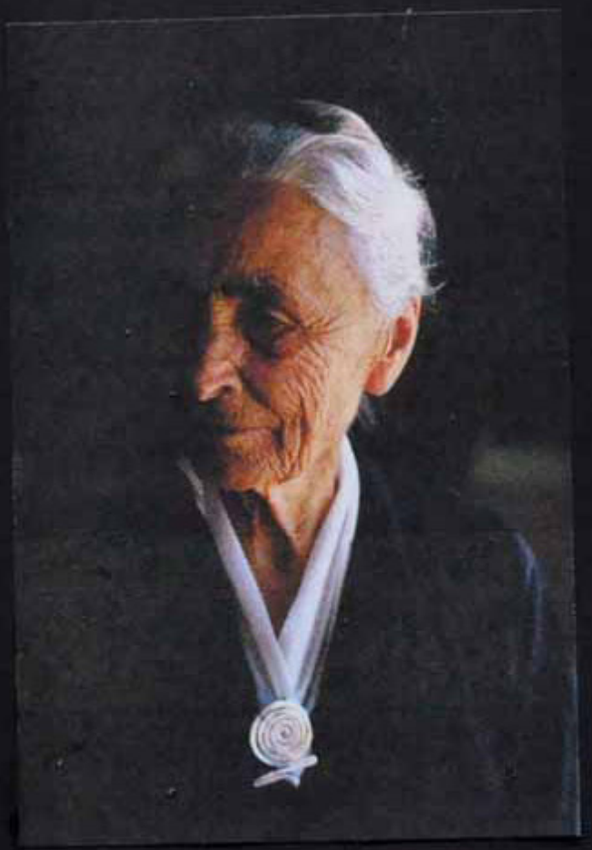
As early as 1936, O'Keeffe developed an intense interest in what is called the "Black Place", which was about 150 miles west of her Ghost Ranch house, and she made an extensive series of paintings of this site in the 1940s and for many years to come. O'Keeffe said that the Black Place resembled "a mile of elephants with gray hills and white sand at their feet." At times the wind was so strong when she was painting there that she had trouble keeping her canvas on the easel. When the heat from the sun became intense, she crawled under her car for shade.

Shortly after O'Keeffe arrived for the summer in New Mexico in 1946, Stieglitz suffered a cerebral thrombosis. She immediately flew to New York to be with him. He died on July 13, 1946. She buried his ashes at Lake George. She move moved permanently to New Mexico in 1949. From 1946 through the 1950s, she made the architectural forms of her Abiquiu house — patio wall and door — subjects in her work. Another distinctive painting of the decade was *Ladder to the Moon*, 1958.

O'Keeffe met photographer Todd Webb in the 1940s, and after his move to New Mexico in 1961, he often made photographs of her. While O'Keeffe was known to have a "prickly personality", Webb's photographs portray her with a kind of "quietness and calm" and revealing new contours of O'Keeffe's character.

In 1962, O'Keeffe was elected to the fifty-member American Academy of Arts and Letters. She was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1966. In the fall of 1970, the Whitney Museum of American Art mounted the *Georgia O'Keeffe Retrospective Exhibition*, the first retrospective exhibition of her work in New York since 1946, the year Stieglitz died. This exhibit did much to revive her public career.

In 1972, O'Keeffe's eyesight was compromised by macular degeneration, leading to the loss of central vision and leaving her with only peripheral vision. She stopped oil painting without assistance in 1972, but continued working in pencil and charcoal until 1984. Juan Hamilton, a young potter, appeared at her ranch house in 1973 looking for work. She hired him for a few odd jobs and soon employed him full-time. He became her closest confidante, companion, and business manager until her death. Hamilton taught O'Keeffe to work with clay, and



working with assistance, she produced clay pots and a series of works in watercolor. On January 10, 1977, President Gerald R. Ford presented O'Keeffe with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor awarded to American citizens. In 1985, she was awarded the National Medal of Arts.

O'Keeffe became increasingly frail in her late 90s. She moved to Santa Fe in 1984, where she died on March 6, 1986, at the age of 98. O'Keeffe has been recognized as the Mother of American Modernism.

WWII Fly Girls and Night Witches

FLY GIRLS AND NIGHT WITCHES

In 1942, the United States was faced with a shortage of pilots. At that time, only men were considered by the military to be fit for flight service.

Women aviators, such as Jackie Cochran were insistent that women should be utilized as pilots in the war effort. She was convinced they could fly military aircraft so male pilots could be released for combat duty. And she wanted to head up the program. Cochran has successfully aided Great Britain in the war effort as a pilot, and eventually political and military leaders listened to her.

A group of female pilots were selected to begin training. A few more than 1100 young women, all volunteers eventually passed the rigorous training and formed what became known as the Women Airforce Service Pilots or WASP.

At the last training WASP training class, commanding general of the U.S. Army Air Forces, Henry "Hap" Arnold, said that when the program started, he wasn't sure "whether a slip of a girl could fight the controls of a B-17 in heavy weather." He went on to add, "Now in 1944, it is on record that women can fly as well as men."

During the program's existence the WASPs' flew almost every type of military aircraft—including B-26 and B-29 bombers. They ferried new planes long distances from factories to military bases and departure points across the country. They tested newly overhauled planes. And they towed targets to give ground and air gunners training shooting—with live ammunition.

At the beginning of the program, the WASP was expected to become part of the military in general. Instead, it was cancelled after two years.

Jackie Cochran, herself an ace aviator, had been picked to head the program. She had expected to train thousands of women to fly for the Army. She believed if the program was a success her goal would be realized. The program was a success. The women's safety records were comparable and sometimes even better than the men's. Also the women's records at doing their jobs were comparable and sometimes even better than the men's.

However, according to historian Landdeck, "It was a very controversial time for women flying aircraft. There was a debate about whether they were needed any longer."

It was generally unacceptable as the war came to an end and male veterans were returning home, that women should be considered for jobs the men would be expecting to obtain. This was true all over the United States in non-military areas. It is not surprising the military would follow suit.

For the women who had so aptly served their country there was little if any consideration provided to them.

The jobs performed by the WASPs for the military were dangerous. Thirty-six female pilots lost their lives serving their country.

Because all of the WASPs were civilian volunteers, none of the women

PRIDE

received any benefit that is normally associated with military service.

If a pilot died, the military did not pay for her remains to be sent home or any death benefits to her family. Most often her fellow pilots pitched in to collect enough money to get her remains shipped home. If possible, a couple of WASPs would accompany her casket and remains back home. And because these women weren't considered military, the American flag could not be draped over her coffin. However, many of the pilot's families would ignore the military and do it anyway.

At the end of the program, the women were just dismissed—told to go home. There were no ceremonies or public expressions of appreciation. They then had to get on planes and head back home.

"Night Witches" is the English translation of *Nachthexen*, a World War II German nickname, for the female military aviators of the 588th Night Bomber Regiment, known later as the 46th "Taman" Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment, of the Soviet Air Forces. The regiment was formed by Colonel Marina Raskova and led by Major Yevdokia Bershanskaya.

The regiment flew harassment bombing and precision bombing missions against the German military from 1942 to the end of the war. At its largest size, it had 40 two-person crews. It flew over 23,000 sorties and is said to have dropped 3,000 tons of bombs. It was the most highly decorated female unit in the Soviet Air Force, each pilot having flown over 800 missions by the end of the war and twenty-three having been awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union title. Thirty of its members died in combat.

The regiment flew in wood and canvas Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes, a 1928 design intended for use as training aircraft and for crop-dusting, and to this day the most-produced biplane in all of aviation history. The planes could carry only six bombs at a time; so multiple missions per night were necessary. Although the aircraft were obsolete and slow, the pilots made daring use of their exceptional maneuverability; they had the advantage of having a maximum speed that was lower than the stall speed of both the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and the Focke-Wulf Fw 190, and as a result, the German pilots found them very difficult to shoot down. An attack technique of the night bombers was to idle the engine near the target and glide to the bomb release point, with only wind noise to reveal their location. German soldiers likened the sound to broomsticks and named the pilots "Night Witches."

Due to the weight of the bombs and the low altitude of flight, the pilots carried no parachutes.

From June 1942, the 588th Night Bomber Regiment was within the 4th Air Army. In February 1943 the regiment was honored with reorganization into the 46th Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment and in October 1943 it became the 46th "Taman" Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment. The word Taman referred to the unit's involvement in two celebrated Soviet victories on the Taman Peninsula, during 1943.

On October 8, 1941, Order number 0099 specified the creation of three women's squadrons—all personnel from technicians to pilots would be entirely composed by women. These were:

- 586 Regiment, Yak-1 fighters
- 587 Regiment, twin engine dive bombers
- 588 Regiment, night bombers

By Marcia Fountain-Blacklidge