



THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM

SUMMER 2024

FOR THE LOVE OF THE NEXT GENERATION



HANGAR ONE

One of the most impressive qualities WASP Shirley Kruse possessed was her ability to treat everyone as if he or she were the most important person in the room. Shirley would graciously give interviews to reporters, chat with historians and then turn around and sit down to be at eye level with a 7-year-old girl who wanted to know about being a pilot. The WASP Museum emulates Shirley's actions which are indicative of all WASP. Its mission is to preserve the history, promote the legacy, and protect the airfield of the WASP but to what end? We do it for the next generation.

In the past five years the Museum has doubled its campus, created all-new exhibits, purchased aircraft, and launched new educational programs. These strategic plans have been executed with students in mind. Today the Museum is elated to announce two new projects that will benefit our youngsters. Because of a generous grant from the Andrews Foundation of Abilene, the Museum will be able to add two annual events for our area schoolchildren. The first is WASP Aviation Day slated for September followed by Night at the Museum in March.

The second project is the completion of fundraising for Phase 3B. Because of the generosity of hundreds of donors across the country, a \$450,000 private donation, and grants from the Prairie Foundation and the Wayne and JoAnn Moore Foundation, the Museum will be able to complete its outdoor exhibit space by late 2025. This phase will include a granite ground map of the U.S. marked with the WASP's duty bases. This outdoor map which fills the plaza will create many opportunities for students to "fly" from base to base calculating routes, fuel, and time in the air as they look across the taxiways of Avenger Field.

Expansion is not for the past but for the future. If WASP history is not to be lost again, it must matter to the youngest generation. Students will need to esteem the stories, inspiration, and values imparted by the WASP and their legacy pilots. Some learners will use new information to go into various fields, but it is the goal of the Museum that many motivated students will enter aviation and carry on the legacy of the WASP.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You may have heard your WASP friends say the wind always blows hard at Avenger Field. They are correct. Never does it blow harder than in March and April. With these blustery gales, along with occasional rain and hail, though, we get green prairies covered in gorgeous yellow wildflowers that somehow survive the harsh elements around them.

Our spring activities have kind of felt like our strong wind. When March came, we were gearing up for three air shows plus our own Homecoming. We experienced a fierce storm of activities as we coordinated airplanes and pilots, educational activities, supplies, and transportation for each airshow. Even stronger were the winds of Homecoming preparation involving speakers, banquets, volunteers, safety crews and performing aircraft. When May came, we felt a little wind burned, hair in tangled up mess, panting for energy. Amid it all, however, was a peaceful satisfaction bringing the same kind of beauty and pleasure as those yellow wildflowers bring to the prairie. The work is worth it, and we will do it all again for Oshkosh and our fall airshow season.



Fabulous Facts

- In addition to our own Homecoming, the Museum took airplanes and crew to Wings over Cowtown in Fort Worth, The Great Texas Air Show at Randolph Air Force Base San Antonio, and Big Country Air Fest at Abilene Regional Airport.
- At each air show, we served an average of 500 families and students over the course of two days by entertaining them with the story of the WASP, giving them aircraft tours, and facilitating educational activities such as riveting and navigation.
- The Museum debuted its new WASP storyboards told in comic book style that entertain and educate both parents and children.



CALLING AIR SHOW VOLUNTEERS

If you live in the following cities and can volunteer at your local airshow, please contact Lisa Taylor at lisataylor@waspmuseum.org.

**EAA AIRVENTURE
OSHKOSH
JULY 22 - 28**
WITTMAN REGIONAL
AIRPORT; PIONEER AIRPORT;
VETTE/BLUST SEAPLANE BASE



2024 AIRSHOW SEASON

MIDLAND AIRSHOW
SEPTEMBER 7 - 8, MIDLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

CORSICANA AIR SHOW
OCTOBER 12, CORSICANA MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

WARBIRDS OVER SOUTH TEXAS
NOVEMBER 15 - 17, ARANSAS COUNTY AIRPORT

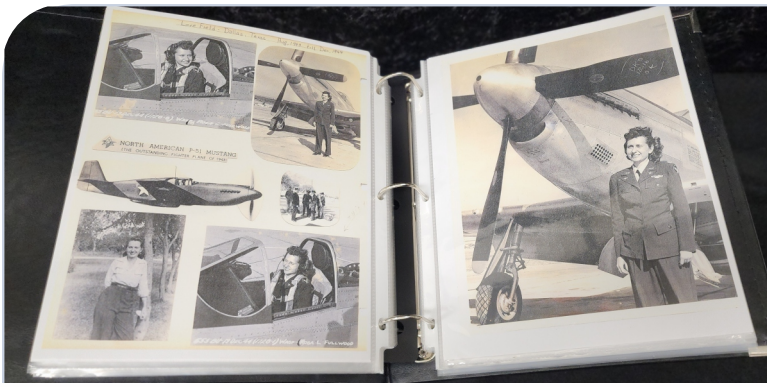
The Official National WASP World II Museum is flying to Oshkosh in a UC-78 Bobcat. Visit the Bobcat, one of only five airworthy models, in Warbird Alley July 22nd through the 27th. You can find our team with the Bobcat or in the Woman Venture tent talking about the WASP and selling swag in support of our mission. We also invite you to our presentations:

• **MONDAY, JULY 22ND 11:30 AM, WOMEN VENTURE TENT, *WASP in Their Own Words***

Enjoy hearing stories and learning about WASP experiences straight from the mouths of these trailblazing pilots. This unique presentation style incorporates video clips of six different WASP interviews with the live stories of four second generation legacy pilots. Follow along with Peggy Phillips, Lucy Young, Trish Beckman and Kathy Cosand as they introduce video clips and expand WASP stories with tales of their own.

• **TUESDAY, JULY 23RD 8:30 AM, SKYSCAPE THEATER, *Girls of Sweetwater***

See the new WASP short film by acclaimed filmmaker Jon Anderson. This story contains never before seen interviews with several WASP. With heartwarming and funny anecdotes, you'll learn something new.



THE ROSA LEA FULLWOOD MEEK COLLECTION

This remarkable photo album showcases the journey of Rosa Lea Fullwood Meek, 43-W-4, during her time at Avenger Field, capturing moments from her training and her experiences at her assigned duty bases. This captivating album is now part of our current exhibit, WASP in the Spotlight, giving visitors a unique insight into the life of WASP pilots. Stop by and see Rosa's album in her WASP in the Spotlight exhibit. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Andrea McGilvray for generously donating Rosa Lea's collection to the National WASP WWII Museum.

CELEBRATING THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE PATRIOTIC MERCHANDISE

Discover Summer Essentials at our Store!

This July, shop our red, white, and blue merchandise. From cool tumblers and comfy WASP-themed shirts for outdoor fun, to books and puzzles for indoor relaxation, we've got you covered.

Visit our store or browse online to shop from anywhere! Don't forget to check our website monthly for featured items and special sales. Make this summer memorable with our curated collection of essentials!

VISIT WASPMUSEUM.ORG TO PURCHASE MERCHANDISE



SONGS OF THE NINETY-NINES NEW BLOG POST FROM JULIA LAURIA-BLUM

"In the air, everywhere, it's the song of the Ninety-Nines. Wings in Flight, Day and Night with the Song of the Ninety-Nines, On the line, fliers fine, ships and spirit tuned in rhyme. Keep that formation over the nation with the song of the Ninety-Nines."

VISIT WASPMUSEUM.ORG TO READ THIS ARTICLE



HONORING A LEGEND THERESA CLAIBORNE

WASP Board of Director Theresa Claiborne retired from United Airlines on May 23rd to the high acclaim of CNN, ABC and countless organizations. 2,225 pilots will retire this year so why does Theresa get such an honorable mention? Well, because she is no ordinary pilot.

Theresa is the first Black woman pilot in the history of the United States Air Force, commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1981. She later became the first Black woman to serve as a command pilot and instructor for the Boeing KC-135 Stratotanker during her seven years on active duty in the Military and 13 years in the Reserves.

Yet, Theresa is so much more than a first. As fellow WASP Board member Heidi Pallister says, "She paved her own path in aviation and brings light to others who did the same."

Theresa is a darn good pilot but she's an even better friend, mentor, and community member. There are so many things I could say about her but at the end of the day Theresa paints her own picture best. Enjoy her Instagram Post from May 23 and keep some Kleenex handy.

For one last time... This is your Captain speaking...

As we descended into EWR on my final approach, memories of my entire 34-year career floated across the clouds like butterflies. I saw the smiles of millions of happy passengers, thousands of loving reunions, hundreds of safe landings, and the face of my favorite passenger I've ever flown with—the one who sacrificed so much for me to get to this moment—my Momma.

A close friend and retired pilot advised me to soak it all in and take things slow. Calm as Captains do, my heart began to swell as I saw the water cannon salute and held back what felt like water cannons behind my eyes. Then the wheels kissed the ground—a perfect landing.

Now everyone's asking me, "What's next?" And I tell them, "This is only just the beginning of what I believe is the best chapter of my life."

I plan to spend my days inspiring young people to follow their dreams by turning them into goals, shattering glass ceilings, and defying all odds. I'll be calling in my friends from all around the world to share their experiences to empower the next generation of trailblazers who are destined for greatness.

If they can see it, they can be it.

Today, I may be retired from flying airplanes at United Airlines, but in the words of one of the G.O.A.T.s (Greatest of All Time), Kobe Bryant, "Job's not finished."

It's been a pleasure to be your Captain and an absolute honor to fly the friendly skies.

Congratulations Theresa on your retirement!



WELCOMING NEW FACES THE WASP MUSEUM INTRODUCES NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Allison Marlett

The Museum is excited to announce the newest additions to the WASP team. We're excited for you to get to know these new faces!

Allison Marlett, Retail Manager

My name is Allison Marlett, and I am the new Retail Manager at the National WASP WWII Museum in Sweetwater, Texas. I was born and raised here, and I've cherished watching this museum evolve as I grew up. After graduating from Sweetwater High School, I proudly joined the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 2023 at Texas A&M University. I worked hard and was fortunate to graduate a year early in 2022 (whoop!). This led me to spend two years in Orlando, Florida. During that time, I worked at Walt Disney World as a Slide Operator and Merchandise Host, eventually earning a promotion to Merchandise Coordinator. It was an invaluable experience, and I am thrilled to bring some of that magic back home to Texas and the WASP Museum!

Connor Aycock, Archivist



Connor Aycock

My name is Connor Aycock, I was born and raised in the small town of Sedgwick, Kansas. While many kids saved all for studying for school and homework, I often studied history on my own, for no other reason than to grow my knowledge. In truth, it would be fair to say that history is a part of my family. My maternal grandfather was a veteran of World War II, and my paternal grandfather was a Korean War veteran. I never knew my maternal grandfather, as he died long before I was born, but I spent a lot of time with my paternal grandfather, and I was always fascinated by the stories he would tell. Through my education, history was always my best subject, but I would be lying if I was always certain it would be my lifelong career. In truth, the event that solidified my career path did not come until college. Throughout high school and college, I had always floated the idea of working at a museum due to my love of history, but a specific position to strive for was still an enigma. That changed when I took a summer internship at the Museum of World Treasures in downtown Wichita, working in the archives, cataloging artifacts, and occasionally moving exhibits in and out of storage. Once I obtained my bachelor's degree in history from Fort Hays State University, I began a long and arduous search for a job, eventually finding my way to the National WASP Museum. As an archivist, my favorite part of the job is undoubtedly working with the various artifacts in the museum's collection. Being a historian is a great responsibility, and it is one that I will bear for the sake of generations to come.

Welcome, Allison & Connor!



NATIONAL
WASP WWII
MUSEUM

UPCOMING EVENTS

7/22 | EAA AirVenture Airshow | Oshkosh, WI

9/7 - 9/8 | Midland Airshow | Midland, TX

10/12 | Corsicana Air Show | Corsicana, TX

11/15 - 11/17 | Warbirds Over South Texas | Rockport, TX

12/7 | Jolly Jamboree featuring Santa

4/25 - 4/26 | Save the date for the
2025 WASP Homecoming Celebration & Fly-In



SCAN ME

WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA TO ACCESS MORE
INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS OR VISIT
OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.WASPMUSEUM.ORG



2024 WASP HOMECOMING SUCCESSFUL CELEBRATION ON AVENGER FIELD

Thank you to all our outstanding attendees, speakers, sponsors, volunteers, photographers, and organizers for making the WASP Homecoming Celebration and Airshow a phenomenal event. Through insightful panels and engaging speakers, we shared knowledge, inspiration, and unforgettable moments together. Your passion, expertise, and enthusiasm truly made this weekend an unforgettable experience. We hope you enjoy the following pictorial memories. If you were unable to attend (or maybe just not feeling it) we hope you find inspiration (and good old fashioned jealousy) and join us next year when we celebrate the WASP Museum's 20th anniversary. If you missed our Homecoming recap in May's digital newsletter, please check it out here:

WWW.WASPMUSEUM.ORG/HOMECOMING

Astronaut Susan Kilrain and crowd




JOURNEY ABOVE THE STARS

Brought to you from the official National WASP WWII Museum

WASP HOMECOMING & AIRSHOW

April 26-27, 2024



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

If you are passionate about the history of the National WASP WWII Museum and want to stay up-to-date with all the latest news and events, then we have got you covered. Our official *Avenger News* exclusive newsletter is the perfect way to keep yourself informed. By subscribing, you will receive marketing emails that will provide you with all the latest information, including exclusive content, extended digital bi-annual newsletters, featured artifacts, upcoming events, and much more.

As our online audience is important to us, we have launched this newsletter tailored specifically to your interests. At the beginning of each month, you will receive fresh and exciting articles and stories from our featured blog written by historians, authors, legacy pilots, WASP family members, and more. We will also share important updates, and also include information on living WASP birthdays, WASP family visits to the museum, and any other museum-related news.



To subscribe, simply visit www.waspmuseum.org or scan the QR code for quick access to our website.





WASP Panel featuring Kin of WASP Tom Lucas, Melissa Reed, Marcy Crawford, and moderator Olga Custodio



Crowd at the WASP Celebration Brunch



Eileen Bjorkman, Susan Kilrain, and Erin Miller signing books



Astronaut Susan Kilrain, Keynote Speaker



Kids enjoying the Cadet Zone



WASP Family Annual Wishing Well Photo



The Bomber Baronesses with Fifinella



Crowd at The Rendezvous dinner

MORE PHOTOS ARE AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON OUR ONLINE GALLERY

VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITE TO VIEW EVENT PHOTOS AND FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHERS

WWW.WASPMUSEUM.ORG/HOMECOMING

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM



These recipes, stories, and photographs of the WASP and their families were compiled to honor their legacy and service to our country. Thank you to all the WASP families and friends for contributing to this special keepsake.

PRESERVING THE HISTORY PROMOTING THE LEGACY
PROTECTING THE AIRFIELD

Women Airforce Service Pilots **WASP** Recipe & Story Book



THE NATIONAL
WASP WWII
MUSEUM
Avenger Field - Sweetwater, Texas | www.waspmuseum.org



THE WASP RECIPE & STORY BOOK

We have some exciting news for you about the WASP Recipe & Story Book... we're getting closer to launch! Coming April 2025.

As we navigate nailing down the technical details and design of this exclusive book, we invite you to consider submitting content one last time. The following WASP and Avenger Field staff will be represented in the book. If any of the families of the WASP listed (or any not listed) would like to send in any additional content, please do! All submissions for the book will be due by **Saturday, August 31, 2024**. Send content via email to Jordan at jordan@waspmuseum.org.

Once we have a finalized design and chosen printer for production, we will have more information to give on pre-order opportunities prior to the WASP Homecoming Celebration where this book will be available in the National WASP WWII Museum gift shop.

AVENGER FIELD STAFF

- PASTRY CHEF LENA SPENCER
- MECHANIC JESSIE LOU MONROE MCREYNOLDS
- INSTRUCTOR JD ALEXANDER
- INSTRUCTOR RIGDON EDWARDS
- INSTRUCTOR WILLIAM DICKENSHEETS

WASP

- ADELINE WOLAK ELLISON
- ANABEL L. (EARP) RUSO
- AUDREY TARDY BRADY
- BERNICE "BEE" FALK HAYDU
- BERYL OWENS PASCHICH
- BETTY JO STREFF REED
- CARYL JONES STORTZ
- CATHERINE "CAPPY" VAIL BRIDGE
- DOLORES MEURER (REED)
- DORA DOUGHERTY STROTHERS
- DORI MARLAN
- DOROTHY FULTON
- DOROTHY "HOT DOT" ANN SMITH LUCAS
- DOROTHY L. BANCROFT (HAMMETT)
- EDITH M. CRAGIN-DALEY
- EDNA HINES PEDLAR BISHOP
- EILEEN WRIGHT FERGUSON
- ELAINE DANFORTH HARMON
- ELIZABETH "BETTY" WALL STROHFUS
- EMMA COULTER WARE

- ESTHER MAY MIGHT
- EULA ELIZABETH "BETTY" MORTON BROWN
- FAITH "BUCKY" BUCHNER RICHARDS
- FLORA BELLE (SMITH) REECE
- FLORENCE J. NIEMIEC MARSTON
- FLORENE MILLER WATSON
- FRANCES R. SARGENT
- GERALDINE "JERRY" HARDMAN JORDAN
- GERTRUDE "TOMMY" TOMPKINS
- GWENDOLYN C. SCALES
- HAZEL PIERCE BROOKS MCKAUGHAN
- INA BARKLEY PETSCH
- IRENE M. RAVEN ROBERTSON
- JEAN "JEEP" HARMAN
- JEAN F. HIXSON
- JEAN T. MOREO MCCREERY
- JOCELYN MOORE EVERNHAM
- JOY WADDINGTON
- KATHERINE JOY MERRITT-MOORE
- KATHRYN "KAY" STARK GUNDERSON
- LENI LEOTI "DEDIE" DEATON
- LESLEY S. WILLIAMS
- LETA JANE BROWNFIELD
- LILLIAN GLEZEN WRAY
- LOUISE GRACE PECK BAUGHMAN
- LUCILE DOLL WISE
- MADelyn M. TAYLOR EGGLESTON
- MARCIA BELLASSAI COURTNEY

- MARGARET "PEGGY" HELBURN KOCHER
- MARGARET E. NEYMAN MARTIN
- MARGERLY MOORE HOLBEN
- MARIAN G. MANN
- MARIE BARRETT MARSH
- MARIE MOUNTAIN CLARK
- MARION FOSTER STEGEMAN
- MARY ANNA MARTIN "MARTY" WYALL
- MARY EDITH ENGLE
- MARY LOUISE "BETTY" CAVETT DEBEHNKE
- MARY LOUISE PRINE
- MARY RUTH RANCE
- MARYLYN MYERS
- MILDRED JANE BAESSLER DOYLE
- MURIEL LINDSTROM SEGALL
- NADINE RAMSEY
- NELL STEVENSON BRIGHT
- PATRICIA HANLEY SHIELDS NEWLON
- RITA EDNA MURPHY
- ROSA LEA DICKERSON
- RUTH REYNOLDS FRANKCLING
- RUTH THOMPSON UNDERWOOD FLOREY
- SARA (PAYNE) HAYDEN
- SHIRLEY J. CHASE KRUSE
- SOLANGE D'HOOGHE
- STARLEY MAE GRONA
- SUSIE WINSTON BAIN
- SUZANNE LEONNE HIGGINS

Frances Rohrer Sargent
43-W-4

"My kids had a superstar for a Grandmother."

EVOLUTION OF A BORN LEGEND
July 24, 1897 - Amelia Earhart | July 24, 1919 Frances Sargent

As I was growing up, my Mom was a kindergarten teacher. Typical 50's Mom. She had a huge house when she was not working. She would occasionally get a "round robin letter" from "friends long ago." The letters always made her smile and she enjoyed them so much! As I got a bit older, she became a secretary at the local junior college.

After I left college and was not on my own, she went back to school. She obtained a Masters degree and took up flying.

I never knew about the WASP program. Nor was I told that some of her friends, that I did know, were former WASP. They were all a very humble bunch.

As my kids were growing up, Grandma Fran was in the local paper numerous times known as the "FLYING GRANDMA". I had moved to another state and I would still get many calls. "Your Mom is in the paper"... AGAIN!

She became a college professor in aviation and a mentor to many young pilots during the 80's in Miami, Florida. All of her friends were now flying. She was an FAA examiner. She

became a legend in flying by winning the "Wright Brothers Memorial Award" from the Greater Miami Aviation Association. She even bought her own plane.

Her sense of adventure took her snow skiing (with my kids), while water rafting (with a group of college kids), and on cross country flying trips. During the summer, she spent traveling the world. Including trips with my kids and my granddaughters, to far away lands.

She took the entire family to Washington D.C. for the 60th anniversary of WASP. We met some of the awesome women who were part of the "round robin" letters. What an exciting trip it was.

I finally got to go on a trip with her when I was 50. And yes, it was wonderful!

She always would remind us that she and Amelia Earhart were born on the same day, July 24, in different years.

Her memorial service was in an airplane hangar. Some parents of her former students spoke to me about how she was a role model and mentor to their kids. Her former students, fellow aviators, state legislators, and long time friends told wonderful stories of her life. Her legacy continues.

Today, she is lovingly still referred to as Grandma Fran and is always referred to with the word AWESOME!!

Frances never missed dessert. When we would go out to eat she always decided what she wanted for dessert first before her meal. "Ask for the dessert menu first!"

Submitted by Donna Timmons, daughter of WASP Frances Rohrer Sargent 43-W-4



Frances's Pineapple Upside Down Cake

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup butter	8 slices of pineapple	3 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup dark brown sugar	8 red cherries	1/2 cup sugar
2 Tablespoons pineapple juice	1 1/2 cups flour	2 eggs
		1 teaspoon vanilla
		1/4 teaspoon almond extract
		1/2 cup milk
		3 Tablespoons fat, melted

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Place butter, brown sugar, and juice in cast iron frying pan. Heat slowly and stir until blended.
3. Place slices of pineapple on top of the mixture at the bottom of the pan and place cherries in the center of each piece of pineapple.
4. Mix the rest of the ingredients in a mixing bowl and beat for 2 minutes.
5. Pour mixture into the cast iron pan on top of the pineapple & cherries.
6. Bake for 35 minutes in a moderate oven.
7. Let it stand for 5 minutes and then carefully turn out onto a plate.

APRIL 26, 2024 - APRIL 25, 2025

A WASP IN THE SPOTLIGHT

EXHIBIT FEATURING



ROSA LEA
FULLWOOD
MEAK
43-W-4



SOLANGE
D'HOOGHE
43-W-5



DORI
MARLAND
MARTIN
43-W-8



MARYLYN
MYERS
PEYTON
44-W-5



BETTY JO
STREFF
REED
44-W-7



SUZETTE
VANDAELL
DOUGLAS
44-W-10

On Friday, April 26, 2024, at the Homecoming Celebration & Air Show, the WASP Museum unveiled its new collection of special WASP in the Spotlight exhibits for the 2024-25 year. Each story is unique and includes videos, artifacts, photos, and memorabilia. This year's featured item is a video recording of class 44-10 graduation with Jacqueline Cochran's and Gen Hap Arnold's speeches. Much like a patchwork quilt, the individual stories of the WASP, pieced together, create the beautiful larger narrative of the WASP program. This quilt represents the most complete account of these mighty pilots and their WASP program.

During Friday's brunch, the WASP Family panel featured three WASP IN The Spotlight families, each with a personal connection to their mother's spirits, adventures, and accomplishments. They represented WASP Betty Jo Streff Reed 44-7, Jean Downey Harman 44-9, and Dorothy Smith Lucas 44-7, bringing their stories to life.

To read their stories, visit the website page listed below and please come to the Museum to see their exhibits before April 2025.

www.waspmuseum.org/wasp-in-the-spotlight



DONATE ARTIFACTS WITH CONFIDENCE

Many of you have inquired about your WASP becoming a Spotlight honoree. Please know while our aim is to spotlight all the WASP either physically and/or digitally, the archive needs information to tell their stories.

An archive is the lifeblood of any museum. It provides primary sources of information through newspapers clippings, official documents, photographs, and textiles that are needed to tell historically accurate, fascinating, and engaging stories. Families can donate artifacts to the Museum with confidence. The National WASP WWII Museum Archive, the only organization solely dedicated to the WASP, adheres to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Archival Storage Standards in our vault's construction and in the archival materials used for preservation.

Please contact Ann Haub at ann@waspmuseum.org to donate artifacts, request research assistance, or to tour the archive.



To find out more about upcoming events, please visit www.waspmuseum.org/events.

WASP IN THE CLASSROOM

Kate Baumann, a sophomore at Houston, Minnesota, high school, recently volunteered to don a leather flight jacket adorned with WASP insignia and patches, along with flight coveralls and leather flying helmet and goggles, as part of Frederick Beseler's WASP presentations to two of Mr. Diekman's history classes and Mrs. Mathers' civics class. A private pilot since 1978, Beseler is retired after 40 years as a writer/editor in the commercial air conditioning industry. He is now a frequent substitute teacher in Southeast Minnesota.

As part of his WASP Powerpoint presentation, Beseler recruits a volunteer to dress in a facsimile WASP uniform. He has given talks about the WASP to various school classes, libraries, historical societies, and museums, including the Richard I. Bong World War 2 Museum in Superior, Wisconsin. Last summer he spoke to nearly 100 women at the Woman's Club of Minneapolis.

Beseler enjoys sharing the WASP history. "Students really enjoy hearing the story of the WASP -- especially when one of their classmates puts on the flying gear." As a thank you, Beseler gives student volunteer a WASP Fifi pin and WASP pen from the WASP museum.

He is looking for a vintage seat pack parachute and harness to complete the uniform. His presentation covers the WASP origins, training, duties and legacy that includes the award of the Congressional Gold Medal.

Beseler grew up in Trempealeau, Wisconsin, hometown of WASP Ailsa Robinson Connally Simonsen, Class 44-W-10. "I never met Ailsa, but my parents said that in later years when she would come home to visit her parents, she'd tear around town in a little green Porsche sports car."

Frederick is a graduate of Winona State University – the Alma Mater of WASP Ethel Meyer Finley. Several years ago he wrote a feature article about Ethel Meyer for the Winona Atate alumni magazine. And until retiring to Houston, Minnesota, Beseler lived in La Crosse, Wisconsin -- hometown of WASP Marybelle Ahlstrom Smith.

"Folks ask me why I enjoy telling the WASP story. Well, it was my late mother who gave me the love of flying from an early age. Later, I was privileged to take her flying in a Piper Super Cub -- a flight she thoroughly enjoyed. And, my flight instructor was a woman.

"It was the women in my life who gave me the gift of flight. Telling the WASP story is one way I can give back!"



A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO CAPTURED THE HOMECOMING WEEKEND

We are so thankful for our volunteer photographers that contribute their time to capture the events and activities that take place at the National WASP WWII Museum. The following individuals have sent in photos to be featured for our online galleries, social media, and to be used for upcoming marketing purposes from the 2024 WASP Homecoming Celebration & Airshow. We appreciate you preserving the memories of these WASP celebrations for years to come! You may find our featured Homecoming photos linked on our website at www.waspmuseum.org/gallery.



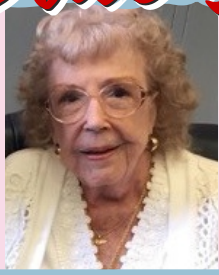
JORDAN BENTLE
SIERRA BERRY
KEVIN BROWN
JOHN CURRY
JULIE HAGGARD

MICHAEL HARBOUR
JUSTIN HESTERLY
JAN JOHNSON
KEVIN LUKE
GLEN MCGRAW
ERIN MILLER

RACHEL PATILLO
MARIA PERKINS
TOM RENEAU
JUSTIN SUAN
ALYSSA VANMETER

If you are interested in sharing any photos from your visit or if you'd like to volunteer to be a photographer for any future events for the National WASP WWII Museum, please email us at media@waspmuseum.org so that we can connect with you.

Blue Skies and Tailwinds



ALYCE STEVENS ROHRER
44-W-4

September 7, 1922 - February 1, 2024

WASP Alyce Stevens Rohrer, a fearless pioneer in aviation during World War II, touched down peacefully on February 1st, 2024, at the age of 101. Known for her significant achievements in the air as well as on the page, she lived a life of courage, dedication, and quiet strength, inspiring generations of women to challenge boundaries and reach for the sky. Hers was a life that soared beyond imaginable heights, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of generations and the fabric of history.

“I knew I wanted more,” Alyce said in an interview for Ms. Magazine. “I wanted freedom. As a little girl I would walk the fields and watch a plane fly over. The first time I saw one I lit up. I knew I would be a pilot one day, and no one could stop me.”

Alyce Stevens met her husband James Rohrer on the airfield. He was a flight instructor who worked alongside her at Avenger Field. They were married after the war and started a family in Pasadena, California. Alyce was often seen at speaking events, book readings, and ceremonies around the nation accompanied by her daughter, Carol Ann Benson. Her son, Glenn Rohrer of Priest River, Idaho, had the privilege of taking his mother on her last private flight, in his own C-182 aircraft, a fitting farewell on the way home from a Idaho Bird Museum’s celebration of WASPs event in 2010.

She taught herself how to play the organ and piano. The art that comforted her most, however, was her passion to write. Her first published book, *The True Believers*, outlined the life and days in the Mormon church. It won her national acclaim. She continued to write over five more books, eventually working up the courage to write about her time as a WASP.

Though grief mutes our voices, a song of celebration rises for a life that soared against the wind. Alyce Rohrer, whose final landing came peacefully, leaves behind a story that takes flight anew, inspiring generations to chase their dreams, defy expectations, and pen their own remarkable chapters in the grand narrative of life.

Her spirit, like her legacy, will forever remain airborne in the hearts and accomplishments of all women who fly, and all of us who dare to dream just a little more than what we are told is possible.

Source: <https://obituaries.forestlawn.com/obituaries/alyce-rohrer>

June 22, 1922 - February 2, 2024

WASP Shirley June Chase Kruse was born June 22, 1922, to William John Chase and Helen Webber Chase. Shirley lived her young life in New York and New Jersey with her siblings Helen, Margaret, William (Bill), and Gertrude (Gert), along with many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends nearby.

She is pre-deceased by her first husband Chester Egler and her second husband Lawrence Kruse.

Family summers the siblings escaped the heat of New York to experience country life with their grandmothers and great aunts in Laconia and Wentworth, New Hampshire, and Rosendale, New York.

A favorite family recollection is that while living in New York City in the late 1920’s early 1930s, Shirley, Gert and Bill formed a vaudeville group that performed in local theaters and also on the Hudson River Dayliner, with a full orchestra. They always won the big talent prize, which was an important contributor to the family income during lean years. Shirley and Gert continued their singing together into their elder years.

Shirley was a pilot with the WASP, US Air Force, from 1944-1946. It was her life’s passion to educate others about the efforts of these valiant, ground-breaking women. She was a spokesman and frequent interviewee for anything WASP. Her legacy leaves many gifts to the WASP Museum in Sweetwater, Texas and the Missiles and More Museum in Topsail Beach, NC.

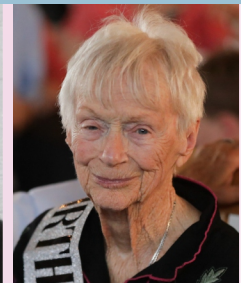
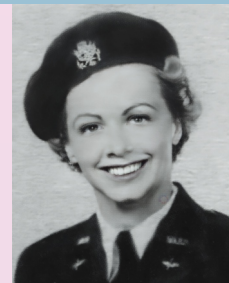
Shirley was strong-willed at times, but she also had an enormous heart and a wonderful sense of adventure. She was generous, loyal, and brave. She loved her family above all else (reprimanding them when necessary!). She was an open-minded world traveler, always preferring the best hotels and the best hotel bar in town and enjoying 12-year scotch. She traveled the world many times over, including family members and making memories with them.

Her wish upon death was for her “clan” to raise a glass and declare, “No tears here, Shirley was a woman who lived her life. She was a good old broad!”. She will be remembered for all the heart she shared with her friends and family.

Shirley is survived by her family who will miss her forever- daughters, Barbara Paul-Holmes of Pompano Beach, Florida, and Katherine Arnett-Maheu and Wendy Van Kleeck, both of Wilmington, North Carolina, 10 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

“Fly High Shirley”

Source: <https://portcitydaily.com/obits/2024/02/12/shirley-june-kruse-101/>



SHIRLEY J. CHASE KRUSE
44-W-6

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