

A
HANDBOOK
FOR
WOMEN STUDENT PILOT TRAINEES

Headquarters
Army Air Forces
Director of Women Pilots

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A NEW PROGRAM

You are about to become affiliated with one of the most interesting and exacting programs ever devised for women in the United States. You will, upon the completion of your course of training, play an unprecedented part in the war effort of the United States. Never before have women in this country been assigned such a mission as will be yours and those of your colleagues already flying for Uncle Sam.

Your job will be to ferry airplanes for the Army Air Forces. In so doing, you will be making it possible to release many pilots for combat duty and other vital and necessary assignments.

Yours will be an important and responsible task. You will be entrusted with Government equipment, costing many thousands of man hours and irreplaceable war material.....Guard it carefully! From this equipment you will obtain invaluable training – training so thorough, so precise, and so complete, that it could not be duplicated elsewhere. You will be trained to be of the utmost value to your nation in time of war.

BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

You are entering upon a phase of your life which will be so changed and so different from that to which you have been accustomed, that it will seem to be a new existence altogether. You will live under different conditions, meet new friends (all with the same objective), and you will be subjected to very stringent rules and regulations throughout your training period.

In these few paragraphs, it is hoped to give you some idea as to what will be expected of you, what you may expect in return, and possible to answer some of the questions which are already going through your mind.

Please don't think that reading these notes will solve all of your problems.....It won't! However, we do hope that you'll be aided in approaching the days ahead with the proper perspective and in a wholesome frame of mind.

A word about the origin of the Women's Flying Training program:

Sometime in the early part of 1942, there was some discussion about the part that several thousand women who held pilot licenses in America might play in the war effort. It remained for Miss Jacqueline Cochran, numbered among the world's most famous women flyers, to bring the program out of the discussion stage into the actual. With the

cooperation of high-ranking Army Air Forces officials, the program was set up. The Flying Training Command of the Army Air Forces, with Miss Cochran as Director of the new Women's Flying Training program, was assigned the task of expediting this significant war effort.

The first school was originally set up and operated at the Municipal Airport, Houston, Texas, on November 16th, 1942. It continued there until June, 1943, at which time it was transferred and combined with a second school, which had been opened at Sweetwater, Texas, on March 21st, 1943. Hundreds of women are now enrolled in the courses.

YOU ARE ONE OF THESE WOMEN!

ABOUT TRAINING

You are most fortunate. Your training will be the very best which can be obtained anywhere in the world. Your friends will envy you, while at the same time paying tribute to the high motive and patriotic spirit which motivated the giving up of your previous way of life and undertaking this rigorous course of training.

Make no mistake about it – you will indeed undergo a rigorous course of training. You will learn that in the Army Air Forces, Precision means Precision. You will learn the correct way to handle and fly an airplane. You **MUST** fly it that way. You will learn there is no room in this program for those who “can't take it”, or for the chronic griper and complainer.

You will be subjected to what many call “regimentation” and to numerous rules and regulations – all of them designed for your own welfare and safety. Some you won't like at first; some you will; but obey them, because you will realize that only in this cooperative and organized manner can the war be fought and won. There must be team play and team spirit. There must be willing and cheerful obedience. You will learn to develop within yourselves a kind of strict, personal discipline that will amaze you and benefit you through all of your life.

You will do all these things because you will soon find out that they add up to self-control, good judgment, and the utmost faith in yourself – essential qualities for good flying. You will be proud of your ability to receive and respond to military orders. You will be proud of your ability to “take it” to stand solidly on both feet – your own.

YOU ARE READY

When you have comprehended all this, you will be ready to fly airplanes for Uncle Sam, to make your maximum contribution to the war effort. Incidentally, you will

have added another page to the brilliant accomplishment of women in the United States. What you and your colleagues are doing and will do, will be recorded in the history of this nation. You will be a part of that history.

You come from all parts of the country. You have been carefully selected and pronounced fit to fly. Your previous background is of no concern to your instructors, Army Supervisors, or your fellow trainees. All that counts here is your own ability. You will soon find this out. The enemy does not ask our fighting men how much money they had, what their previous station in life was, or whom they knew. Neither does the Army Air Forces ask these questions from those whom it calls to help win the war.

By the time you reach graduation some months hence, your Government will have made you a real asset. A great opportunity to serve your Nation in time of trouble is yours. It becomes, therefore, an almost sacred duty to extend yourself to the utmost and to obtain the maximum out of your course here.

SOME WON'T!

Unfortunately, not all of you will complete your training period. In an intensive course of this nature, which involves hazards to yourself, to other students, and to Government property and equipment, it is only natural that some will be found unsuited to handle the heavier ships which you must fly. Please do not forget that this does not mean that you are not a good flyer.

It is no disgrace to be eliminated from this course...and you must not let that fear be a bogey to you. Rather, let it be the challenge which encourages you to greater efforts in achieving your goal and exercising that self-discipline and self-control mentioned a few paragraphs back.

There is no "quota" of eliminees. Everyone connected with this program sincerely wished that everyone of you will "make the grade".

We don't want to harp upon eliminations too much or too long, but a few more words might not be amiss at this point. The Army Air Forces tries to maintain a standard that is second to none in the world. In doing so, it must be selective. We repeat, it is no reflection to be eliminated from this program. Some of our finest intellectual and physical specimens haven't "got it" when it comes to flying ability necessary for the job ahead.

At Randolph Field, they used to put it this way:

"No matter how much we may be able to minimize the dangers of flying, the Grim Reaper is still a constant check pilot. If those minds which operate the best flying schools in the world think you cannot pass all your checks with that

chap who wields the Scythe, then it's time to turn your equipment so far as being an Army pilot is concerned."

That's about the best way we know to express it.

IF YOU SHOULD BE ELIMINATED

If you should be eliminated, take it like a good soldier. Don't seek excuses everywhere except in your own ability or lack of it. The system used by the Army Air Forces may not be perfect, but it is the best yet known. No one is more anxious to see you succeed than the very persons some students seek to blame. Accept the verdict, and let your superior talents in other fields be put to immediate use in some other phase of the war effort. We've got to get on with the job, and there isn't much time for the chronic "griper" under the present circumstances.

YOUR STATUS

About your status. You are a member of a Flying Training school. You will work, fly, and learn according to Air Force rules and regulations. Part of the test of your ability to pilot ships for the Air force is your ability to comply with the rules and regulations set up for you. Here, too, you are largely your own master and will be "made" or "broken" according to your own ability to properly understand what is required of you and to conform.

No large groups can be trained with any degree of efficiency unless those who are part of the program come into it with the desire to get along. If you feel that you cannot abide by the rules, you can save you Government time and money.....and yourself considerable embarrassment.....by saying so at this point. It's up to you!

HONOR SYSTEM

Much of what you do here will be under what is called the "Honor System". This means little else than that you are on your own and that your actions will be governed by honesty and integrity of purpose.

"Honor" is not something that can easily be reduced t black and white, yet its presence is readily detected and its absence immediately obvious. Your fellow students will know. You will not fool them or your supervisors. There must be a common bond between individuals who live and work together as you and your associates will. There

must be a desire on the part of the group to act in complete confidence in whatever each does and says.

Any system to be workable must be a system of spirit, not of rules and regulations. To satisfy this requirement, the system must necessarily be administered and enforced by persons who are themselves living according to the code. This does not mean that there cannot be rules; on the contrary, it may be necessary to have an elaborate set of rules to guarantee the uniform adoption and practice of the system.

Your Honor Committee will be comprised of fellow members of your school. Only the highest sense of honor and fair play will govern any decisions which must be made by them.

The basis of the honor system is that no advantage will be sought or given to any student trainee; that the word of every member of the school will, indeed, be her bond; that reports of whatever nature required will be fairly and impartially made; and that all official decisions will be complied with in the fullest measure and intent.

GETTING ORIENTED

It will take you several days to “settle down” and become accustomed to your new mode of living. You will find that, to a certain extent, your life at the Training School will be “regimented”. In no sense should you interpret this as being destructive to individual initiative. Your disciplinary training is not pointed towards that end. True, you are being trained to fly. But, in no other branch of the military organization is self-discipline so important. Let’s look at it this way. Your basic knowledge must be on a firm foundation. You must be in good physical condition to “take it”, and you’ll have to learn to “take it” if you expect to fly airplanes.

And so, you will soon learn that the rules and regulations, which at first glance seem designed to “regiment” you, are instead made to place every student trainee on the same level. They are necessary to move you from one place to another with least possible confusion. They are designed to teach you the fundamentals of flying and its allied phases. They are, the results of many years of dearly bought experience.

RULES ARE IMPORTANT

Flying rules are not made to hamper your flying; they are made to keep you flying safely. They are not just picked out of a hat, but as we have said, promulgated only after many hard and bitter experiences.

Your Ground School work is important, because your life may eventually depend upon how well you acquired the necessary basic information. You may question the

Military Drill you receive.....but when you realize that it is a means of teaching you discipline, coordination, and of giving you that sense of pride which comes from being a part of a well-trained, well-disciplined unit, you will understand, enjoy and appreciate it.

PHYSICAL TRAINING IMPORTANT

Your physical training is not only required but most important. In other branches of the military, the normal activities of those units might be substituted for the conditioning exercises which you will receive. But, in the Air Forces, because of the nature of the work to be done, there is little time or demand for the physical exercises. You will soon learn, if you enter into the spirit of the exercises, that the personal benefits you will reap from them will more than repay you for the temporarily stiff muscles you will have for the first few days. You will also find that your flying will vary in direct ratio to your physical condition. No person in poor physical condition or health should be allowed to fly an airplane. your body must be ready for the demands which flying will make upon you.

YOUR FLYING INSTRUCTOR

Soon after you are processed through the school, you will meet your flight instructor. Prior to and after that time, you will hear a lot about instructors, their types and methods. Some of it will be constructive talk; and some of it destructive. Some of it will be just plain "hot air". But one thing is certain, your instructors have been carefully chosen. Their personal characteristics will vary even as yours do.....but you should remember one thing; and that is, that all of your instructors take pride in the number of students they can pass on to the next phase of training, or graduate. Their job is to turn out as many pilots as they possible can....and don't let anyone tell you otherwise!

YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

The relationship of the student trainee to the instructor is sometimes a source of puzzlement. It should be one of sincere respect. Remember, he is doing a big and important job at great risk and sacrifice. Avoid taking liberties that common sense would frown upon. Don't try to get "chummy" with your instructors. Remember that you are more or less under the microscope and that your instructor will render his findings without the slightest partiality.

Occasionally there will be misunderstandings between students and instructors. These might take various forms such as "personality clashes". It is only natural that in any large organization, especially where individuals are working under pressure, that this

should occur. If this should happen it will be better for all concerned that you or your instructor take the matter to the Flight Commander. He will make every effort to straighten out the condition and, if he feels the occasion warrants, recommend a change of instructors.

Towards the commissioned personnel, you should adopt an air of courteous discipline. Due to the more intimate association of officers, men and students in the Air Forces, and the desire to keep students relaxed at all times, there will be less formality here than in other branches of the Service.
Don't misunderstand it!

GOOD DAYS AND BAD DAYS

Even the best of pilots encounter times when their flying is noticeably poorer than at others. Many of you may encounter this experience sooner or later, but.....it should be no real source of worry, unless the slump is protracted and becomes the rule rather than the exception. Your instructor will do all in his power to help you.....but the big job is up to you. Don't let it get the best of you!

FLYING AGAIN

A few words about flying. You have all had some flying experience before you came into this program. It may be at variance with the type of instruction you will receive here. Military flying is different from ordinary civilian flying and therefore involves many other considerations. For one thing, it requires greater caution and adherence to rules. It involves heavy traffic and definite patterns. The demands upon your caution will be incessant.

Learn your flying rules and use them at all times. Violation of them means that you are hardly the type to be in this program. Low flying and performance of prohibited maneuvers are evidence of your inability to conform. More than one promising career has been concluded because a student trainee got the "hot pilot" bug. Don't let it happen to you!

You will hear tales of so-called daring. Most of them will be richly garnished, but in any case, pay no attention to them. Remember this axiom during your entire career as a flyer: "There are old pilots and there are bold pilots; but there are no old, bold pilots." If you do, you will live safer and longer.

THAT'S THE STORY.....EXCEPT.....

Civilians with whom you come in contact, on and off the Post, will naturally form their opinion of all the women connected with this program through their observances and association with you. You should not accordingly.

You are going to do a great job, and we feel that this phase of the matter can wisely be left to your own judgment and discretion.

GOOD LUCK AND GOOD FLYING!!!!

INSTRUCTIONS TO ACCEPTED TRAINEES

LOCATION

Avenger Field is located 4 miles west of Sweetwater, Texas, on the Sweetwater-Big Spring Highway. Taxi service is available from town to field. Sweetwater is on the Texas & Pacific Railroad line.

REPORTING DATE

Trainees will be expected to report, at their own expense, to the Adjutant's office, Administration Building, Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas, at the time specified in their orders. Upon arrival, trainees will be furnished all information regarding matriculating, et. by the Adjutant. Training will start on day specified in orders. It is not necessary for trainees to report prior to starting date. Relations and friends are discouraged from accompanying trainees, as the first two weeks are devoted to indoctrination and matriculation.

PREVIOUS POSITION

If trainees previously held Civil Service Positions, they should be able to supply information as to whether they resigned or were transferred.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Trainees will be required to live in barracks on the post. six girls occupy each room and the occupants of two connecting rooms share the same shower and lavatory facilities. A double locker is provided for each students clothes and it is suggested that only necessary articles of clothing be brought to the field. The barracks must be cleaned and kept neat and orderly at all time by the trainees.

CLOTHING

The location enjoys approximately eight months of warm weather. The following clothing is suggested:

- 4 pairs of slacks (light weight, serviceable)
- 6 shirts or blouses (conventional colors)

12 pairs socks
2 pairs walking shoes
4 bath towels
4 face towels
2 wash cloths
3 pairs pajamas
1 pair tennis shoes (low or high lace, white)
1 or 2 dresses
Lingerie
Alarm clock
watch

It is suggested that no additional purchases of this nature be made as local merchants can supply their needs at reasonable prices. All clothing should be plainly marked with name tape or idelible ink. The following items are suggested also; standard brands may be purchased on the field:

Hand Lotion
Foundation cream
Cosmetics
Shower cap
Clothes Hangers (6)

EQUIPMENT FURNISHED

Flying equipment (including coveralls, helmet, goggles, winter flying equipment), text books, and bed linens are furnished to the trainees.

UNIFORM

The only uniform worn will be the regulation coveralls mentioned above. For dress occasions, trainees wear khaki trousers, white blouses, and khaki overseas caps, purchased by trainee after reporting on field.

SALARY

Trainees are on Civil Service status and receive \$150 per month base pay, less 5% retirement deductions. Trainees should have sufficient money on arrival to meet all expenses until first pay check is received, which is approximately three weeks after entering on duty. Trainees are paid twice a month – on the 15th and last day of the month. Approximately \$30 will be needed to purchase the necessary gym clothing before starting training.

EXPENSES

Transportation from home to training field (and from training field if trainee is eliminated), as well as subsistence and maintenance during training, are at the expense of the trainee. The appropriate cost of room and board is \$1.65 per day.

AUTOMOBILES

Automobiles may be kept on the post. All vehicles must be in good operating condition, and must be covered by Public Liability and Property Damage Insurance in the sum of \$5,000 and \$10,000 respectively. This may be secured prior to reporting or after arrival.

PETS

No pets of any kind are allowed on the Post.

INSURANCE

Trainees are covered by regular Civil Service insurance. However, in view of the unusual nature of their duties, trainees are encouraged to secure approximately \$3,000 worth of life insurance either before entering on duty or shortly thereafter. After reporting on the field, trainees will be given an opportunity to avail themselves of special policies drawn up for their benefit, which include hospitalization, accident insurance, and life insurance, and a special combination of all three.

DEMERIT SYSTEM

The demerit system is used to maintain discipline among the trainees. Demerits are given for failure to comply with rules and regulations on or off the post while in training. A sufficient number of demerits can eliminate a trainee just as easily as failure to make satisfactory progress in the course.

PASSES

Trainees are required to remain on the post at all times, unless permission is secured to leave it, and are subject to the same discipline as Aviation cadets. Overnight and week-end passes are given only at the discretion of the Commanding Officer of the post when recommended by the Chief Establishment Officer, who is the head women in charge of trainees. When such passes are granted, the trainees must register where they can be reached at all times while off the post and with whom they are staying. Due to transportation difficulties trainees will not leave for a distance over 50 miles except in extreme emergencies.

COURSE

The five to six months' course will include training to proficiency required of ferry primary, basic, and advanced type trainers within the United States. A complete ground school course, as well as calisthenics and military drill, are also included.

LEAVES

Leaves of absence will not be granted to any Trainee except in case of personal illness, critical illness or death in her immediate family, in which case regulations governing Civil Service leaves will apply.

ELIMINATIONS

Trainees can be eliminated at any time during the course for failure to meet the required standards in flying, ground school, or personal conduct. All trainees who are eliminated should be prepared to settle all accounts and provide travel expense to whatever destination chosen. Due to limited housing facilities, it is necessary that eliminated trainees clear the post within twenty-four hours after elimination.