



SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF

JACQUELINE COCHRAN

U.S. AIR FORCE RESERVES

Jacqueline Cochran

The accomplishments of famed aviatrix, Jacqueline Cochran, are legion, stretching from 1932 when she first earned a pilot license to 1971 when she was enshrined in the Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio. Her life is an inspiration, proving that courage, determination and hard work can overcome poverty and neglect.

Orphaned at an early age in Muscogee, Florida, she knew only foster parents who were very poor and who lived in various small sawmill towns in the South. Her formal schooling ended with third grade, when she took a 12-hour shift in a cotton mill. After three years she became a helper in a beauty parlor. Quick to learn, she moved to New York and soon opened her own beauty shop. Miss Cochran continued in the beauty and cosmetics business until she died, except for three years of training as a nurse and three months of work as a district nurse in the backwoods of Alabama.

It is mainly for her achievements in aviation, however, that Jacqueline Cochran is best known. Becoming interested in flying in 1932, she obtained a pilot's license after three weeks instruction at Roosevelt Field, NY. She later took an additional year of training at Long Beach, California, the equivalent of a U.S. Navy course in groundwork and flight, and began her lifelong aeronautical career. (See list of accomplishments right.) In May 1936 she married businessman Floyd B. Odium in Kingman, Arizona.

Her accomplishments drew the attention of the military establishment. After the U.S. entered World War II, she enlisted a group of 25 women pilots at the request of military authorities and took them to England to serve with the British Air

Transport Auxiliary. This group of women ferried airplanes throughout England between airports and factories.

With the U.S. facing a severe shortage of pilots, the Air Force turned to women pilots to help the war effort. Miss Cochran returned from England, and in September, 1942 she was appointed director of women flying training. In 1943 she was appointed to the general staff of the U.S. Air Force as Director of Women Pilots. In this capacity she directed all phases, both training and operational, of the Woman Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). As the first women to fly U.S. military aircraft, this program successfully proved the ability of women to perform as military pilots, not only as ferry pilots but in many other operational flying duties. When the WASP were deactivated in December 1944, more than 1,000 women pilots were fully trained and on operational duty.

Following deactivation of the WASP program, she went to the Far East as correspondent for Liberty magazine, and was present at the surrender of General Yamashita in the Philippines.

After the war Miss Cochran continued to participate in air races and established many new trans-continental and international records. She established more speed, distance and altitude records than any other person, and logged approximately 15,000 hours at the controls of airplanes of all types, including ten different types of jet-powered aircraft, mostly military fighters.

She held the rank of Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserves starting in 1948, and put in her time of active duty each year. Eventually she re-

Jacqueline Chochran

tired with her husband to their ranch in Indio, California, where many of her WASP often visited. It was a deep sadness for them all when she took her last flight in 1980.

A partial list of her accomplishments and honors:

1934 - Only woman entrant in MacRobertson London-to-Australia air race.

1935 - First woman to participate in the Bendix transcontinental air race.

1937 - Won first place in the women's division of the Bendix and third place overall.

1937 - First woman to make a totally blind landing on instruments.

1938 - Winner of Bendix race against a field of all male pilots, setting a new women's division speed record. Received the Gen. William E. Mitchell award as the person making the greatest contribution to aviation that year.

1939 - Established women's national altitude record, and broke the international speed record for men and women.

1940 - Broke the 2,000 kilometer international speed record and the 100 kilometer national record.

1941 - First woman to pilot a bomber across the Atlantic, flying a Canadian RAF plane from Canada to England.

1953 - First woman to exceed the speed of sound, in a F-86 Sabre Jet.

1962 - Flew Lockheed Jet Star from U.S. to Germany, establishing many distance records en route, while becoming the first woman to fly a jet aircraft across the Atlantic.

1937-1962 Received Hannon Trophy 15 different times as the outstanding woman flier in the world.

1962 - Established 9 international speed, distance and altitude records in a Northrop T-38 military jet.

1963 - Broke two of her own speed records in a Lockheed F-104 Starfire.

1945 - Recipient of the U.S. Distinguished Service Medal.

1949 - Recipient of the French Legion of Honor.

1951 - Recipient of the French Air Medal.

1957 - Recipient of Air Force Association award for distinguished civilian service in defense of the country.

1969 - Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with two oak leaf clusters by the U.S. Air Force.

1970 - Presented with Legion of Merit by Secretary of the Air Force.

1971 - Enshrined in Aviation Hall of Fame, Dayton, Ohio.

Dear General Bellis:

The Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II take great pleasure in honoring Jacqueline Cochran with the Falcon Foundation scholarship. Our wartime leader and friend, she was a lady who left an indelible mark on the history of aviation as well as in our hearts. We firmly believe our country needs more women like her, and hope this scholarship will help to pave the way for other young persons who, like us, were born with stars in their eyes.

Violet Cowden

Violet C. Cowden, Class 43-4
President, WASP of WW II , 1996-1998



The Falcon Foundation is a 501(c)(3), non-profit foundation. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to College or Preparatory Schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

Although it is a separate organization, the Falcon Foundation works closely with USAFA.