

## **FIRSTS FOR WOMEN IN AVIATION**

**1784**

Elisabeth Thible becomes the first woman to fly—in a hot air balloon.

**1798**

Jeanne Labrosse is the first woman to solo in a balloon.

**1809**

Marie Madeleine Sophie Blanchard becomes the first woman to lose her life while flying—she was watching fireworks in her hydrogen balloon.

**1880**

Mary Myers is the first American woman to solo in a balloon (July 4).

**1903**

Aida de Acosta is the first woman to solo in a dirigible.

**1906**

E. Lillian Todd is the first woman to design and build an airplane, though it never flew.

**1908**

Madame Therese Peltier is the first woman to fly an airplane solo.

**1910**

Baroness Raymonde de Laroche obtains a license from the Aero Club of France, the first woman licensed in the world.

**1910**

Blanche Stuart Scott, without permission or knowledge of Glenn Curtiss, the airplane's owner and builder, removes a small wood wedge and is able to get the airplane airborne—without any flying lessons—thus becoming the first American woman to pilot an airplane (September 2).

Bessica Raiche's flight qualifies her, for some, as the first woman pilot in America—because some discount the flight of Scott as accidental (October 13).

**1911**

Harriet Quimby becomes the first American woman licensed pilot (August 11).

Harriet Quimby becomes the first woman to fly at night (September 4).

**1912**

Harriet Quimby becomes the first woman to pilot her own aircraft across the English Channel (April 16).

**1913**

Alys McKey Bryant is the first woman pilot in Canada.

**1916**

Ruth Law sets two American records flying from Chicago to New York.

**1918**

The U.S. Postmaster General approves the appointment of Marjorie Stinson as the first female airmail pilot.

**1919**

Ruth Law becomes the first person to fly air mail in the Philippines.

**1921**

Adrienne Bolland is the first woman to fly over the Andes.

Bessie Coleman becomes the first African American to earn a pilot's certificate.

**1922**

Lillian Gatlin is the first woman to fly across America as a passenger.

**1928**

Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly across the Atlantic (June 17).

**1929**

Florence Lowe Barnes (Pancho Barnes) becomes the first woman stunt pilot in motion pictures.

Amelia Earhart becomes the first president of the Ninety-Nines, an organization of women pilots.

**1930**

Amy Johnson becomes the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia (May 5-24).

Anne Morrow Lindbergh becomes the first woman to earn a glider pilot license.

**1931**

Ruth Nichols fails in her attempt to fly solo across the Atlantic, but she breaks the world distance record flying from California to Kentucky.

Katherine Cheung becomes the first woman of Chinese ancestry to earn a pilot's license.

**1932**

Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic (May 20-31).

Ruthy Tu becomes the first woman pilot in the Chinese Army.

**1934**

Helen Richey becomes the first woman pilot hired by a regularly scheduled airline, Central Airlines.

Jean Batten is the first woman to fly round trip England to Australia.

**1935**

Amelia Earhart is the first person to fly solo from Hawaii to the American mainland (January 11-23).

**1936**

Beryl Markham becomes the first woman to fly across the Atlantic east to west.

Louise Thaden and Blanche Noyes beat male pilots also entered in the Bendix Trophy Race, the first victory of women over men in a race in which both genders could enter.

**1937**

Amelia Earhart lost over the Pacific (July 2).

**1938**

Hanna Reitsch becomes the first woman to fly a helicopter and the first woman to be licensed as a helicopter pilot.

**1939**

Willa Brown, the first African American commercial pilot and first African American woman officer in the Civil Air Patrol, helps form the National Airmen's Association of America to help open up the U.S. Armed Forces to African American men.

Jacqueline Cochran sets an international speed record; the same year, she is the first woman to make a blind landing.

Vera Huckel begins her career at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, NASA's predecessor, as an engineer. She was one of only 3 women engineers at NACA's Langley Research Center during that time.

**1940**

Physicist Pearl Young became NACA's first female professional, paving the way for women to work in laboratories, and making her one of the first prominent women in the agency.

**1941**

Jacqueline Cochran is the first woman to ferry a bomber across the Atlantic (July 1).

Marina Raskova appointed by Soviet Union high command to organize regiments of women pilots.

**1942**

Nancy Harkness Love and Jackie Cochran organize women flying units and training detachment

**1943**

Women make up more than 30% of the work force in the aviation industry.

Love and Cochran's units are merged into the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) and Jackie Cochran becomes the Director of Women Pilots. WASP flew more than 60 million miles before the program ended in December 1944, with only 38 lives lost of 1830 volunteers and 1074 graduates—these pilots were seen as civilians and were first recognized as military personnel in 1977.

**1945**

Melitta Schiller is awarded the Iron Cross and Military Flight Badge in Germany.

**1953**

Jackie Cochran becomes the first woman to break the sound barrier.

**1960**

Nancy Roman, Ph. D. becomes the first Chief Astronomer at NASA.

**1963**

Valentina Tereshkova becomes the first woman in space as a cosmonaut on the Vostok 5 (June 16).

**1964**

Jerrie Mock is the first woman to pilot a plane around the world (March 19).

**1965**

Marjorie R. Townsend becomes the first woman to manage a U.S. spacecraft launch.

**1973**

Emily Howell Warner is the first woman working as a pilot for a commercial airline, Frontier Airlines (January 29).

U.S. Navy announces pilot training for women.

**1974**

Mary Barr becomes the first woman pilot with the U.S. Forest Service.

Sally Murphy is the first woman to qualify as an aviator with the U.S. Army (June 4).

Mary Helen Johnston, Ann Whitaker, Carolyn Griner, and Doris Chandler comprised an all-women space team for experiments at the Marshall Space Flight Center.

**1977**

Congress passes a bill recognizing WASP of World War II as military personnel, and President Jimmy Carter signs the bill into law.

**1978**

International Society of Women Airline Pilots formed.

The first women joined the astronaut corps: Rhea Seddon, Kathryn D. Sullivan, Judith A. Resnick, Sally K. Ride, Anna L. Fisher, and Shannon W. Lucid.

**1983**

Sally Ride, Ph. D., becomes the first American woman to fly in space (June 18).

**1984**

Kathryn D. Sullivan, Ph. D., becomes the first American woman to walk in space.

**1991**

Lt. Col. Eileen Collins, USAF, becomes the first female space shuttle pilot.

**1992**

Mae Jemison, M.D., becomes the first African American woman in space.

**1994**

Vicki Van Meter is the youngest pilot (to that date) to fly across the Atlantic in a Cessna 210. She is 12 years old at the time of the flight.

Jackie Parker becomes the first woman to qualify to fly an F-16 combat plane (April 21).

**1995**

In the same month, Beverly Burns becomes the first woman to captain a 747 cross country, and Lynn Rippelmeyer becomes the first woman to captain a 747 across the Atlantic.

**1999**

Col. Eileen Collins, USAF, becomes the first woman to command a space shuttle mission.

**2001**

Polly Vacher becomes the first woman to fly around the world in a small plane—she flies from England to England on a route that includes Australia.

**2006**

Capt. Nicole Malachowski, USAF, makes her debut as the first female pilot on the USAF Thunderbird Air Demonstration Squadron.

Anousheh Ansari becomes the first female Muslim and first Iranian in space. She is also the first female space tourist to fly to the International Space Station and the first person to publish a blog from space.