

AWARD DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
TO MISS JACQUELINE COCHRAN

Miss Jacqueline Cochran, formerly Director of Women Pilots, Headquarters Army Air Forces, has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the War Department announced today.

Miss Cochran is the first woman civilian to receive the DSM in the present war. Presentation of the award will be announced at a later date. The citation for the award follows:

For exceptionally meritorious service to the Government in a duty of great responsibility from June 1943 to December 1944 as Director of Women Pilots, Headquarters Army Air Forces. She directed the planning, programming and administration of all women pilot activities of the Army Air Forces, including the organization, training, and operations of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). Under her leadership the WASP performed, with the utmost loyalty and efficiency, multiple flying services in direct and effective support of the Army Air Forces which were of the greatest assistance and importance to the war effort of the nation. Further, her achievements in this respect and the conclusions she has carefully and wisely drawn from this undertaking represent a contribution which is of permanent and far-reaching significance to the future of aviation. Her vision, skill and initiative have resulted in services of exceptional value and importance to the country.

Preliminary measures toward a women's pilot program as an adjunct to the AAF were begun in 1941. In July, August, and September of that year, by direction of the Assistant Secretary of War for Air, and at the request of the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Miss Cochran's voluntary services were used in preparation of a plan for Army utilization of women pilots in a war emergency.

In the fall of 1942, she was appointed Technical Advisor to the AAF Training Command to direct the Women's Flying Training program organized as one of two experimental groups to determine the feasibility of training and employment of women pilots by the AAF.

In July 1943, when success of the women's pilot program was assured, Miss Cochran was transferred from the Training Command to AAF Headquarters and appointed Director of Women Pilots for AAF, and Special Assistant to the Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Operations, Commitments, and Requirements. The training program was enlarged, and operations were extended to include service with the Domestic Air Forces and various AAF Commands, for such service pilot activities as target-towing testing, courier work, instrument flight instruction, weather flights, and simulated bombing missions, in addition to ferrying for the ATC.

With enlargement of the program a flexible coordinated organization was perfected and the official name WASP, Women's Airforce Service Pilots, adopted to apply to all women pilots in the AAF women pilot program. Upon inactivation of the program on December 20, 1944, the WASP, approximately 1,000 in number, had flown all types of aircraft in domestic use from light liaison and training planes to the fastest fighters and bombers. In training, safety, and operations as service pilots, their record compared favorably with that of AAF male pilots.

Miss Cochran (Mrs. Floyd B. Odum) of New York City and Indio, California, was born in Pensacola, Florida. She learned to fly in 1932 and obtained her pilot licence after three weeks training. In 1937 she won first place in the women's

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division of the Bendix event and third place against a field of men pilots. A year later she won the coast to coast dash, winning \$12,500 prize money and setting a new women's transcontinental record of 10 hours, 27 minutes and 55 seconds.

In addition to many speed records, she was the first woman to pilot a bomber across the North Atlantic, when in 1941 she flew a Royal Air Force Lockheed Hudson craft from Canada to Great Britain. She has three times received the Aviatrix Trophy of the International League of Aviators as the outstanding woman flier in the world for the years 1937-1939. Presentation of the trophy was made on each occasion by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Miss Cochran was president of the Ninety-nines, 1941-1942, and recently was appointed on the Board of Directors of the Northeast Air Lines.

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