



Honoring the First Women to Fly for America's Military

★1942-44★

WASP OF WORLD WAR II

WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

Who They Were

In 1942, as the country reeled from the attack on Pearl Harbor, trained male pilots were in short supply. Qualified pilots were needed to fight the war. The Army also was desperate for pilots to deliver newly built trainer aircraft to the flight schools in the South. Twenty-eight experienced civilian women pilots volunteered to take those ferrying jobs. They formed the country's first female squadron late summer 1942.

Between November 1942 and December 1944, 1,074 more women were trained to fly first in Houston and then moved to Avenger Field in Sweetwater, TX. Nancy Love and Jacqueline Cochran founded the two programs (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron and Women's Flying Training Detachment) that became the WASP.

WASP flew every aircraft in the Army's arsenal. In addition to ferrying, they towed gunnery targets, transported equipment and non-flying personnel, and flight-tested aircraft that had been repaired before the men were allowed to fly them again. For over two years, the WASP went on to perform a wide variety of aviation-related jobs and to serve at more than 120 bases around the country.

The man who championed the WASP was Army Air Forces Commanding General "Hap" Arnold. He was revered by the U.S. Congress, but in June 1944 when he sought to officially designate the WASP as members of the United States military, Congress said "no." After a protracted fight, the WASP were granted military status in 1977, thanks to a law signed by President Carter. These 1,102 Women Airforce Service Pilots flew wingtip to wingtip with their male counterparts and were just as vital to the war effort.

Sarah Byrn Rickman, WASP author and historian

The WASP flew with excellence and self-sacrifice, and are the harbingers of women fighter pilots, astronauts and airline professionals that we know today. Their service was short; their courage to confidently step out of their domestic lives into a male-dominated world has inspired four successive generations of female pilots.

January 2022

Dear Friend:

The National WASP WWII Museum is in a season of dynamic expansion, both in its physical space and in its mission. Our future is the education and inspiration of all visitors to the museum, young and old. The Museum continues to make a vital contribution to America, a country of growth, passion and service. Located at the heart of our great state of Texas, the Museum is accessible to 30,000 vehicles per day traveling Interstate 20 and 44 school districts located in our region.

Your support will help transform our hopes and plans into reality and keep the Museum a vital and contributing member of our country, state, and local educational communities.

Requested funding:

The Museum is raising \$3.8 million for all-new exhibits across its 15-acre campus. WASP history will be the foundation comprising two-thirds of the content with the last third dedicated to legacy pilots - all the women pilots who have stood on the strong shoulders of the WASP.

Exhibits in Hangars 1 and 2 will be interactive with varied levels of interest to educate and delight children eight years old – adults. Exterior exhibits will include a granite map of the United States with marked duty bases, a memorial garden, and life-size photos. The pièce de résistance will be the installation of a control tower on Hangar 1, completing its replica status of the original Hangar 1 on Avenger Field.

Justification:

For the past 15 years, the Museum has told a singular story of WASP achievements during World War II from the perspective of their commander, Jacqueline Cochran. Initially, this approach was tremendously successful in educating and inspiring visitors and students. In 2017, however, the Board of Directors began to realize the WASP story had relevance for our youngest generations appearing 80 years after the war.

In 2020, the Directors spent nine months creating the Museum's first ten-year Strategic Plan. This plan culminated in unanimous approval to expand the mission statement to guide the WASP legacy toward the future that is already here. The WASP aviators of the 1940s stand at the forefront of women aviators now in the military, in civilian aviation, and in space exploration and development.

A transformed Museum campus brings the new mission to life through expanded stories, thought-provoking questions, and interactive content, all designed to create a seamless web between past, present and future. New exhibits will expand the WASP story itself by including not only Cochran's perspective, but that of several leaders, both female and male, who had tremendous impact over the program. Visitors will grapple with social issues of the time and the impact it carried. As visitors travel through the Museum, exhibits will culminate in the Legacy section. There, we will learn the stories of today's women pilots and aviation support personnel. These women of today will represent multiple generations across numerous ethnicities, ensuring every female visitor has an aviator she can identify with and relate to.

Concluding Thoughts:

Hope needs a home. This is our museum. Ideas and vision need a story. That is the purpose of our Museum expansion. While the Strategic Plan is multi-faceted with several important components to be launched in the next decade, new exhibits, pictures and text are foundational. The Board appreciates your consideration of financial support for this first important next step.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Taylor
Executive Director
National WASP WWII Museum
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PHASE 3

\$3.8 MILLION EXPANSION

Future Exhibits To Come



GRANITE MAP BETWEEN HANGARS



HANGAR 1 WELCOME CENTER EXHIBIT



HANGAR 1 OVERHEAD VIEW OF EXHIBIT HALL





HANGAR 2 WASP DATABASE & EXHIBITS



HANGAR 2 EXHIBIT HALL





For full renderings of our future Museum Campus and a virtual Museum fly-through experience, please visit www.waspmuseum.org and click the Fundraising tab to learn more.

For more questions, contact Lisa Taylor at lisataylor@waspmuseum.org or 325-235-0099.



ABOUT THE **NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM**

Preserving the History, Promoting the Legacy

Our Mission

The National WASP WWII Museum is dedicated to honoring the life and legacy of the Women Airforce Service Pilots and preserving the legacy of Avenger Field on which most of them trained. Our mission is to educate and inspire all current and future generations with the story of the WASP – the first women to fly America’s military aircraft – women who brought honor to our nation and forever changed the role of women in military and civilian aviation.

The National WASP WWII Museum began in 2002 with the vision of two women, WASP Deanie Bishop Parrish and her daughter, Nancy Parrish. They believed the history of the Women Airforce Service Pilots should be showcased at Avenger Field on the grounds where most of the WASP trained during World War II.

Plans to transform this vision into reality began in the fall of 2002 with a presentation to Sweetwater community leaders. On December 9th of that year, a steering committee met for the first time to investigate the Museum’s feasibility. Incorporation documents were presented to the steering committee in January 2003, and the Museum was incorporated in the State of Texas in July 2003. The Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce supported the Museum both financially and with key leadership. In September 2003, the Museum Board of Directors leased 55 acres of land at Avenger Field from the City of Sweetwater. The two hundred-year lease included the land as well as a hangar that had been built in 1929 to serve as the first Sweetwater Municipal Airport.

With incorporation papers in hand and a site settled upon, construction of the Museum began. In 2004 the Board of Directors recruited new members to support the Museum, developed a master plan around architectural drawings, mailed the first official newsletters, and continued to seek funds to build a nationally recognized memorial to the WASP. Renovations to the hangar began in early 2005 culminating in the first National WASP WWII Museum Fly-In. Local, state, and national volunteers worked long hours in order to open the Museum in May 2005. The outside of the hangar was painted, and the inside of the hangar was fully renovated to house the exhibits. In celebration of much hard work, a grand opening was held on May 28, the same day the first class of WASP graduated 62 years earlier.

In 2006 the Museum grew with new members and monetary donations as well as donations of historical artifacts and new exhibits. The first Homecoming at Hangar One, now held annually, was held on Memorial Day weekend. The highlight of the first Homecoming was the opening of the exhibit depicting a bay, the living quarters of the WASP while they were in training.

As membership and interest in the Museum grew, directors hired an executive director in 2007. In 2008 the Museum began to register the extensive collection, to find new marketing and fundraising avenues, to increase membership, and to build new exhibits.

As a continually evolving project, the Museum has grown each year. In 2020, the Museum closed for six months to expand and grow, both in facilities and its Mission. It reopened May 15, 2021 with a new Welcome Center and Gift shop, a temperature and humidity-controlled archival vault and suite, a fully stocked Catering room, state-of-the-art Conference Room, and a beautiful Exhibit Gallery. The Mission has expanded to include preservation of WASP history and its airfield, and to promote WASP legacy pilots to all generations.

The future includes a \$3.8 million fabrication of all-new exhibits across the entire campus.

Please enjoy the following pictorial history of the Museum.

For a complete package of current Museum pictures,
please contact Lisa Taylor at
lisataylor@waspmuseum.org or 325-235-0099.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY

1941 - 2021

Housed in the 1929 Sweetwater Municipal Airport, the Museum opens in 2005

1941 SWEETWATER AIRPORT



PRIOR TO MUSEUM OPENING IN 2005



2005 HANGAR 2 EXTERIOR



HANGAR 2 MUSEUM EXHIBITS

HANDCRAFTED BY CITY LEADERS FOR 2005 OPENING

Preserving the History, Promoting the Legacy



CAPTURING WASP HANDPRINTS



WASP HANDPRINTS EXHIBIT



AVENGER FIELD BAY REPLICA



JACQUELINE COCHRAN EXHIBIT

PHASE 1 | 2016-2017
\$3 MILLION EXPANSION

Building Hangar 1



2016 WASP BREAKING GROUND



2017 HANGAR 1 EXTERIOR BUILT



PHASE 2 | 2020-2021
\$1.5 MILLION EXPANSION
Completion of Remodel in Hangars 1 & 2



2020 HANGAR 1 INTERIOR CONSTRUCTION

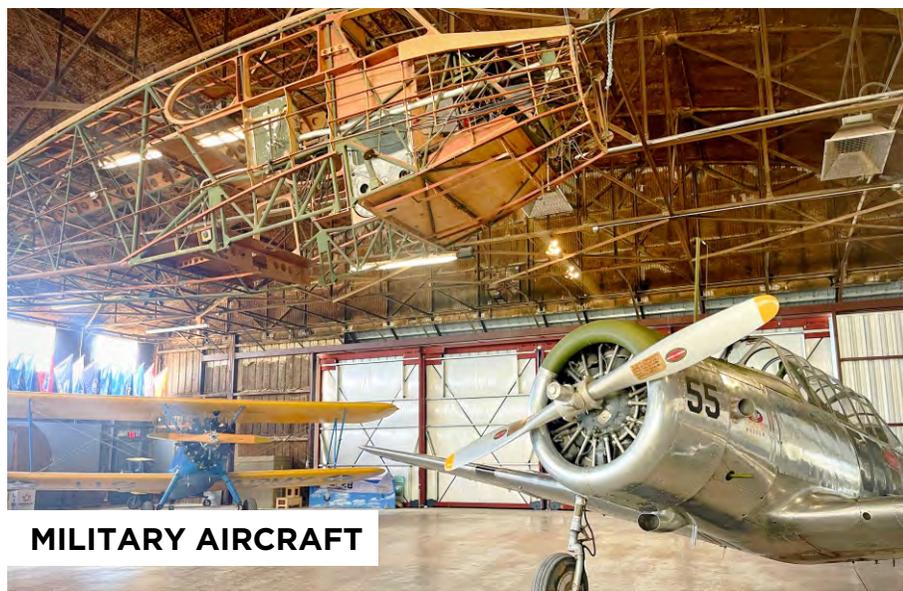


HANGAR 2 AIRCRAFT BAY DOOR BEING INSTALLED



2021 FINISHED STRUCTURES

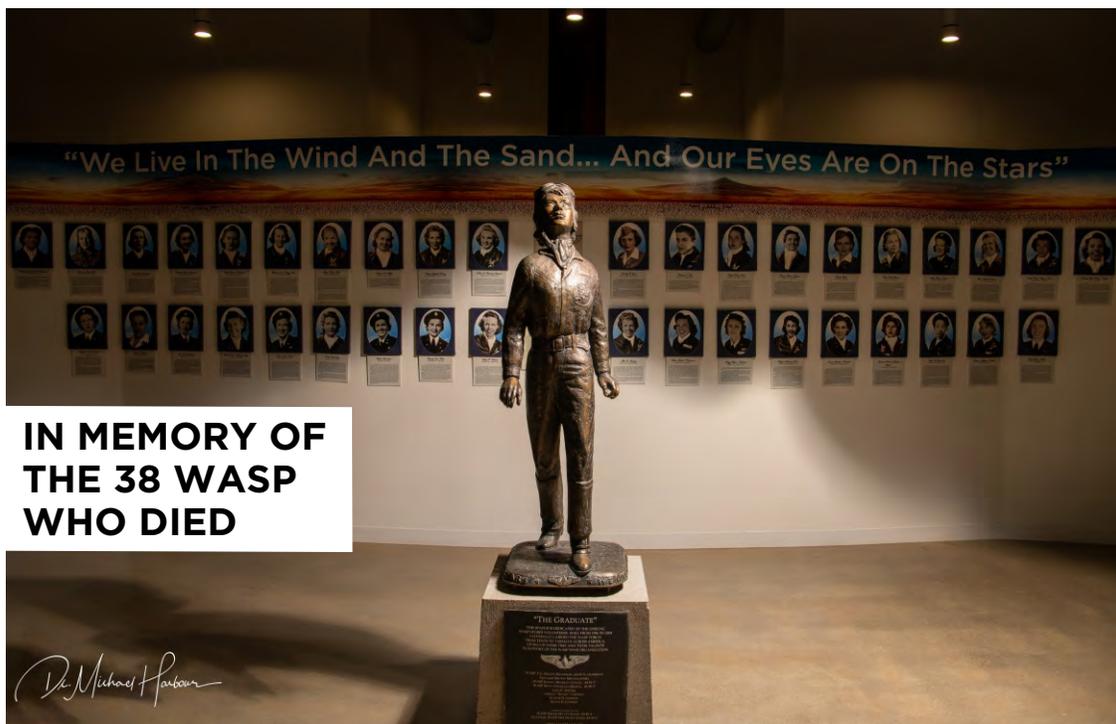
PHASE 2
\$1.5 MILLION EXPANSION
2021 Hangar 2 New & Updated Exhibits



PHASE 2
\$1.5 MILLION EXPANSION
2021 Hangar 1 New & Updated Exhibits



HANGAR 1 ENTRY WAY



**IN MEMORY OF
THE 38 WASP
WHO DIED**

Dr. Michael Harbour



A WASP IN THE SPOTLIGHT EXHIBIT



FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR EXHIBIT



WASP SANTIAGO BLUE UNIFORMS



LEGACY PILOTS EXHIBIT



ARRIVAL EXHIBIT



TRAINEE SCHOOL HOLOGRAM

CONTRIBUTION OPPORTUNITIES

WHY INVEST IN THE MUSEUM

Education & Outreach

An investment in the Museum is a vote of confidence for what our World War II veterans, particularly our Women Airforce Service Pilots, accomplished 80 years ago. They saved the world from totalitarianism and tyranny by using a skill, flying, that is still much in demand for today's military, space, and civilian sectors. The National WASP WWII Museum ensures their story is never forgotten while inspiring and connecting young generations to flight through educational programs designed to expand women's presence in aviation.

Although the Museum currently has a vibrant 2 – 8 grade history and STEM program, new exhibits are foundational to expanding into multiple programs, both in the museum and mobile, that will go through 12th grade.

In exchange for your generosity, the Museum would enjoy honoring families, foundations, and businesses in a variety of ways dependant on the type of gift.

For further information regarding sponsor recognition, our 10-year strategic plan, our financials, and our Board of Directors, please contact:



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Contact Us

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