

An Interview with Cornelia Fort



Connecting with Us

1. After receiving your confirmation email from us, be on the lookout for a follow up “Webex Meeting Invitation” email from our Webex account, which is our web-conferencing software. If you prefer, follow the directions to add the event to your calendar. Make sure to keep this email because it includes your log-in information for our digital classroom.
2. We will also schedule a test connection about a week before our program in order to work out any bugs that may come up on either end. This will be scheduled at a date and time that is convenient for you.
3. **At our scheduled program time**, please click the link included in your “Webex Meeting Invitation” email labeled “join the meeting.”
4. This will take you to the Webex site where you will provide your name and email address you gave us on your reservation form. You are now connected with us!
5. Once you are in our classroom, click “Connect Audio and Video” and we will be able to begin class!

*If you need to use a different web-conferencing program, other than Webex, please contact us to make other arrangements.

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FOR THE TEACHER

Thank you for inviting the Tennessee State Museum's Education Department to be a part of your classroom experience. We are excited to work with your students and contribute a unique and valuable educational experience to your curriculum.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the Interview with a Historic Figure program, we have provided you with activities and materials that can be done in the classroom before, during, and after we connect with you. These activities are designed to prepare the students for our class, keep them engaged and organized during the lesson, and provide them with reflection after we leave the classroom. **If you end up not having time to review these materials before our session, please be sure to at least review the first page of the activity packet so your students will know who they are going to interview.** We hope that this will help to create an enjoyable and educational experience for your students!

Pre-Visit:

Materials:

Several primary and secondary reading samples (these deal with the themes surrounding the historical figure that will be discussed during the program), writing prompts, KWL chart

Goal:

Students will read over the provided materials critically. This will not only give the students more information on the time in which the historic figure lived, but it will also help encourage them to want to learn more about what life was like during their time. Student's understanding of the passages can be gauged by using the provided writing prompts or in a class discussion led by you. They will then be able to fill out the first two boxes of the KWL chart. They should be able to list several things they already know about the subject being discussed and generate thoughtful, targeted questions that they would like to ask during our class. (It will be beneficial to have the students generate their questions based on the themes found in the information packet. Students can even be grouped together based on the themes.)

Connecting with Us:

Materials:

KWL chart, question cards (included in information packet), note taking section

Goal:

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Students will use the questions generated on their KWL chart, during the interview, to keep their thoughts clear and to ask us thoughtful questions. As our educator interacts with the students and answers questions, your class is welcome to take notes on the new information they learn. If students have trouble coming up with questions, note cards have been provided with prepared questions relating to the themes in your packet. These can be used by the teacher, or students, to spark conversation and to help them form any new questions. Please only use these cards if your students truly need a little nudge in the right direction.

Post-Visit:

Materials:

KWL chart, Writing a News Article prewriting sheet

Goal:

Students will now be able to complete the KWL chart by using the notes they took during the interview. They should also have a better understanding of the time period through the main themes discussed and be able to identify the many ways in which everyday life has changed over many years. Students should be able to take this knowledge and write a news article (blog post, etc.) in order to share what they learned with others. The prewriting sheet included will help the students focus their thought process prior to writing.

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Writing a News Article:

It is 1943. America has been involved in World War II for the last two years, ever since a band of Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in December 1941. The United States is rapidly changing with the amount of men going off to war and women stepping in to take their place outside the home. Along with these changes at home, more and more women want to join the war effort by joining the military. This is a new idea, and one that is not exactly embraced by everyone. You are a reporter that will be writing an article that you hope will give people on the home front a better and more complete understanding of the social changes going on around them. In order to do this you have a unique opportunity to interview an American pilot, Cornelia Fort, on her experience as the first female pilot instructor from Tennessee. Remember, this is a very different time in America: thousands have left their homes to fight Europe, women are left alone to take care of their children while maintaining full time jobs and many children are without their fathers.

In order to prepare for your story, you must organize your thoughts before you begin the interview. Use the questions below to help you prepare.

What type of writing will this be?

Fiction Nonfiction

What is the purpose of this writing?

To Persuade To Inform To Tell a Story To Compare/Contrast

Who is your audience (who will be reading your piece)?

What do you want your audience to know when they have finished reading your piece?

What will the focus of your story be? (examples: life in the air force, life at home, soldiers in camp, why was World War II fought, why was having women in the air force significant, ... etc.)

An Interview with Cornelia Fort

PRIMARY SOURCE

THEME: Changing Roles of Women During World War II

Watch this training video on how to deal with the new women recruits in the workforce. Videos like this were created by the United States Government Office of Education during wartime to assist with wartime efforts. What sort of themes stand out to you?

<https://archive.org/details/Supervis1944>

An Interview with Cornelia Fort

PRIMARY SOURCE

THEME: Changing Roles of Women During World War II

In this letter, Cornelia Fort describes her thoughts on wanting to join the military and not being allowed to in a flying capacity because of the restrictions the military had on women pilots.

“Women weren’t allowed to instruct even in those army primary schools which were being run by civilians. ... Any girl who has flown at all grows used to the prejudice of most men pilots, who will trot out any number of reasons why women ‘can’t possibly’ be good pilots. We grow so used to it in fact that I seldom think of it and almost never get on the defensive as I did constantly right after I soloed and wanted so desperately to be a good pilot. ... The only way to show the disbelievers, the snickering hangar pilots, is to show them. ...

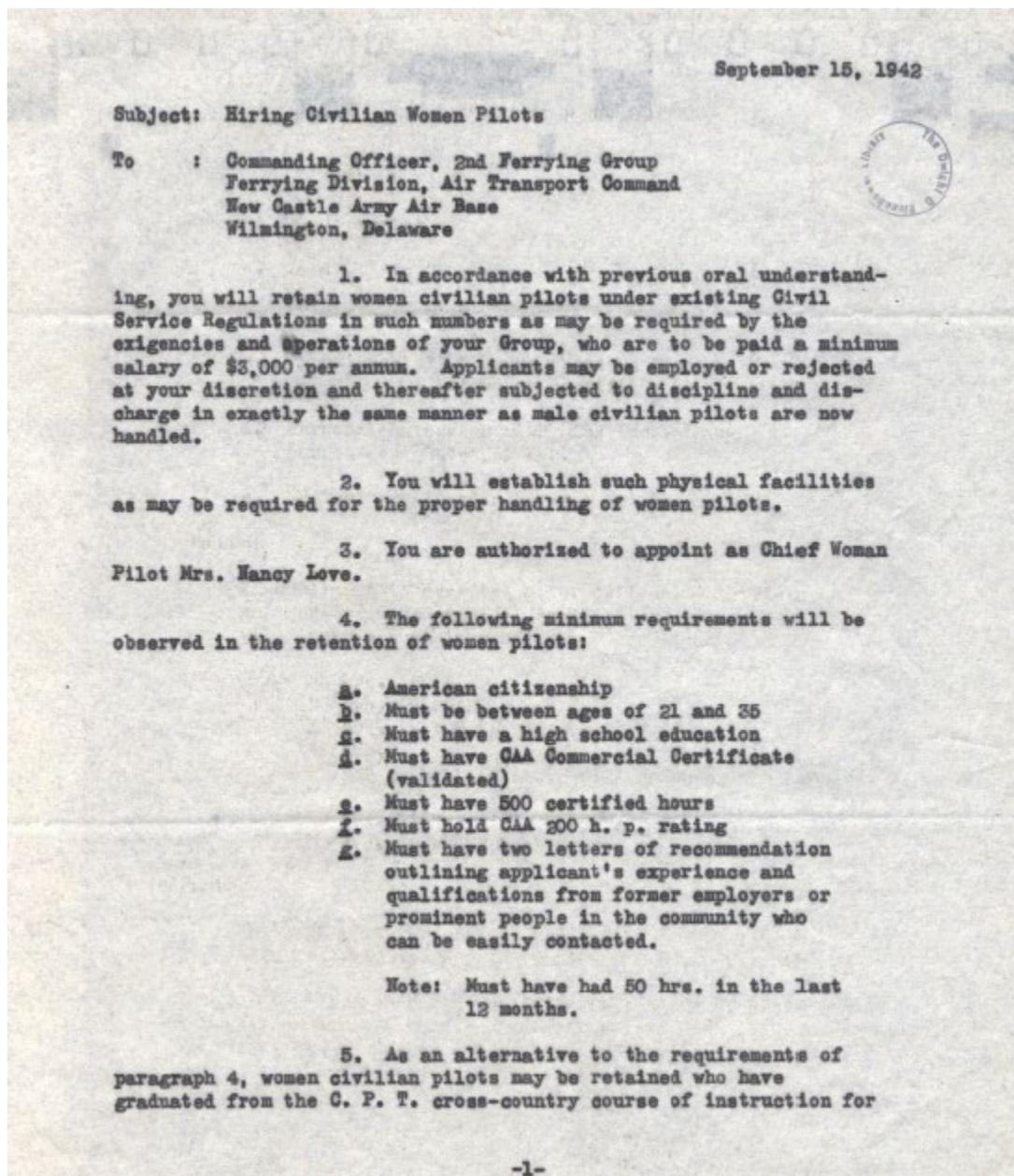
So I was unhappy but not angry when I was informed on every side that there would be no women’s branch of the ferry command. ‘Look,’ they would say, ‘get in the Civil Air Patrol’ (an organization composed of civil pilots which is doing great work in coastal patrol). This was a splendid thought until I discovered that although women pilots could join they could not be used on ‘missions.’ I had taught two CPT programs and wanted to do some other kind of flying, for in variation you gain knowledge and I wanted and still want to be as good a pilot- as skilled, as scientific and knowledgeable a pilot as it is possible for me to be.”

An Interview with Cornelia Fort

PRIMARY SOURCE

THEME: Changing Roles of Women During World War II

Read the letter that was sent out to Cornelia, and other women, when the military decided to begin hiring talented women pilots. Look carefully at the qualification list. In order to be considered "fully trained" for the same military service, male pilots had to complete 65 hours of primary training and an additional 75 hours of basic and advanced training. This is less than half the hours required for women to be considered ready for service.



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Original letter continued.

women ferry pilots, (under the direction of Miss Jacquelyne Cochran). You will determine that the minimum required curricula hereinafter set forth has been completed to your satisfaction.

Each candidate must have completed:

- a. 25 hrs. on aircraft of liaison type
- b. 25 hrs. on aircraft of not less than 90 h. p.
- c. 50 hrs. on aircraft of not less than 200 h.p.
- d. 15 hrs. on a link trainer
- e. 25 hrs. instrument instruction under a hood
- f. Ground course consisting of a minimum of 24 hrs. of meteorology, 30 hrs. of mathematics, 50 hrs. of physics, 50 hrs. of navigation, 16 hrs. of Civil Air Regulations, and 16 hrs. of aircraft servicing.
- g. Must have a minimum of 300 total hours
- h. Must be an American citizen
- i. Between the ages of 21 and 35 years
- j. Have a high school education
- k. Must have obtained a CAA Commercial License (validated) on 200 h. p. airplanes.

6. All applicants will complete to your satisfaction a flight test as outlined in Paragraph 7 d, AAF Reg. 50-7. Such flight test will be given by a qualified military pilot of your choice.

7. Applicants will be required to undergo a physical examination to be given by your Flight Surgeon in accordance with directions furnished by the Surgeon of the ATC.

8. You will be responsible to the Commanding Officer, Ferrying Division, that all requirements in the hiring of women civilian pilots have been complied with, and you will report to this headquarters not later than Monday of each week name and number, stating full qualifications, of women pilots hired by you.

WILLIAM H. TURNER
Colonel, Air Corps
Commanding

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SECONDARY SOURCE

THEME: Changing Roles of Women During World War II

This excerpt from Daughter of the Air, explores more in depth just a few of the differences women and men faced when joining the piloting program.

“Once they had met the army’s rigorous standards, these women would be trained for thirty to forty-five days and would fly only primary and liaison aircraft on domestic routes. They were to be paid \$250 per month, plus \$6 a day when they were traveling. This was \$130 less per month than men were making.

The ferrying group was originally to have been a military unit, which the flyers commissioned as second lieutenants, but that idea was scrapped because existing legislation made no provision for such a move. It was proposed organizing the squadron on a civilian basis instead.”

- Daughter of the Air, Rob Simbeck

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PRIMARY SOURCE

THEME: Women in the Workforce During WWII

Watch this video about the regulations women had to follow in factory jobs. As you watch, pay close attention to the beginning of the video as it discusses the kind of women who would be working in factories. Think also about the many changes women had to adapt to and how this was marketed towards these women.

https://archive.org/details/0995_Danger_Women_at_Work_01_15_48_19

An Interview with Cornelia Fort

PRIMARY SOURCE

THEME: Women in the Workforce During WWII

This excerpt comes from a page from the Nashville Bridge Company handbook. The Nashville Bridge Company was one of many businesses that shifted production during the war to support the military. This company, and many around the country, also began hiring women in great numbers to fill the jobs left by men going off to war. To view a digital copy, [click here](#).

HISTORY

The Nashville Bridge Company was organized in 1902 by Mr. A. J. Dyer, who is Chairman of the Board. Through the years the Company has experienced a continuous and expanding development, and today ranks as one of the largest and best known concerns in the country. This growth has been due to the fact that we follow an honest method of doing business, always taking pride in our Quality of Production. Quality, plus our square dealing with our employees and customers at all times, has been the most important factor in our growth. We sincerely hope that YOU, like the rest of us, will help us do this by bringing to your job, loyalty and pride in your workmanship.

During normal times we fabricate and erect structural steel for buildings, bridges, tanks and towers, and our Marine Department builds barges and towboats. Since the war our entire plant has been engaged in building combat vessels and barges for the Army and Navy. These boats are playing a big part in winning the war.

NABRICO

NABRICO is the company trade name. Whenever you see this name you will know it stands for Nashville Bridge Company.

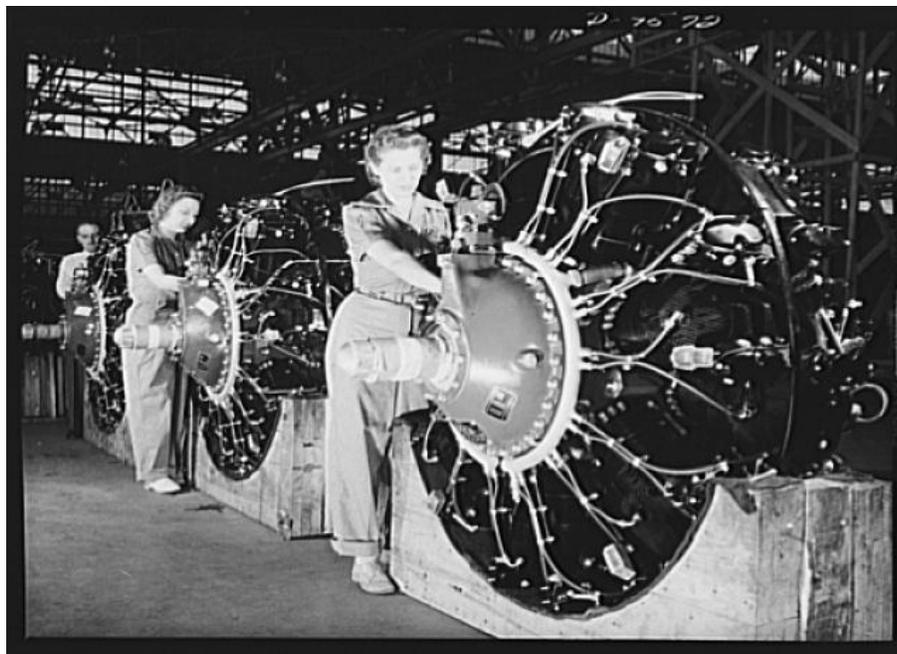
The NA-BRI-Co NEWS is published monthly by and for the employees of the company.

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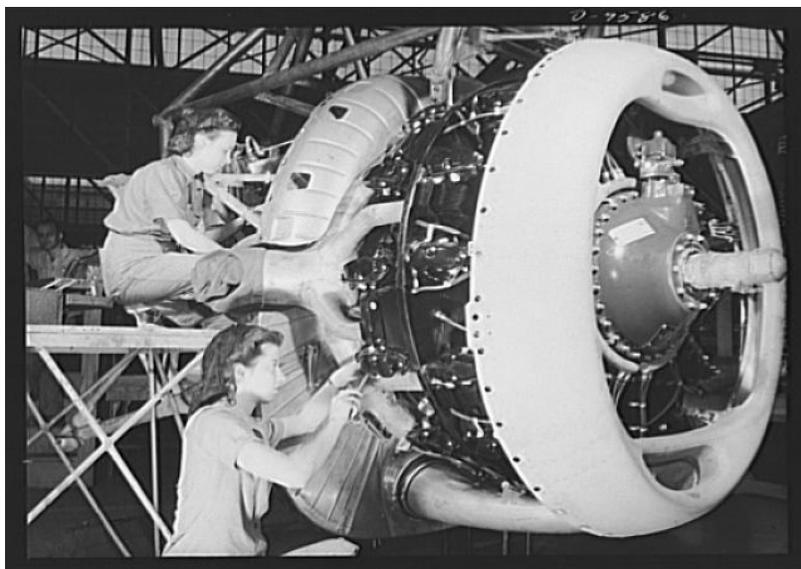
Primary Source

THEME: Women in the Workforce During WWII

These photos are from the Vultee Aircraft plant where government planes were made in Nashville, TN. During World War II, large defense contracts with the federal government were made with this plant. Many women were employed at the plant, as “Rosie the Riveter” became a popular symbol of women’s patriotism.



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Secondary Source

THEME: Women in the Workforce During WWII

Read these two excerpts from Daughter of the Air, which discusses why women were allowed to join the fight through aviation and what role women played during the wartime effort.

Cornelia's new job owed its existence to Hitler. The Roosevelt administration, recognizing that growing threat of Germany's air force, had established the Civilian Pilot Training Program in 1938. Spearheaded by the Army Air Force commander General Henry Harley "Hap" Arnold, the program was designed to enlarge the U.S. aviation industry and teach young Americans to fly in preparation for the nation's probable entry into the war. Although the military had thus far resisted using female pilots, women were welcome in the CPTP. The AAF had fewer than 1,000 officers and was adding only 300 a year, while Arnold figured the country would soon need 100,000 trained pilots.

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Nancy [Nancy Harkness Love, WAFS Commander] told the press that four weeks' training would begin shortly and talked about the women pilots' qualifications, their pay, and their civilian status- they were officially civil service employees. No doubt in response to the question, "What does your husband think of your appointment?" she told them he thought it was swell. She also told them, "The squadron was formed to release men for more difficult flying jobs." With women ferrying lighter planes, she said, 'the men can be sued to ferry more complicated aircraft to various points in this country and to war combat zones.'

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Use this space below to take notes during the interview with Cornelia. You will want to write down the things that surprised you throughout the interview.

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What we **K**now

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a black border, intended for notes under the 'What we Know' heading.

What we **W**ant to know

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a black border, intended for notes under the 'What we Want to know' heading.

What we **L**earned

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a black border, intended for notes under the 'What we Learned' heading.

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Women in the Workforce

- Is going to work the only thing women did to help the war effort?

Women in the Workforce

- Why did many women choose to go to work instead of staying home?

Women in the Workforce

- How did life change for women in Tennessee during the war?

Women in the Workforce

- Were women able to remain in their jobs after the war ended?

Changing Roles

- What did the pilots do in their free time?

Changing Roles

- What was a typical flying mission like?

Changing Roles

- Were you scared to go to war?

Changing Roles

- What did the pilots do in their free time?

Men and Women

- What are some similarities between men and women during the war?

Men and Women

- Why did women have to do so much more than men?

Men and Women

- What was the training like for men pilots?

Men and Women

- What would women choose to fight if it was so unfair?

Fill in the Venn diagram with at least three ways that Men and Women soldiers were the same and at least three ways that they were unique.

