

November 1, 1944 Brigadier General Nowland, Commander ATC Ferrying Division

"Secret Memorandum"
to Commanding General, Air Transport Command

The announced inactivation of the WASP on 20 December 1944 will have a profound effect on the ability of the Ferrying Division to meet its commitments and to deliver pursuit type aircraft. Since June 1943 women pilots have been delivering fighters in increasing numbers, and at this date 117 WASPs, or 82 per cent of the total number assigned this Division, are "frozen" on pursuit planes. They represent 49 per cent of our total "frozen" pursuit pilots in the five Groups to which WASPs are assigned. It was planned to keep this group of civilian pilots on pursuit deliveries permanently, thus releasing men for progressive upgrading in order to meet our quotas...

Replacement of these experienced pilots with an equal number of male pilots will entail a month's training at Brownsville for each pilot. These replacements must be chosen from the ranks of our more experienced personnel, since it has been demonstrated that a minimum of 400 hours and an instrument card are necessary prerequisites for pursuit training and subsequent safe delivery of fighters. The 117 WASPs we have been using on pursuit deliveries are already experienced in this specialized type of flying and have established a remarkable low accident record...

The cost of training a fighter pilot at the 4th OUT is approximately \$9,336.00, or \$1,085,312 for the 117 replacements required upon the discharge of the WASPs...

The loss of the women pilots in the Ferrying Division will effect a definite hardship upon the operations of the Groups. The discharge of the WASPs in December will necessitate the immediate freezing on pursuits of 117 male pilots to replace them. These officers will consequently be ineligible for upgrading and foreign quotas for a minimum period of five months, since pursuit training consumes one month, and a period of four months of pursuit flying has been demonstrated to be the minimum period to insure effective utilization.

These pilots, even after training, will not be as efficient, due to lack of experience, as are the WASPs who have been specializing in this type of flying over a period of eighteen months. It is obvious that the elimination of this group of pilots will not only seriously hamper the Ferrying Division in performing its ferrying mission, but will result in needless expenditure of a considerable amount of money in training and replacements.

According to Miss Merryman, General Arnold's reply came via another 'secret memorandum' which said, in part: "Evaluation of this program in terms of dollars and cents is not the immediate issue at stake and personnel under your control should scrupulously avoid any discussion along this line."

This excerpt is from Molly Merriman's fantastic book, "**Clipped Wings**"
New York University Press, 1998. pp 121 and 122.