

# Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)

Annotated Bibliography for 2016 NEH Summer Institute on Veterans in Society

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## Secondary Sources:

**Merryman, Molly. *Clipped Wings: The Rise and Fall of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.**

*Clipped Wings* is an analysis of the WASP disbandment and quests for militarization in 1944 and 1976-1977. It focuses on the creation of the WASP program, plans for militarization, negative media publicity towards the end of the war, Congressional debates over militarization, the disbandment of the program, and successful militarization in 1977. Among the contributing factors for disbandment was negative media publicity arising from accusations that the WASP took jobs from male pilots and the inaccurate Congressional conclusion that WASP training was an incredibly expensive program. While the Congressional debate highlighted the inaccuracies of these accusations, Merryman concluded the WASP bill failed because men wanted to enforce traditional gendered ideals, including male preferences to jobs. This plan for WASP militarization arose during a period when there were "cultural fears" associated with women's increasingly stretched roles.

**Meyer, Leisa. *Creating GI Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps during World War II*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.**

Analyzing oral histories, archival records, and media coverage of the Women's Army Corps (WAC), historian Leisa Meyer discusses the American public's perceived "proper" roles of men and women during the war. Her work filled a large gap in the historiography of military women as she traced issues of sexuality and power during World War II which remain relevant today. The formation of the WAC generated controversy about definitions of masculinity and femininity, and the military regulated the sexuality of female soldiers.

**Moore, Brenda. *Serving Our Country: Japanese American Women in the Military during World War II*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003.**

Sociologist Brenda L. Moore utilizes a life course perspective framework to analyze Japanese Women's military service during World War II as she examined their lives before, during, and after the war. This study is primarily based on Moore's interviews with eight former WACs and one former nurse in the Army Nurse Corps (ANC), which are woven throughout the book. Seeking to answer questions about Nisei women's motivations to join the military and the effect their service had on their lives, she also utilized War Department papers, personal diaries, biographies, and oral histories from the National Japanese American Historical Society. Her analysis of this rich dearth of sources provides readers with a better sense of the gendered and racial politics during the war as she explains how and why the military accepted Nisei women, why they decided to join, and how their military experiences contributed to the betterment of their lives.

**Norman, Elizabeth M. *We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of American Nurses Trapped on Bataan by the Japanese*. New York: Pocket Books, 1999.**

Utilizing her own background as a nurse, Elizabeth M. Norman wrote this study based on over fifty interviews with American nurses who served in the Philippines during World War II. These women were Prisoners of War for three years in Japanese POW camps. While nursing is considered traditional in the

historiography of the war, Norman argues otherwise. From her personal interviews with the nurses, she noticed that women described their experiences with a collective persona as they thought of their experiences in terms of the group.

Vuic, Kara Dixon. *Officer, Nurse, Woman: The Army Nurse Corps in the Vietnam War*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

Historian Kara Dixon Vuic illuminates nurses' experiences during the Vietnam War through interviews with the nurses, questionnaires they completed after the war, and Vuic's experiences at their reunions. She argues American women did not go to war simply because they saw nursing posters, but rather the opportunities for career advancement and the experiences they believed they would gain. Yet, this period is wrought with contradictions as Army Nurse Corps advertisements that offered equal opportunity also told women they could find a man overseas. Vuic eloquently reveals the complex and shifting social and gender norms during this fraught and controversial war.

### Memoirs/Personal Narratives:

Carl, Ann B. *A WASP Among Eagles: A Woman Military Test Pilot in World War II*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999.

WASP Ann Carl wrote this memoir to explain her work as a test pilot during World War II. She participated in testing the effects of the altitude chamber on women and later helped design a female relief tube. Carl became the first woman to fly a jet aircraft when she worked as a test pilot at the Wright-Patterson Air Force test center. Some of her other work included flying close to jets to test their tail warning system, shooting the guns on a P-51, and testing a high-altitude camera. Disappointed when the WASP program ended, she hoped to continue working in the field of aviation. Unfortunately, she found few opportunities after the war and instead focused on a career in journalism and her family.

Clark, Marie Mountain. *Dear Mother and Daddy: World War II Letters Home from a WASP*. Livonia, MI: First Page Publications, 2005.

This book is a collection of WASP Marie Mountain Clark's letters and diaries from the war and postwar period. They are filled with evidence of her passion for flying, her love of the WASP experience and the camaraderie between the women pilots. After the war, the only aviation job she could find was as an instructor, which she soon gave up because she found flying small aircraft unsatisfying compared to military aircraft. Since she did not have the financial resources to continue flying on a regular basis, she focused on her music career.