

ready terminating a number of the male civilian instructor pilots. Thus, when the WASP militarization bill was introduced, Congress was deluged with letters from those civilian instructor pilots protesting against militarization of women pilots while men pilots were being lay-off. In addition, the Ramspeck Committee on Civil Service that looked into the WASP program reported unfavorably on the proposal and recommended immediate termination of women pilot training. The WASP bill was defeated.

In August 1944 Miss Cochran recommended to General Arnold that either another attempt be made for militarization, or disband the WASP. Her recommendation was heralded in newspapers as an ultimatum. General Arnold realized that it was futile to press for militarization; the need for pilots had changed radically with victory in Europe in the offing, thus on Oct. 3rd General Arnold announced that the WASP program would be deactivated. It was a bitter disappointment to the women pilots and even to the Ferrying Division which claimed that its activities would be handicapped by the loss of the women pilots.

At the time the WASPs were getting over their growing pains and were mounting their best efforts the war was nearing an end and their services were no longer needed. In their operations from 1942 to 1944, their overall accident rate was slightly higher than male pilots but their fatal accident rate was slightly lower (.693 per 1000 hours for women vs. .707 per 100 hours for men in 1942). No trustworthy conclusion could be drawn from this comparison however, because men were doing combat training type flying. The WASPs had averaged 33 flying hours per woman per month and had flown approximately 60 million miles within the continent of United States and Canada. 38 of the WASPs gave their lives during training and operation,

As the program came to an end in 1945 there were 916 WASPs on duty with the AAF assigned to the following Commands:

Headquarters, AAF	1	4th Air Force	37
Training Command	620	Weather Wing	11
Air Transport Command	141	Proving Ground Command	6
1st Air Force	16	Air Technical Service Command	3
2nd Air Force	80	Troop Carrier Command	1

The WASP organization came to an end on 20 Dec. 1944. The failure to militarize women pilots was unfair to the WASPs, who had given good service while they were needed, but on the other hand the War Department could not be burdened with the difficult task of finding assignments for trained women pilots whose skills were no longer required.

In spite of all the difficulties encountered, the WASP program achieved its goal of releasing male pilots for combat duty. During these crucial months in 1943, when the outcome of daylight bombing of Germany hung in the balance, those additional combat pilots undoubtedly contributed toward the eventual air superiority in the sky of Europe.

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WAR IS HELL - SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW? By JAMES H. FARMER

A commentary on the production of *The Thousand Plane Raid*, a motion picture. See "Santa Maria Diary" by J.H. Farmer, *JOURNAL of AAHS*, Fall 1969, Page 178.

The motion picture, *The Thousand Plane Raid*, is as dated in its approach to film making as the subject it attempts to deal with, a celluloid dinosaur of the "B" movie ice age.

The *Raid* is the fictitious story of the first American 1000-plane raid over Europe during WWII, the trials and tribulations of the tactician, a B-17 group commander who first worked up the plan, and of his lackluster bomb group, the 103rd. The story centers around this semi-inspired leader, played haltingly by actor Chris George, and is complete with the usual compliment of one-dimensional war period characterizations: the long-suffering (and of course beautiful) girl friend (Larine Stephines); the tough "give 'em hell" ground sergeant; the whimpering coward; the brave and handsome renegade ace pilot played in a spirited tongue-in-cheek fashion by actor Gary Marshall; plus a General with overly developed paternal instincts. They are all there, personalities as familiar as a pair of well-worn house slippers, dispensing the outdated dialogue and tired cliches so typical of the formula films of the late 1930's and 40's.

The *Raid* is ill-conceived, with an ill-fitting group of characters, interwoven sub plots and unimaginative photography that may have sold war bonds twenty-five years ago, but today seems pointless and trite. The value of the motion picture, little though it may be, is to be found in the unpretentious display, both on the ground and in the air, of the famous Flying Fortress. The B-17 is a joy to behold for a generation yet unexposed to its grace and majesty. There is a low-level flypast that is the high point of the film, a scene not to be surpassed by any human actor. For all of its functional aesthetics it is a shame to have to

report that armchair directors and writers persist in treating the Fortress as little more than a prop before which the actor does his thing.

In some respects, what the Spitfire was to Great Britain, the Flying Fortress was to the United States. It tangibly represented a military theory and, later, a military policy. The strategic bomber formed the backup for this nation's foreign policy for over a generation. It seems appropriate to examine, in public forum, those times and conditions as they really were. They made fertile the concept of strategic bombardment as both an instrument of and a deterrent to war. In this day of changing morals and values, of personal and national reevaluation, truth is at a premium. The present generation wants, year, demands, to be told what it really was like. Why do popular, qualified studies of the 8th Air Force go by the boards only to be replaced on the screen by unimaginative, superficial stories that do neither the Air Force nor the viewing public justice?

Hopefully, the *Raid* is an exception of today and not the rule. There has been a financial and limited renaissance in aviation films with the box office success of *Those Magnificent Men and Their Flying Machines*. The longevity of this trend in pure dollars and cents language is of course wholly dependent upon the success of a handfull of epic films (*Battle of Britain* for one) about to be released. Still, it is hoped that this will sustain enough life for at least one in-depth motion picture study of the 8th Air Force.

QUOTATIONS, MAYBE FAMOUS

"The progress of technology has endowed mankind with virtually unlimited potential wealth and power, but in piling up riches for us, technology has sabotaged our relations with each other. The way of life that technology produces, and requires, creates a psychological climate of exasperation and intransigence which is even making us throw its material product away."

Arnold Toynbee, in *Los Angeles Times*, 14 July 68.