



The Flying Life of **EVELYN SHARP**

by H. Glenn Buffington

(All photos from author's collection except as noted)

Evelyn Sharp and the writer had an ongoing correspondence 1938–1944, from the late Depression years into WWII. After this long interval, I feel her interesting commentary should be shared with AAHS members as it gives an insight into her trials, tribulations and triumphs.

Ord, Nebraska—Sept. 29, 1938: "I received your very kind letter and I will try to give you the information you want. The enclosed article will give you most of the information; however, some of the figures have changed.

"Before I soloed I had flown in seven different types of planes and had 12 hours that stretched over a period of a year. The planes flown up till that time were: Flyabout, Curtiss *Robin*, Stinson, Travel Air, Aeronca, Fairchild and Waco. Since then I have flown those and several others: Taylor *Cub*, Taylorcraft, Arrow *Sport* and Stearman Hammond. I received my Amateur license No. 34711 when I was 16 with 26 hours, my Private at 17 with 52 hours, and my Commercial at 18 with 202 hours.

"I have been flying since February 4,

1935. I lost the *Cub* in January because of failure to make payments. Since I got my Commercial I have been barnstorming. August 11, 1938, I borrowed 500 dollars and bought an old Curtiss *Robin* OX-5 powered, like Corrigan's, and started taking in county fairs. I've taken in 12 up to date, and I carry passengers for one dollar a ride. I've carried over 600 to date and have 365 hours' flying time.

"My little dog always goes with me and he loves to fly. 'Scottie' is my best 'boyfriend,' and he is always with me. I have had him about two years. He was eight months old when I got him.

"One of my ambitions now that I have a Commercial is to become one of the few women to hold an instrument rating. I also want to get a job advertising one of the fairs to come off next year, either the San Francisco Exposition or the New York World's Fair. I should think there would be some way of advertising that I could do since I am the youngest commercial aviatrix in the United States, don't you?"

(A number of Ord business persons made the down payment on a Taylor *Silver Cub* J-2 for Evelyn, and on either side of the fuselage in navy blue color was inscribed:

EVELYN SHARP

Ord, Nebraska

Youngest Commercial Pilot
in the USA

Douglas Corrigan's Curtiss *Robin* originally had an OX-5 engine; however, he converted it to a Wright *Whirlwind* J6-5 for his Atlantic flight, July 17–18, 1938, in 28:13 flying time.)

Ord, Nebraska—Oct. 19, 1938: "You may keep the *World-Herald* clipping if you like. Yes, I've taken in quite a few county fairs. Made some good money but it has gone for payments on the *Robin*. I still owe about \$300 and cold weather is setting in.

"I have been ill for the past two days with asthma and I'm so weak that my writing doesn't look so good. I've had asthma ever since I was two. Am trying my best to get a flying job before winter sets in and certainly hope I'll succeed."

Ord, Nebraska—Dec. 19, 1938: (with the Christmas card) "How are you and the *Cub* coming along? Thank you very much for trying to scare up a job

At Fairchild Aircraft Corp., Hagerstown, Maryland, Evelyn takes delivery of a PT-19, late November 1942. (Fairchild)

for me. Gee, I sure wish I could connect with someone like that. I'd like to get in with some oil company. Just got my plane back from the overhaul and it is certainly in good condition now.

"How many hours do you have now? It would be fun to go on the *Cub* Convoy—too bad I still don't have mine. Just got the *Robin* back yesterday, as I told you before and have flown five hours since. Hauled 40 passengers—the overhaul cost \$155. No, I'm not planning any hop, no money to hop on—ha!

"I am anxious to get a job so I can pay up my bills. I owe close to \$400 now. That overhaul and tires, and I still owe on the plane. If the summer hadn't been over with so quickly I'd got that paid back. Perhaps spring will bring flying jobs or even Santa Claus might slip one in my stocking!"

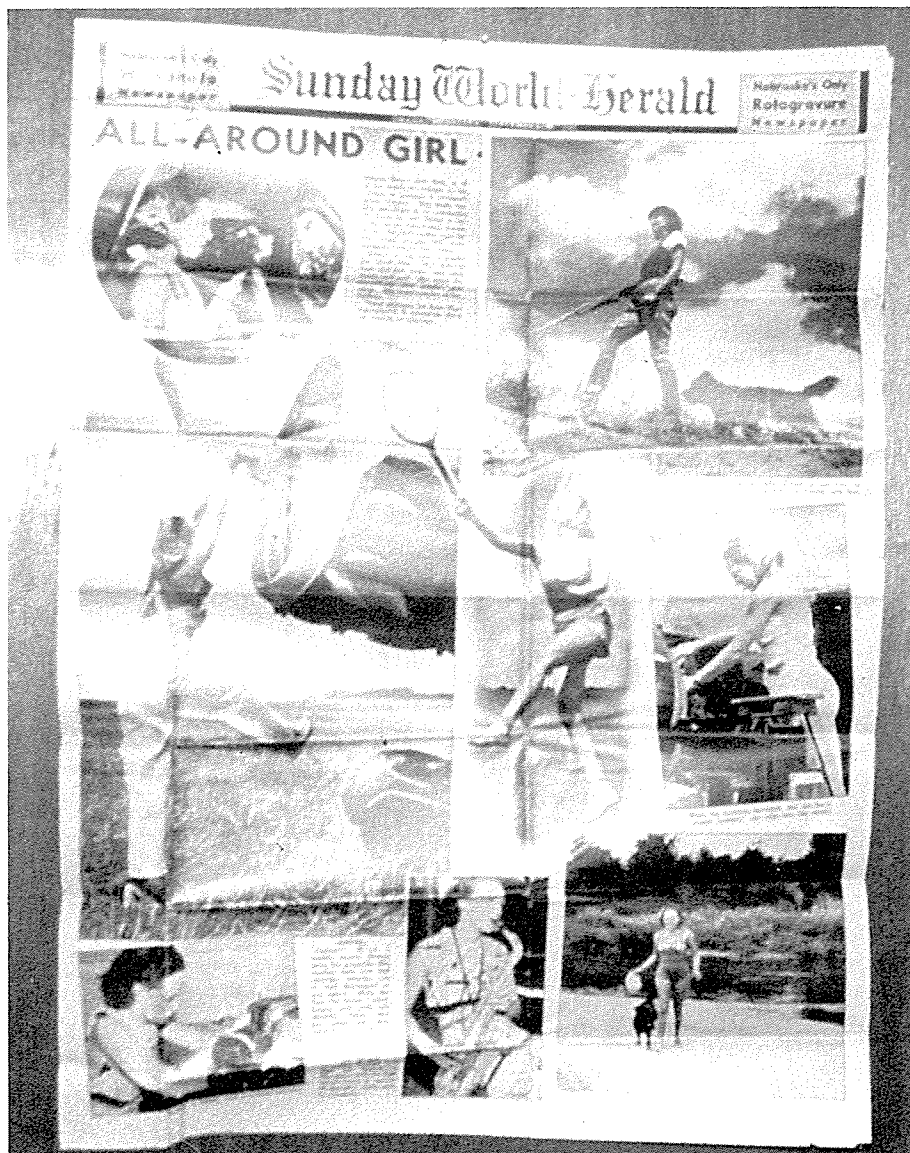
The Cub Convoys were an annual gathering of hundreds of light planes, merging in the Miami, Florida area for the All-American Air Maneuvers, usually a week in early January.

Ord, Nebraska—Jan. 13, 1939: "Last Thursday I flew to Broken Bow, about 50 miles by air from Ord and stayed two days and took in about 25 dollars. The second day was a bad one and I took in only three dollars, so we left early for Ord. Saturday morning we flew to Kearney, stayed two days and took in 72 dollars. Sunday morning I was interviewed over their radio station.

"Do you know that on Feb. 4th I will have been flying four years! I only had twelve hours' flying time the first year in seven different kinds of planes, but since then I skipped right along. I certainly wish I could have gone on the *Cub* Convoy—bet everyone had lots of fun.

"My little dog, 'Scottie,' broke his leg the day after Christmas; hit by a car. We took the cast off two days ago. He doesn't use it much yet, but soon you won't be able to tell he ever had a broken leg. In fact, he is more ornery than before. Well, I must cut my motor and glide."

Ord, Nebraska—Jan. 31, 1939: "The last few days have been perfect, but the weather man reports bad weather coming. Friday, I played basketball up at the schoolhouse. During the tussle I broke the crystal on my watch. Saturday I went roller skating all afternoon. Sun-



Evelyn rates front-page rotogravure section of the *Omaha World-Herald*, September 18, 1938.

day I went ice skating and horseback riding in the afternoon. Monday I rode horseback in the afternoon and bicycle riding in the evening. I haven't read Corrigan's book yet but I plan to. I also plan to read Amelia Earhart's book, too.

"Certainly hope I get to visit Kansas City in the near future, to see their airport and to meet you. 'Scottie' is up and perking again—you'd never know his leg was ever broken. He's cuter than ever, and I don't know what I would do without him. He seems to understand everything I say and he always goes with me. Well, Happy Landings."

Ord, Nebraska—Mar. 10, 1939: "My mother and I just returned from Fort Worth where we attended the Southwest Aviation Conference and met all kinds of famous fliers. I would have liked to drop over to Kansas City but couldn't. We had five flats and burned

out two rods. The water leaked into the crankcase and really messed things up. I'm going to fly to Lincoln the 15th to a Junior Chamber of Commerce meeting of the Aviation Division."

Grand Island, Nebraska—May 12, 1939: "At present I am at Grand Island getting my plane ready for relicensing. I sure hope it goes through. I was at Goodland, Kansas, and barnstormed—guess I'll have to make my living by barnstorming. I have 500 hours now and have carried over 2,400 people. Not bad for a scrub, eh? Please excuse this writing, as I am doing it on my knee at the airport. Don't make any nose-high turns!"

Cambridge, Nebraska—July 19, 1939: "I'm out at the field, lying on a cot in the shade of my airplane wing,

Oct 4, 1939
Cozad, Neb.

Hello Glenn,

Well, here I am at Cozad, Neb. Since you last heard from me I've been every place but Ord. I just don't even go there. I was in Harlan & Des Moines Iowa last week. I almost decided to come to Kansas City to the big doings they had there last Saturday but it turned out that I couldn't make it. I wish I could have.

No, I didn't get to the

Cleveland Air Races. I'm not as disappointed tho' cause I've seen practically the same show at the different small air shows since. The same pilots with the same act. They were good, too.

How is your flying coming along? I have 700 hrs & have carried over 4,500 passengers. We're still planning on coming to Kansas City sometime this fall.

Well, I had another of those darn birthdays & I'm 20 years old now. Personally, I'd just as soon stay in my teens. Let me hear from you soon.
Evelyn Sharp

Typical letter from Evelyn, from Cozad, Nebraska.

waiting for some prospective customers to drive up. I'm doing a little barnstorming in other words. I have 600 hours now and have carried over 3,500 passengers—am supporting myself and my mother and dad and have one fellow working for me. The last three days have been my worst days. The most I've taken in one day has been \$90.

"We have had some tricky weather the last few days. Dust storms and what not but mostly hot weather. If my plane will just hold out it will be o.k. But, if it doesn't I just don't know what I'll do. I am planning on starting south in the late fall and barnstorm my way into Texas. Send a letter to Ord and it will be forwarded to me."

Shelton, Nebraska—Aug. 16, 1939: "Well, I haven't had such good luck lately—motor trouble mostly. I've gone in the hole quite a bit, but guess if I just keep plugging the best I can, maybe I'll get on top. No, I've never flown out of

Elwood but I have flown over there several times. I will look him up (my uncle), if I ever go there. I didn't subscribe to *The Pilot* so you don't need to worry.

"To date I've flown 630 hours and have carried 3,930 passengers. I'm still trying to get a job and capitalize on my extreme youth, but so far no luck. By gosh, I'd better do it soon or I won't be the youngest! I sure would like to scrape up the dough to go to the Cleveland Air Races, but I have my doubts if it will be possible."

Cozad, Nebraska—Oct. 4, 1939: "Since you last heard from me I've been every place but Ord. I was in Harlan and Des Moines, Iowa, last week. I almost decided to come to Kansas City to the big doings they had there last Saturday (dedication of the new terminal building at Municipal Airport; now known as the Kansas City Downtown Airport), but it turned out

that I couldn't make it.

"No, I didn't get to the Cleveland Air Races, but am not too disappointed 'cause I've seen practically the same show at the different small air shows since. The same pilots with their same act. They were good, too.

"How is your flying coming along? I have 700 hours and have carried over 4,500 passengers. Well, I had another of those darn birthdays and am 20 years old now. Personally, I'd just as soon stay in my teens. Let me hear from you soon."

Lincoln, Nebraska—Nov. 18, 1939: "I've been in Lincoln since Oct. 31, trying to get some welding done on some of the plane's tail surfaces—they are so doggone slow! As far as I know, my southern winter plans have been cancelled. I'm planning to stay in Grand Island at the Old Airport, so if you ever decide on a cross-country, drop in at Old Airport. I have 725 hours

now, but haven't flown for about three weeks."

Grand Island, Nebraska—Dec. 18, 1939: "Yes, you can call Grand Island my homeport. My ship is still in Lincoln though. Perhaps I'll get it the middle of the week. They sure are keeping me from making the most of this lovely weather. I'll be down to Kansas City sometime tho' as I'm going to try to get my instructor's rating and the inspector who gives the test is stationed there."

Grand Island, Nebraska—Jan. 6, 1940: "Gee, thanks oodles for the picture—it sits right in the middle of my dresser. The one I'm going to send you won't have a frame, but I guess you can have it anyway."

"How cold has it been down your way? It's been as far down as 20 degrees below here and that is just too darn cold, don't you agree? At any rate, am thinking now it will be spring before I'm ready for my rating. I sure hope I get it—do you think I will?"

"The enclosed negatives were taken in Lexington, Nebraska, about the first of September. Kinda goofy, aren't they? That Texaco can showing up so plainly was purely accidental. I wanted something to sit Scottie on and it was the closest thing. The other two were when I was down swimming. Well, I guess I had better cut my motor and glide to a landing."

Grand Island, Nebraska—Jan. 17, 1940: "We are going to have another siege of cold weather. Last night it was quite nice out, so Scottie and I went out and played in the snow together. He just loves to roll in the snow and run and jump in a snowdrift—cute!"

"That was swell encouragement you gave me about my instructor's rating. You know, I sit and talk to Scottie lots. He seems to understand exactly what I say, but he can't answer!"

"I am planning on going roller skating tonight, am learning to waltz skate—lots of fun. Haven't been ice skating yet. Happy Landings and Arf, Arf from Scottie."

Grand Island, Nebraska—Feb. 9, 1940: "Gee, thanks oodles for the compact. It was certainly thoughtful of you to remember my 5th year of flying. The compact is so clever too—I've never seen one pertaining to aviation before."

"I've been sewing a little lately. In fact, I made a blouse with a hood and

also made a skirt. Now, I'll have to continue studying."

Grand Island, Nebraska—Mar. 28, 1940: "It is a month to the day since I got your letter. Fine letter answerer I am—I'd better do better or you will disown me. Our weather has been perfectly outrageous, today was terrible, rain and hail. You remember me telling you that we lived across the street from the Old Airport? Well, something told me to look out the window and what should I see but a yellow *Cub* on its nose. I tore across the road, under a fence and over a mesh, five-foot fence and to the plane. The pilot and I were both hanging onto it when help got there in a car. After struggling with the plane in the high wind, we finally got to the hangar. One wingtip dug into the ground during the time we were trying to make it to the hangar. Both wingtips were slightly bent and one prop blade broken, and a bewildered pilot from Avoca, Iowa. He came over to our house and waited three hours, then took a bus to Omaha. He is going to send a prop out and let me fly his plane for a month. It's only a 40-hp *Cub*—not much power, but it's something to fly. I don't know how I got over that five-foot fence so fast. I tried it again later and could hardly make it. The wind was blowing about 45 mph and it got up to 57 mph in half an hour,

Evelyn Sharp, "Scottie" and the OX-5 Curtiss Robin, barnstorming at Lexington, Nebraska, September 1939.



so you can see how it happened."

Lincoln, Nebraska—May 12, 1940: "I'm in Lincoln for a spell now as I have some good contacts here and I believe it's better to stay here than to be in Grand Island."

"I made a personal appearance on the Nebraska Theatre stage here a week ago Thursday. Last Thursday I was on Jane Tucker's radio program, and I also gave a speech at the Lincoln Co-operative Club. Now the Chamber of Commerce here wants me to speak before them. I also have to be at an Aeronautical meeting and speak on aviation a week from Monday—quite a public speaker, I must say. I'm trying to raise the dough for a 3-place *Cub*, think I would like one."

Spearfish, South Dakota—July 27, 1940: "Received my instructor's rating June 9th and the next day I landed a job at \$40 a week to help another instructor out. It was at Mitchell, South Dakota. I was there two weeks and then came the job at Spearfish. It is a complete unit for the CAA of 15 students for which I am paid \$300 a month. I get up at 4:00 A.M., fly until 11:00 A.M. Get off until 3:00 P.M., and during that time I sleep, ride horseback, swim, hike, etc. Then at 3:00 P.M. until 7:30 or 8:00 P.M. I fly students again. Not bad, eh? Now have 1,000 hours—and of course Scottie has enjoyed my job too. They say he just sits and watches the plane while I'm flying all day. I'm flying a Luscombe but personally, I prefer the tandem seating arrangement for instructing."

"I certainly like my job here at the north edge of the Black Hills. The airport is set in a lovely, little valley; we have two nice hangars and an administration building. I have 14 boys and one girl student. Have soloed all of them, and they are doing fine."

"We had an air show here last Saturday. Tex Rankin stunted for it. So did I. Tex became interested in me and I am in line for a job under him when I finish here."

Spearfish, South Dakota—Oct. 4, 1940: "Still at Spearfish and will be for another two months. I also have 10 more students to train and have just finished my other group—they all received their Privates. I don't know what I'll do after that. Do you know Bill Ong at Old Richards Field in Kansas City? I wrote him for a job."

"You ought to spend a vacation up here in the Black Hills. They are lovely! I'm going deer hunting here when the season opens. Deer are all over the place here and we see some most every day.

"I have 1,200 hours now so am not doing so badly. I have a 1938 Chev and also a 24-foot Covered Wagon trailer house. My folks are with me and Scottie, too. I only have to work from 5:30 A.M. till 5:30 P.M. Will have a couple of pictures for you next time—so remind me."

Spearfish, South Dakota—Oct. 25, 1940: "I have about 1,270 hours now, and have all of my students soloed now and they are all doing fine. Clyde Ice has a unit of 10 students, and out of his 10 and my 10, 11 are football players. After a game there are so many banged-up boys that we don't have much of a flying class for a few days. They are sure a good bunch of kids, though. I fly for the operator, A.J. Menard.

"I still haven't heard from Bill Ong, so I accepted the job here again. Ruth Stilson dropped up to visit me when she came up here on her vacation—seemed very nice. I also know Louise Miller quite well. I hope you get to take the groundwork because it will surely help you. I even take in the class here once in a while and always learn something."

(Bill Ong hired Ruth Stilson in January 1940 and Louise Tinsley Miller in December 1940 to instruct in the CPTP at Kansas City. When Stilson was hired, the local press quoted Ong: "You see, these young men will try to learn faster because they don't want to think a young girl of 23 years knows more about flying than they do.")

Spearfish, South Dakota—Dec. 28, 1940: "Rather lonesome the last few days, as only a few of my students are here. All of the others have gone home for Christmas. Have four of my students done and four ready and two are behind. The two that are behind were grounded for six weeks for being overweight. Isn't that silly? One was three pounds overweight and one was seven over. We had a lot of red tape to go through before we could get them reinstated. Darn these armchair pilots!

"Here is an idea of what I do in a day. Get up at 6:30 A.M., am at the field by 7:00 A.M. I fly a different student about every hour. The airport is four miles from town, so I don't bother



about eating dinner. I just keep on flying until about 4:30 P.M. and then leave the airport and go skating, shooting, hiking or just go home, depending upon how I feel. I eat supper generally at 6:00 P.M. Mother always has something real good for me. After supper, I get my logbooks up to date. Except that the government put out new books and we have the lovely job of re-copying all of the logbooks. I got word the other day that several more of my students are in the service. Isn't that grand? Scottie sends his special 'Arf—he is a proud papa."

Bakersfield, California—Jan. 26, 1941: "Surprise! I sneaked out on you. Finished my unit at Spearfish and will start another here soon. In the meantime, I have some private students. Quite the deal—lots of ships here, 60 Army planes and oodles of civilian planes. I'll soon develop a pivot neck

While instructing at Spearfish, South Dakota, Evelyn visits the Mt. Rushmore National Memorial site, Black Hills of South Dakota, summer of 1940.

watching for airplanes. We have our trailer house in a lovely, little trailer camp about 1 ½ miles from the airport. I'm sure I'll like it here!"

Bakersfield, California—Feb. 25, 1941: "Enclosed is an article full of hooey about me, as I thought you'd like to have it. You know I darned near got to come to your town after a Porterfield, but my boss finally sent someone else as he needed me here. We have three Porterfields here, used for instructing. My boss's name is Les Buchner. I've been instructing Commercial refreshers while waiting for my CPTP unit to start. At present, we follow the opposite pattern the Army does—they are just building a control tower."

Bakersfield, California—May 23, 1941: “Well, I haven’t exactly kicked the bucket, but I have been in this flying game so long that I’m getting lazy. I bought a new car—it is a 4-door, Plymouth sedan, a pretty grey. Brand new, too, radio, spotlight, seat covers, etc. I’ll take a picture of it and send to you.

“I have almost 1,800 hours now, believe it or not. I think I’ll get a couple of days’ vacation after finishing this unit, and plan to go up to Yosemite Park.”

Bakersfield, California—Sept. 11, 1941: “Terribly sorry about my laziness, guess everyone is having that trouble around here. It is so easy to jaunt down to the pool and lie on the lawn and talk to everyone with an occasional dip to drive away the heat. That’s about how I spend my free hours in the middle of the day. The days have shortened quite a bit now and I fly from 5:45 A.M. until noon and from 3:00 P.M. to 6:15 P.M. I have a gorgeous tan from swimming so much. Yesterday I dove too deep and really skinned my face, so everyone teased me today—quite a sight.”

Bakersfield, California—Sept. 19, 1941: “I’ve passed the 2,000th hour mark, have exactly 2,007 hrs 45 min. Have been swimming and ice skating and horseback riding a lot since I’ve been here. They are just finishing some swell new runways on our field here. Plenty of Army traffic in here—big ships, little ships, odd-shaped ones, everything.”

Bakersfield, California—Nov. 17, 1941: “Glad you liked the picture. Not much flying, but enjoy it for a change. I bought a new camera, so will probably be able to get a few pictures now and then. They have our field finished. Here comes a funny looking crate so I’d better get a picture of it—Army observation.”

Bakersfield, California—Dec. 22, 1941: “Well, everything is such a muddle now. The Army is making us move and besides we can’t fly any closer than 150 miles from the ocean, hence we have to go clear back into the desert to fly. Without private flying, I am practically out of a job, so I am getting mad at Japan now for almost putting me out of work. This airport is going to be a bomber base, and about 2,000 soldiers are camped here at the airport. You even have to have a pass to get within a half mile of the airport. Yes, the ship I

fly a lot has a number almost the same as mine (Porterfield, NC34722). I haven’t met Achsa Peacock yet.” (*Achsa Peacock Donnels, Ninety-Nines Charter Member, now lives at Laytonville, California.*)

Lone Pine, California—Mar. 6, 1942: “Sorry I haven’t written sooner but we have been moving our whole flying school to this little burg and I have been pretty busy. We are getting situated now and they are building some offices and enlarging the field for us. The little town has a population of 800, and the skiing is wonderful—just 14 miles to snow—beautiful country for horseback riding. Fifteen to 20 western movies are made here each year. I have 2,300 hours—and have 25 students now—all local people. Our CPTP unit starts March 15, sure hope I can continue to hold a job. I have some bad news for you—Scottie was killed by a car at the airport about a month ago. Gee, I felt badly, and I really miss the little pooch. I don’t know when I will be able to get another Scottie in L.A., but don’t know just when. Mother and Dad are going to stay at Bakersfield because we are pretty well situated there, and then I can have someplace to go. Perhaps we can move back there someday.”

Lone Pine, California—May 6, 1942: “Our 100 CPT students are doing o.k. They are from L.A. City College; I’m teaching private students now instead of CPT this time, so I am getting a little rest. Although I fly as much it’s not so much worry. I haven’t another dog yet but hope to get one soon. I have an old boyfriend at Santa Ana. You said your brother was going to be there. How is your operator’s job coming along? You said you were going to get on with Northwest Airlines. They don’t need a good female pilot, do they?”

Lone Pine, California—July 17, 1942: “I got back a week ago from a trip back east flying an Interstate *Cadet*. We went through NV, AZ, NM, TX, AR, MS, AL, GA, TN, KY, IN, IL, MO, NE, SD, WY, UT, NV—home again. If you had been in Kansas City, I would have dropped over to see you—was in St. Joseph. Has Lady Luck been good to you concerning your job? So you want to put up to Alaska—I’d like to go there too.”

Lone Pine, California—July 24, 1942: “So, you’re in Canada now!

Wow! You’re getting around. Just exactly what are you doing there? I’m teaching Navy CPT now. Have five and some private students, and it really keeps me busy. I have passed 2,700 hours now. I’m still trying to find a puppy to replace Scottie.”

Lone Pine, California—Aug. 25, 1942: “Our airport at Lone Pine is still just an airport, dirt runway, not so hot at all. Although good experience for the boys. I’m teaching in Interstate *Cadets* mostly now, and a Porterfield *Collegiate* once in a while.

“Don’t think I wouldn’t like to fly up to Alaska—my instructor is a CAA inspector there: Jack Jefford. [There is a good Jefford chapter in Jean Potter’s 1947 book, *The Flying North*.]

“I am supposed to get a little pup about Friday or Saturday, I can hardly wait. It will be another Scottie. What would be a good name? Open for suggestions!”

Wilmington, Delaware—Oct. 19, 1942: “I’m on my way back to the East again. This time to the Women’s Ferry Command in Wilmington, Delaware. I don’t know what is in store for me, but surely hope I like it and they like me.

“My mother came as far with me as Des Moines. She’s going to visit her mother. Have you run into Jack Jefford in Fairbanks? He is the guy who taught me to fly.

“I have a new Scottie pup. At least I think I have if he fails this trip. He’s five months old and I’ve had him a month. His name is Shanty McTavish, and he has already got seven hours’ flying time. He’s the cutest little fellow you ever saw.”

Wilmington, Delaware—Jan. 25, 1943: “We have delivered some ships up to Toronto, and it was pretty cold. I had a nice Christmas—spent from Dec. 23 until the 30 in Charlotte, NC, so you can see where Christmas was. New Year’s found me having a gala time in Jackson, MS. I gather that you work in cargo ships—sounds like an interesting but cold job.

“How do your folks like their little dog? I finally decided to send Shanty back to my folks. He was a little too much trouble to take care of here. Poor little fellow, he hardly knows me.”

Long Beach, California—Feb. 29, 1943: “As you can see, I have a new address and do I like it. This is really the

nuts!

"I arrived the 13th and checked out the 15th in BT-13As and BT-15s. And on top of that, I have flown to Dallas on two trips already. It is fun to have instruments you can depend on. We have a chance to fly large equipment eventually, so hope we do."

Long Beach, California—Apr. 16, 1943: "Have been waiting to get my pictures before I wrote. Hope you like the one I'm sending."

"It's too bad we couldn't get together when you came down here. Guess we will have to keep good track of one another from now on. I'm positive I'll be here all the time, at least stationed here. Of course, I'll be out on trips part of the time."

"Certainly was swell that you had a chance to visit your folks. Mine came down to see me and stayed for a week. They brought little Tam and Shanty. Gee, it was good to see them all. They enjoyed seeing what Army life was like—they decided it wasn't nearly as bad as they had imagined. I am still working out in the gym every morning. Wow! Am I healthy—can chin myself seven times now, and a month ago I couldn't do it once."

"How do you like the new home you have? You mentioned you were going to move to a large residential home. Sounds good to me. You certainly have a ducky address—that Group X tickles me. Heh! Don't forget to send the picture of 'Solo'."

Long Beach, California—May 29, 1943: "You look so nice in your uniform. As for my folks paying me a visit—they are in Las Vegas, Nevada, now. I'm going to try to fly the airline up there someday. I'm still pushing BT-13As around the country, but best of all I'm copilot on a C-47. I'm tickled to pieces. Have also flown quite a bit from the left side, and the little devil is a cinch to fly. More fun!"

"And now my physical condition: Hard as nails and I'm getting the flesh in the right spots instead of the wrong spots. I weigh 115 lbs and am 5 ft. 4 in., and have a beautiful tan. I've also started and taxied a P-51 around three different times. It's wonderful fun! Would really like to fly one. No more news so will sign off. Take care of yourself."

Long Beach, California—July 4, 1943: "I just returned to flying status,

as I got strep throat two weeks ago Monday, so now am getting back in the groove. But before being sick, two other WAFs and myself went over to Palm Springs and took 4½ hours apiece in an AT-6, then a cockpit check in a P-51A, and then flew it. Wowie! Can you imagine me in a pursuit plane, and the fastest one in the world at that? I only have four hours in one but will soon have 10 hours and then I can start ferrying them. What a day! Haven't been on any more C-47 trips but I need only one more copilot trip, and I am supposed to be checked out as first pilot. At any rate, am glad to be in this and out of the instructing business. I think this job is wonderful. What do you think?"

"Have you managed to get in any flying lately? I sure hope you do. Are you back in the United States? Just wondered as your last letter wasn't censored and the one before was. Guess I told you my best news, so wheels down and locked."

Palm Springs, California—Sept. 23, 1943: "I have now been transferred to Palm Springs, and you see I think it will be a good deal because it is a winter resort and this is just the beginning of the winter season. I also have the job of being Squadron Commander over here. I was Executive Officer at Long Beach—have been doing lots of groundwork: maps, charts, etc. Checked out as first pilot in a C-47, made one trip and had a girl copilot—a fun trip and am anxious for another."

Long Beach, California—Dec. 16, 1943: "Palm Springs turned into a pursuit school so here I am with all my girls back in Long Beach. Am now in instrument school trying to get a little knowledge. While in Palm Springs I wasn't idle—checked out in C-73s, A-25s, C-78s, B-25s and P-47s. I am one of three girls in the U.S. checked out as first pilot on B-25s. Isn't that wonderful? I've delivered six of them and have also delivered one P-47. Will get an A-20 check as soon as I finish instrument school. I can hardly wait!"

Long Beach, California—Jan. 2, 1944: "Still in instrument school, have about 30 hours of Link and about 30 hours of instruments. When finished will get an A-20 check. I'll really like that."

"It has been raining cats and dogs here—don't think it will ever stop. Bet

it is sure cold up your way. I would like a trip up there though. My folks are o.k., they are still in Las Vegas. Didn't get to see them for Christmas. Well, time to go to Link. Write—Bestest."

Daggett, California—Mar. 11, 1944: "Gee, thanks for the 'Lady Buxton.' Am on an A-20 trip—have delivered seven of them and am on my eighth delivery. Just returned from a Newark delivery. Now that is an airplane—really wonderful! Also have my Army instrument card—thank goodness. And this coming week, I'll get my P-38 check. Isn't that just unbelievable?"

"You aren't by any chance working with B-29s, are you? If you are at Seattle, I might get up that way sometime, for A-20s are delivered up there a lot. Drop me a line and thanks a million for the little gift. It will really be handy. 'Bye now.'"

It was a real shock to read the Associated Press release April 4, 1944, and to learn Evelyn had been a fatality the day before.

On a P-38 delivery flight, west to east, she had just taken off from the Olmsted AAB at Middletown, Pennsylvania. She lost one of the powerful 1,150-hp Allison engines over the Susquehanna River; with no suitable landing spot, it was decision time. The average pilot would have dropped a wing and spun-in, but not Evelyn!

She did everything right, kicked hard

Buffington at Norman Wells, NWT, March 31, 1943.





1 Cornelia Fort, WAFS/WASP. (U.S. Army Photo)

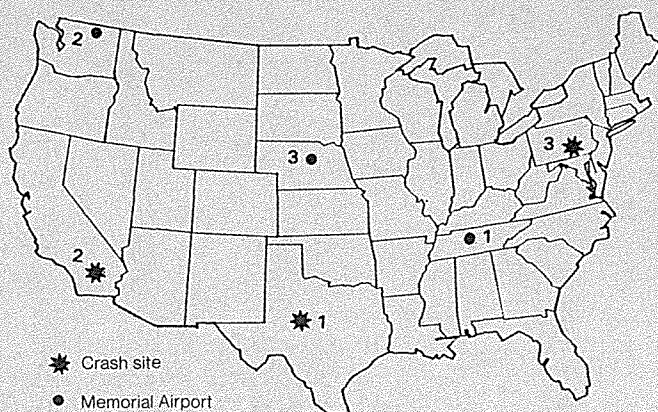
2 Dorothy Scott, WAFS/WASP.

(E.A. Scott)

3 Evelyn Sharp, WAFS/WASP.

Places and Planes

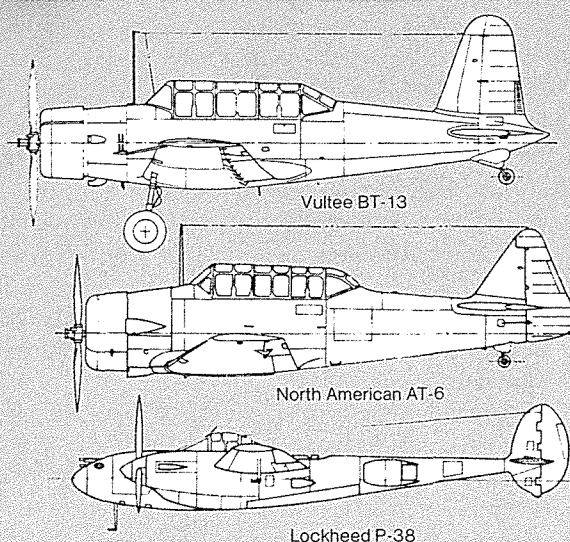
The crash sites and memorial airports are shown below. Fatal aircraft shown right.



1. Cornelia Fort

2. Dorothy Scott

3. Evelyn Sharp



rudder and kept the wings level, deciding to bank a one-eighty and try for a wheels-up landing downwind. Evelyn ran out of altitude too soon, cut the switches, and during the ensuing landing she became a WWII casualty.

Betty Huyler Gillies, the WASP squadron commander at New Castle AAB, asked Nancy Batson to accompany Evelyn's body back to her old hometown of Ord, Nebraska. Both girls had signed on with the WAFS about the same time 18 months previously, at Wilmington, Delaware. Nancy considered Evelyn one of the better pilots, and this assignment was not an easy one for her.

Not only was it a long, lonely train ride but there was much grief to face in Ord. Evelyn had been the town heroine, having given many of the citizens

their first plane ride and had taught some of the youngsters to swim and ride horseback. She had also flown in the town's first sack of airmail during National Air Mail Week in May of 1938.

The funeral lasted for two-plus hours during which there were a number of eulogies. At the close of the service, the Ord mayor announced the town airport would subsequently be named Evelyn Sharp Field, a fitting salute to a great little pilot.

All three of the WAFS/WASP fatalities during service to the USA were memorialized with airports named in their tribute:

Cornelia Fort Airpark, 6 mi NE—Nashville, TN. BT-13 near Merkel, TX, March 21, 1943.

Dorothy Scott Airport, 2 mi NE—Oro-

ville, WA. AT-6, Palm Springs, CA, December 3, 1943.

Evelyn Sharp Field, 2 mi NW—Ord, Nebraska, P-38, Middletown, PA, April 3, 1944. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

H. Glenn Buffington, Life Member No. 26 of AAHS, has written numerous articles for the *Journal* and other aviation periodicals. He was associated with Dr. John D. Brock's optical company for three years after high school graduation. He attended Dickinson Business, Rearwin Flying and Midland Tech schools, all in the Kansas City area, then signed on with Northwest Airlines for 18 months (1942–1943) as a flight radio operator over their ATC routes in Canada and Alaska—flying in C-47s and C-46s. He joined the Boeing Company, Seattle, mid-December 1943 as a flight technician in Production Flight Test. Retired in 1980, he reports to being "rather lazy." However, he now serves as an advisor to the Ninety-Nines Resource Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

