

Former WASP passes away in Delaware

Former WASP Ethel Meyer Finley of Rehoboth Beach, Del., died on Feb. 24, 2006, at the home of her daughter in Forked River, N.J. She was 85.

Finley, who was born in Lake City, Minn., lived on a farm near there until graduating from high school in 1937. She earned a bachelor's degree in science, mathematics and physical education from Winona State Teacher College, and she was the first woman at the school to participate in the Civilian Pilot Training program, training with renowned aviator Max Conrad. She taught school for a year before she learned she could not earn a living and have enough left to fly planes, so she went to work operating the Link trainer at the airport in exchange for flying time.

In March 1943 she entered the Army as a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). She was one of about 1,000 women who were the first to serve as U.S. military aviators. She trained military pilots, logging more than 1,000 hours of flying before the WASP were disbanded in December 1944.

While in the Army, she met James A. Finley Jr., and they were married in December 1944.

She left aviation to raise a family, living in West Virginia and Pennsylvania before settling in Summit, N.J. in 1952. They lived there for 30 years, and she became active in womens affairs by starting halfway houses for women recovering from substance abuse.

After moving to Rehoboth Beach, Finley again became active with the WASP organization. She served a variety of positions and continued to travel to national air shows and events throughout the country telling the story of the women aviators and encouraging young women to follow their dreams. She was president of the organization from 1992-94, when Congress granted the women veterans status.

She received the Delaware Trailblazer Award in 1995 and was named to the Delaware Aviation Hall of Fame in 2001. She is a member of the Board of Directors of Wright Flight Youth Program in Tucson, Ariz, and served on the Dover Air Mobility Museum Foundation Board. For seven years, through 2005, she organized the WASP activities at the Experimental Aircraft Association Fly-In in Oshkosh, Wisc., and the national Sun and Fun Air Show in Lakeland, Fla.

In Delaware, Finley remained active in the womens affairs, serving on the Delaware Commission for Women and helping to establish Tau House and Houston Hall in Georgetown.

She is survived by her sister Ione Olson of Minnesota, and her children Janet Finley of Steamboat Springs, Colo.; Michael J. Finley of Odessa, Del.; and Joanne Marine of Forked River, N.J. She has four grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

[RPMH receives good JCAHO review](#)

The Nolan County Hospital District Board of Directors received a report on the Feb. 22-24 survey by the national hospital accrediting body, the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

[Soles to run for city seat](#)

Nancy Soles has qualified to run for the Sweetwater City Commission seat for Precinct 4.

[Man gets six years for drug charge](#)

Elias Moreno Limon was sentenced to six years confinement for delivery of marijuana to a minor.

[Rain provides relief, but winds hasten drying](#)

Some areas of West Texas received welcome rains over the weekend, but predicted fair, windy weather could hasten the return of grass fire danger sooner than many people expect.

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