

WASP Class 43-W-3

A Short History



by Andy Hailey,
son of Lois Hailey, 43-3

WASP Class 43-W-3

A Short History

Class 43-3 Training and Base Assignments

- A Dynamic Class Within a Dynamic Program -

INTRODUCTION:

Unless otherwise noted, my primary reference for this article is *On Final Approach* [1] by Byrd Howell Granger of class 43-1. It is full of stories, pictures, lots of lists (Including all the Army bases and who was assigned to them), charts, and tables. Also included are photos taken by my mother and from the TWU library. I also used *Out of the Blue and Into History* (43-3 biographies) [2], *WASP of the Ferry Command* [3], *Sisters in the Sky, Vol II* [4], and *View from the Doghouse of the 319th AAFWFTD* [5].



Half of Class 43-3, Photo by Lois Brooks



Class 43-3 started training at the Houston Municipal Airport, now called Hobby Airport. As this was a new program with growing pains, uniform dress was slow to take hold. Those growing pains/adjustments occurred throughout the program. The weeks for training started at 16 with the more experienced pilots and grew to 27 then to 30 weeks for the classes of 1944. The total flight training hours started at 162 and grew to 210 starting with class 44-5. Ground school hours grew from 180 to 570. Link trainer hours went from 20 to 35. Some of the earlier classes got extra training before final base assignment. The later classes had less time for serving at a duty station after initial training as the termination of the program in December 1944 approached.

Class 43-1 was the only class to graduate in Houston just before the move to Sweetwater in May of 1943. Class 43-2 became the first class to graduate in Sweetwater just days after they arrived. It was after the move to Sweetwater class 43-3 became known as the "Lost Class." They had just a few weeks to become familiar with Sweetwater and catch up on their required flight time.

Minimum requirement for the first 4 classes were age 21-35, height of at least 5'2" and high school/ equivalent education. One requirement that did change was prior flight time. It started at 200 hours for class 43-1, then 100 for class 43-2, 75 for 43-3, and

finally 35 for class 43-4 and all other classes. For comparison purposes, Nancy Loves' WAFS needed at least 500 pilot hours. Other age and height changes occurred later.

As shown with the changes above, the WASP program was too short lived to have developed the kind of consistency that older services had developed. Their duties started in the Ferry Command, but soon branched out to other commands, other planes, and other duties. The first classes got additional advanced training after training in Houston and Sweetwater. Most of Class 43-3 got six more months of advanced training after graduation. Later classes went directly from Sweetwater to a duty station. The official WASP uniform didn't arrive until early 1944.

**New WASP Uniform - Lois Brooks Puts Her's On,
Biggs Army Air Base, El Paso, 1944**



**Biggs AAF - Lois Brooks, Betty Deuser, Lois Hollingsworth
in Official WASP Uniform**

CLASS 43-3:

Class 43-3 took the program's dynamic nature to a whole new level after graduation. But in the meantime these pilots had a lot to learn both in the air and in the classroom.



**Betty Archibald, Betty Deuser, Lois Brooks and Mary Beritich
(43-W-3) standing by BT-13,
Houston, Texas - TWU Library
(Mom carried a copy of this photo in her wallet.)**



**Emma Coulter (43-W-3) and Ann Baumgartner (43-W-5)
in ground school, Sweetwater, Texas
(TWU Photo)**

Class 43-3 started with 58 trainees on January 16, 1943, in Houston. In May, all Houston trainees were transferred to Sweetwater, Texas. In addition to lack of facilities in Houston, the weather was a major damper on completing the required flight time.

This issue was extended after the move by unusual weather in Sweetwater - two weeks of rain. [3 page 97-98] On July 3, 38 of the 58 graduated.



Class 43-3 Graduation - TWU Photo

WASP CLASS 43-3, The Unruly Third, 38 GRADUATES, 7/3/43, TWU 43-3 Bins
 (PHOTO ALBUMS: [Graduation](#), [Reunions](#))

AHLSTROM, Mary Belle [Smith]	ASCHIBALD, Betty [Fernando]	BEBITICE, Mary N.
BESSNET, Clarice M.	BIZOR, Grace [Mayfield]	BROOKS, Law S. [Bobby]??
CONNOR, L. H. M. [Roberts-Kirby]	CORLIER, Emma [Ward]??	COULINBY, Mavis E. [Bellows]??
CRINSLAW, Virginia E. [Fierce]	DEUSER, Betty Jane [Book]??	COULBERTY, Don [Stratton, McKernan]?, - Lt. Col. USAFR
DYER, Elsie E. [Merrico]	FENTON, Isabel [Stinson]?, Capt. USAFR	FRANKMAN, Sara E. [Abrams, Dancer, Libell]
GROOMAN, Strachan J. [Kirby]	GIBBES, Frances E. [K.D.]?	HARRINGTON, Marjorie S. [For Class USNR]
HAKLE, Elri [Harriman]?	HULLINGSWORTH, Lois [Zick]??, 1st Lt. USAFR	HUMMEL, Shirley [Hudson]??
JONES, Virginia Klara [Chadwick]	KIDD, Louise	KNIGHT, Florence E.?, 1st Lt. USAFR
LAZAR, Vilma [Quail]	LEATHERBEE, Mary Lee?	LINK, Bertha [Trask]?
MARTIN, Fredonia [Richardson]?	MEDES, Beatrice A. T.	MERCER, Katherine A. [Brick]??, Biggs Accident
NEILSON, Lorraine V.?	OPEN, Sherry [Pate], OMA	PARSON, Jean [Hansen], Lt. Grade USN
FOGLE, Esther D. [Bauer]	RAWLINS, Mabel S. [K.D.]?, Ruzickin Kalamazoo	SHALE, Marie?, E2 USNR
SHERWOOD, Lyla E. [Stanton]??	TUNER, Mildred A. [Clayton]?	* - To Camp Davis ? - From Davis to Liberty Field, Camp Stewart, to Biggs

43-3 Class Graduates Listed by Name While in the WASP (Screenshot from My web site.)

The 20 who washed out or washed back to another class are listed below. In Granger's On Final Approach, she documented that two of the trainees were not identified in the official records. Since then, they have been. One was mentioned twice in Betty Deuser Budde's letters home, <http://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/uploads/4/4/5/2/44527045/bdbudde-ltrs.pdf>, and the other was written about in a September 2015 web article, <http://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/uploads/4/4/5/2/44527045/elfarley43-3t.pdf>.

Artussy, Jane	Brandt, Beverly, Y. (Robson)	Bristol, Eileen
Chisler, Dorris (Phillips)	Christenson, Dorothy (Mitchell)	Clark, Margaret Anne (Jemyn)
<u>Cook, Margaret A.</u>	Daughady, Alice I.	Davis, Dorothy (<u>Search Deuser Letters</u>)
Foster, Laura Jean	Gartrell, Mary Alice	Gray, Melva Doyle
Houchin, Gladys	Howard-Phalen, Jean Ross	Laech, Evelyn L. (Farley)
Roberts, Roberta	Ruechert, Ruth Nevada	Schmidt, Patricia S. (Washback to 43-4)
Vaughn, ????	Unknown #4 - See D. H. Davis	Unknown #5 - <u>Evelyn L. Farley</u> (9/2015) NEW

43-3 Trainee List with Two Recently Identified Names

Upon graduation, the class, like the two previous classes, got a few days to report to one of four assigned Ferrying Groups in Long Beach, Dallas, New Castle, or Romulus. However, soon after they arrived 23 of the class's pilots were ordered to Washington, D.C. to meet with Jackie Cochran and General Hap Arnold. They were told they were being reassigned to a top secret advanced training program in. This training lasted for the next six months and occurred at two different bases - Tow Target.

TOW TARGET:

Tow target training was in two, three-month phases. The first was flying the A-24 to tow a target far behind the aircraft and the other was to learn radio control drone flying. Towing target was one of many tasks this class supported after they reached their final duty stations. The primary objective tow target flying was training of ground and air troops to increase their chances of survival overseas.

Camp Davis, NC - Basic Tow Target:

The 23 graduates were first sent to Camp Davis in North Carolina for three months to learn to fly a modified, wore torn, A-24 Douglas Dauntless dive bomber. The A-24 was rigged with a cable and large flag that could be reeled out and back while flying target patterns. These patterns changed based on the weapon that was firing live ammo at the target. These A-24s were not only used, they were also on low priority for both quality spare parts and proper high octane fuel. All the quality parts and high octane fuel went overseas to support the pilots at war.



First WASP at Camp Davis, Flight I. Lila Burr (43-W-2), Dora Strother, Marcia Courtney, Betty Deuser, Emma Coulter, Elsie Dyer, and Lois Brooks (43-W-3) - TWU Library



First WASP at Camp Davis, Flight II. Back Row - Mabel Rawlinson, Frederica McAfee, Laurine Nielsen, Mildred Toner, Mary Leatherbee, Jean Pearson; Front Row - Joyce Sherwood, Katherine Menges, Florence Knight, Shirley Ingalls, and Marie Shale - TWU Library

Four of the twenty-three 43-3 pilots did not complete this phase of advanced training.

Mabel Rawlinson was the fifth WASP to lose her life in the program and the first from class 43-3. She died during night training when the plane's engine failed on August 23, 1943. There were rumors of sugar in the tank, but remember the quality of the aircraft and parts, and the low octane fuel they used. Also, remember that sugar was rationed.

In 1998, the issue of sabotage with sugar in the fuel tank came up at the WASP reunion in Omaha, NE. My daughter and I were there with Mom and other members of class 43-3 including Lois Hollingsworth Ziler in her WASP uniform. There were two film crews at that event and one was looking to interview Lois and others from the class about this accident. The

denial of sabotage with sugar from the WASP at the table couldn't have been stronger. I'm sure the film crew was disappointed, but they still interviewed Lois in her uniform.



Mabel was buried in Kalamazoo, MI - Photo courtesy of Niece Pam Pohly (Bertha Link Trasky escorted the body of her best friend to Kalamazoo.)

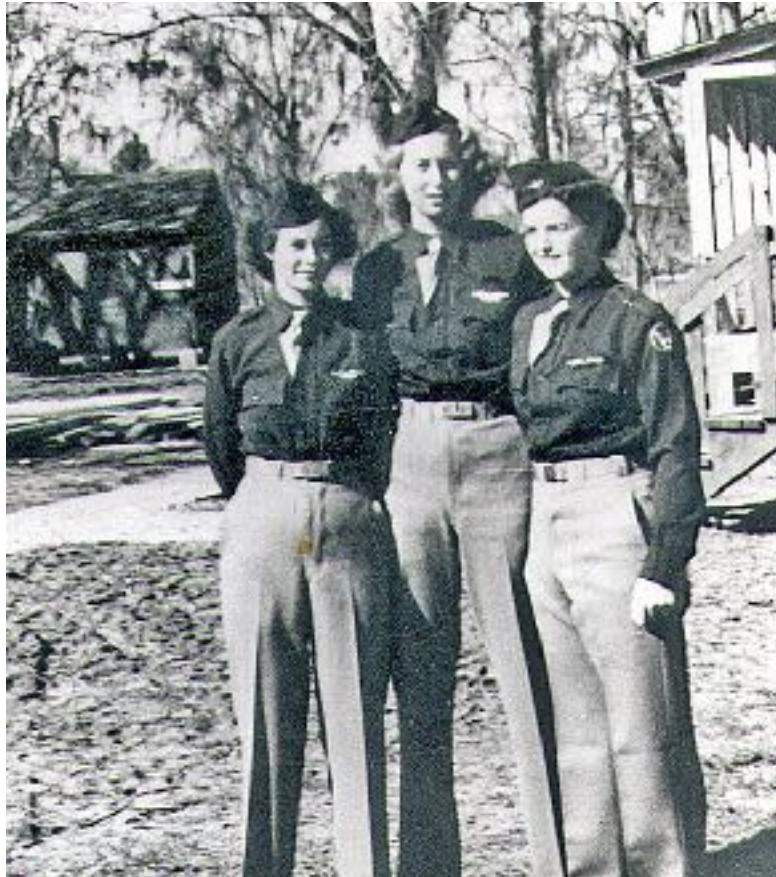
Marie Shale, Jean Pearson, and Marion Hanrahan were the next three to leave this risky advanced training assignment. They left the WASP in September 1943, soon after Mabel's accident. They were concerned over the condition of the aircraft used for training and had a greater interest in ferrying. [4, p120-128]

Of the 23 who transferred to Camp Davis, 19 were advanced to radio control tow target at Liberty Field in Hinesville, Georgia.

Liberty Field, GA - Radio Controlled Tow Target (Oct 1943 to Mar 1944):

At Liberty field the WASP pilots learned all about radio controlled aircraft using the PQ-8 and PQ14. Two pilots would fly in an AT-17 (UC-78), Bamboo Bomber: one WASP to fly the AT-17 and one to control the PQ-8. A third WASP flew in the PQ as a safety pilot to take control if needed, and that happened to Lois Brooks Hailey after assignment to Biggs Army Air Field. More on this in the article on accidents for this class.

The training at Liberty Field was also split into at least two groups. One started in October and the other in January of 1944. Class 43-3 was split between the two. The first group, including The Biggs Five, completed training in December. The Biggs Five were sent to Biggs Army Air Field in January 1944. This splitting of the class for training at Liberty is shown by the photos of uniforms above and the photos below of the uniforms worn in late 1943 by the first Liberty Field class and early 1944 with the second group from 43-3.



**Class #1, Liberty Field, Winter 1943, - Lois Hollingsworth, Betty Deuser, and Lois Brooks.
New WASP uniforms were not yet available.**



Class#2, Joyce Sherwood (43-W-3), Laurine "Rene" Nielsen (43-W-3), Gertrude Brown (43-W-1), Elsie Dyer (43-W-3), and Dora Dougherty (43-W-3) in WASP uniforms at Liberty Field, January 1944. - TWU Library

Lois Hollingsworth Ziler, a best and life long friend, to Lois Brooks Hailey, had an aeronautical engineering degree from Purdue. Holly is credited in Granger's book, page 273, for establishing a well defined course for the second class of WASP from 43-3 and 43-4 scheduled to start in January, 1944.

Prior to departing Liberty Field, Emma Coulter Ware received a gift from her aunt Peggy, a Pomeranian puppy.



Emma and Widget went every where together, including in a PQ-8 [4, page 565}

Tow Target Base Assignments after Camp Davis and Liberty Field:

At the end of another six months of advanced tow target and radio control training, which was provided only for classes 43-3 and 43-4, 18 of the 19 first Tow Target WASP from 43-3 were finally assigned to one or more duty stations. **Marcia Courtney (Bellassai)** was the only 43-3 pilot to get assigned to Liberty Field as part of the 4th Tow Target, where she supported troop training with B-34s, PQ-8s, and PQ-14s at Camp Stewart.

The Biggs Five, El Paso, TX (Jan to Dec 1944):

Lois Hollingsworth (Ziler), Kay Menges (Brick), Betty Deuser (Budde), Emma Coulter (Ware) (and Widget), and Lois Brooks (Hailey) were the first WASP sent to Biggs Army Air Field, now part of Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, to join the 6th Tow Target Squadron. They arrived in January to a command that was unsure of what to do with them, but that changed fairly quickly as they proved their value.



Arrival of The Biggs Five captured in the local newspaper.

Based on the duty description in Granger's On Final Approach, this assignment was the most dynamic of all the duty stations for the WASP. They simulated troop strafing, flew at night for search light training, towed targets at different altitudes depending on the weapon used, flew as targets for radar tracking, flew PQ-8 radio control for target practice, flew low altitude night missions without lights to drop flares on troop trainees, laid smoke and tear gas on trainees, and occasional ferrying.



**Alexander the Swoose - Replica of 6th Tow Target Patch - Courtesy Rudy Reyes
(Note: In 1941, a song titled Alexander the Swoose was written.)**



In addition to service at Biggs, Lois Hollingsworth Ziler spent 5 days in October, 1944, at Muroc Lake, CA., where she helped demonstrate the use of a PQ-8 for carrying bombs.

Kay Menges Brick was assigned as CO for the WASP at Biggs, which grew to 26 pilots in 1944.

In honor of these 26 WASP of the 6th Tow Target Squadron, and along with a long-term build up at Fort Bliss, including new base housing, streets will be named after these 26 WASP.



Lois Brooks St. Fort Bliss, El Paso, TX - Photo Courtesy of Rudy Reyes

The remaining 13 pilots from 43-3 ended up at the following duty assignments after completing training at Liberty Field. Some got more training at other bases before arriving at their final duty station.

March Army Air Base, Riverside, CA (Jan to Dec 1944):

WASP **Florence Knight** and **Joyce Sherwood (Secciani)** were assigned to March with the 7th Tow Target Squadron, where they used PQ-8s and PQ-14 as drone targets, and flew for tow target and searchlight training. Joyce was the second CO for the WASP at March AAB.

Otis Army Air Base, Falmouth, MA (Jan to April 1944):

Most of the WASP assigned to Otis from Liberty Field were there for more experience with PQ-8s and PQ-14s and were then sent on to other bases. **Bertha Link (Trasky)**, who was the best friend to Mable Rawlinson (5, p189), retired from the WASP while at Otis. This was where she met her husband and gave birth to her first son on September 17, 1944 (5, p190). **Frances Grimes** became the 14th WASP fatality on March 27, 1944, in another A-24, while serving at Otis.



Dora Dougherty, Isabel Fenton, Elsie Dyer, and Laurine Nielsen (43-W-3) during car trip from Otis AAB, Massachusetts to Eglin AAB, Florida - TWU Library

Eglin Army Air Base, Homestead, FL (May to Dec 1944):

Four pilots from 43-3 served briefly in Eglin, where PQ-8s were used as gunnery targets for other aircraft like the P-29, B-25, and B-29. **Isabel Fenton (Stinson)** was the one pilot to remain at Eglin until the WASP program was shut down.

Salinas AAB, Salinas, CA (Jun to Dec 1944):

Laurine "Rene" Nielsen, Elin Harte (Raimondi), and Elsie Dyer (Monaco) completed their duty at Salinas after some time at Otis, March, and/or Eglin. Most of their efforts supported radio control piloting for troop target practice using the PQ-14 with the B-25.

Hamilton AAF, Bakersfield, CA (Jun to Dec 1944):

After spending some time at Half Moon Bay Flight Strip in Moss Beach, CA, using their radio control training, **Mary Leatherbee, Mildred Toner (Chapin), and Shirley Ingalls (Thackara)**, The Hamilton Three, completed their service at Hamilton as staff pilots for the 4th Air Force HQ.

Wendover AAB, Wendover, UT (Oct to Dec 1944):

Dora Dougherty (Strother, McKeown) became the most fortunate of class 43-3. Colonel Tibbets, who flew a B-29 to Japan, selected Dora and another wasp from 43-4 to fly the B-29. The Col. was trying to encourage the fearful male pilots to get with the program. Dora. After finishing with the second class at Liberty, Dora reported to Otis AAB. From there she went to Eglin to experience flying the B-29. Then she went to Grand Island AAB in Nebraska for cargo transport training and finally to Wendover, where she transported cargo in support of the atom bomb project.

Sweetwater, Texas:

It appears that one of 43-3 pilots, **Frederica McAfee (Richardson)** did not complete radio control training at liberty and became part of Jackie Cochran's staff.



Eglin AAB, Fort Walton, Florida. Col. Tibbets, Dorothea Johnson (43-W-4) and Dora Dougherty (43-W-3) with Tibbets' B-29 crew. - TWU Library

FERRYING:

Ferrying groups flew out of Long Beach, Love, New Castle, and Romulus. On the one hand, they got to fly new planes from the factory, with premium aviation fuel, to either coast for shipment overseas. On the other hand they had to find their own way back to base after delivering the plane and they were not allowed to fly at night.

Of the 60,000,000 air miles flown by the WASP, 9,224,000 miles were flown by the Ferrying Division of the Air Transport Command.

Fifteen graduates from 43-3 were assigned to a ferry command and, for the most part, remained in the Ferry Command. However, four of the fifteen did get reassigned to other stations.

According to Granger's On Final approach, page 346, in May of 1944, headquarters initiated a transfer of ferry pilots exclusively to pursuit and other combat aircraft. This transfer affected nearly 50% of all the WASP in Ferry command. Those who were not suited to these aircraft were transferred to other non-ferrying duties.

Hondo AAF, Hondo, TX (Nov 43 to Dec 44):

After initial assignment to Romulus, **Mary Beritich** was transferred to Hondo. The primary duty for WASP at Hondo was flying to support training of cadet navigators.

Napier AAB, Dothan, AL (Jan to Dec 1944):

Another WASP who started in the Ferry Division of ATC but was later transferred is **Mary Ahlstrom (Smith)**. Duties at this base included instrument training with the AT-6 and some ferrying of AT-6s and PT-17s.

Greenwood AAB, Greenwood, MS (Jul to Dec 1944):

Elinore Owen (Pyle) went from New Castle to Randolph AAB in San Antonio, Texas, for flight instructor training and then to Greenwood to ferry aircraft for mothballing. She retired from the WASP on 5/18/1944 after marriage and her husband was sent overseas.

Long Beach AAB, 6th FG, Long Beach, CA. (Feb 1943 to Dec 1944):

Of the nine 43-3 WASP assigned to Long Beach, only **Vilma Lazar (Qualls)**, **Beatrice Medes**, and **Virginia Jones (Chadwickross)** completed their two years with the 6th Ferrying Group, which became the largest ferrying base with more than 1,700 pilots [3, page 145].

During the transfer to exclusively pursuit ferrying, **Beatrice Medes** was transferred to ATC/FD headquarters to a desk job. [1, pages 346-348], [4, page 344]



Long Beach AAB, Long Beach, California.

Geneva Slack (43-W-4), Vilma Lazar (43-W-3), and Edna Pedlar (43-W-4) - TWU

Love Field, 5th FG Dallas, TX. (Jan 1943 to Dec 1944):

Of the ten 43-3 WASP assigned to Love, **Anna Frankman Atwood Darwin Isbell**, and **Gretchen Gorman Graba** were the last two 43-3 WASP that supported the Ferry Command in the 5th Ferrying Group. Anna left the WASP early on December 15, 1943.

Planes ferried by men out of Love Field included: B-34, AT-6, P-51, and P-38. Women ferried PT-17, BT-13, AT-6, AT-11, and the AT-17 (UC-78). [3, pages 120, 124]

New Castle AAB, 2nd FG, Wilmington, DE. (Jan 1943 to Dec 1944):

Of the nine 43-3 pilots originally assigned to New Castle, only one, **Esther Poole Berner**, remained. However, two other 43-3 WASP joined Esther. **Louise Kidd**, who resigned from the WASP on October 24, 1944, was transferred from Long Beach, and **Grace Birge Mayfield** was transferred from Romulus.

The New Castle WASP ferried PT-19 and PT-26 initially until they qualified for the P-47. [3, page2 130]

Romulus AAB, 3rd FG, Romulus, MI. (Jan 1943 to Dec 1944):

Of the 10 pilots from 43-3 assigned to Romulus, four spent the rest of their time at Romulus. They were **Clarice Bessent**, **Lillian Conner Roberts-Risdon**, **Virginia Crinklaw Pierce**, and **Betty Archibald Fernandez**. Lillian actually started with the WFTD program as an assistant to Cochran in Washington, D.C. before joining class 43-3. [3, pages 94-95]

The major aircraft ferried from Romulus were the Ford built B-24 and the P-39. However, other smaller aircraft (L2-B, L5, PT-23, PT-26, AT-6, and AT-19 were ferried by the WASP. A few WASP were checked out in the P-39. [3, pages136, 138, & 143]



**Romulus AAB, Romulus, Michigan. Virginia Crinklaw (43-W-3)
and Janet Zuchowski (43-W-4) - TWU Library**

In conclusion, the dynamics of class 43-3 in it's duty assignments and additional training reflects the dynamics of the WASP program in it's first year of growing pains and adjustments to changing pilot experience. Class 43-3 was one of three classes where the whole class started in Houston. It was the only "Lost Class" in Sweetwater as they crammed their final flight requirements into two fewer weeks with far busier and more crowded skies. Most of the class were immediately transferred from Ferry Command to learn Tow Target and then piloting of radio controlled drones. They experienced the risks and losses of flying worn out plans with low octane fuel. In

addition to serving 4 Ferry Commands, they served at 11 other bases. They got to fly at night and one class member learned to fly the B-29 to show the men how it was done.

I salute my mother and all her classmates and will help to keep their story growing. I hope you will do what you can to grow this story where each WASP represents a unique and one of a kind story.

Class 43-3 Minor Injuries and Fatalities

- Accidents and Losses Are Part of Military Service -

Introduction:

The primary source of information on WASP accidents is from Army records that are now public. This included a list of all WASP accidents, which I transferred to a spreadsheet. I then enhanced the list with color, other information, and missing data. I also have copies of all WASP Army accident reports that detailed each accident and produced a web page based on relating accidents to classes and the phases of accidents, <http://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/accidents.html>.

Since the WASP were split between Ferrying and several other missions and since Granger's book specifies the flight hours for Ferrying and other, it's interesting to compare the rate of accidents per million miles of flying as shown in the table below.

	Ferrying	Other	Total
Flight Hours [1, A-103] ##	9,224,000	50,776,000	60,000,000
Accidents	98	335	433
Accidents/Million Hours	10.6	6.6	7.2

WASP Accident Rates by Mission

- Denotes Granger's OFA book as source

Overall the WASP had a lower accident rate than their male counter parts, but accidents still happened. During their support of the war effort, there were 433 accidents involving WAASP: 38 were killed, 7 suffered serious injury, 28 suffered minor injuries, and 360 were involved in accidents without injury but with damaged planes. During WASP training, there were eleven fatalities, two major injuries, ten minor injuries, and 190 with no injury. For class 43-3, there were two fatalities, none suffered major injuries, five had minor injuries, and 17 had no injury.

CLASS 43-W-3 MINOR INJURIES AND FATALITIES

1/31/44	7/3/43	AT	BROOKS, L	BROOKS, Lois E. [Haley]	43-3 4	BIGGS FIELD, TX	2	PQ-3A, 1	1/31/44
1/31/44	7/3/43	AT	BUODE, E.J.	DEUSER, Betty Jane [Bucke], 2	43-3 11	BIGGS FIELD, TX	1	PQ-3A, 2	1/31/44
2/18/44	7/3/43	OPR	MENKES, K.A.	MENKES, Katherine A. BRICK	43-3 30	BIGGS FIELD, TX	1	A3-11	2/18/44
5/18/44	7/3/43	TT	BROOKS, L	BROOKS, Lois E. [Haley], 2	43-3 4	BIGGS FIELD, TX	1	PL-14B	5/18/44
6/14/44	7/3/43	T	NOT REPORTED	MENKES, Katherine A. BRICK, 2	43-3 30	BIGGS FIELD, TX	2	B1-13	6/14/44
8/25/44	7/3/43	TT	COLLIER, E	COLLIER, Erena [Ware]	43-3 8	BIGGS FIELD, TX	1	PQ-14A	8/25/44
8/1/43	7/3/43	AT	DYER, E.	DYER, ESH [MORANO]	43-3 13	CAMP DAVIS, NC	1	A-24A	8/1/43
8/23/43	7/3/43	TT	SAMINSON, M.V.	RAM INSON, Mabel V. [KS]	43-3 55	CAMP DAVIS, NC	4	A-24A	8/23/43
8/25/43	7/3/43	TRANS	SHERWOOD, J.E.	SHERWOOD, Joyce E. [Beckler]	43-3 27	CAMP DAVIS, NC	2	A-24A	8/25/43
9/11/43	7/3/43	TT	YONER, M.	YONER, Mabel [Theobald]	43-3 58	CAMP DAVIS, NC	1	A-24A	9/11/43
4/12/44	7/3/43	OPR	COURTNEY, M.	COURTNEY, Marie E. [Bellanca]	43-3 1	CAMP STEWART, GA	1	L3-7B	4/12/44
18/5/44	7/3/43	OPR	FENTON, I.C.	FENTON, Isabel [Benson]	43-3 14	EGLIN FLD, FL	1	PQ-14A	10/5/44
4/18/43	7/3/43	BT	LINK, B.	LINK, Be-the [Bosky]	43-3 27	HOUSTON, TX	2	B1-15, 2	4/18/43
8/21/43	7/3/43	F	GORMAN, G.J.	GORMAN, Gretchen J. [Graba]	43-3 16	LOVE FIELD, TX	2	PT-13D	8/21/43
5/25/44	7/3/43	TT	SHERWOOD, J.	SHERWOOD, Joyce E. [Beckler], 2	43-3 27	MAPCH FLD, GA	1	PQ-14A	5/25/44
2/27/44	7/3/43	TT	GRIMES, F.F.	GRIMES, Frances F. [KS]	43-3 17	OTIS FLD, MASS	1	A3-11	5/27/44
3/27/44	7/3/43	TRANS	GRIMES, F.F.	GRIMES, Frances F. [KS], 2	43-3 17	OTIS FLD, MASS	4	PA-24B	3/27/44
8/19/43	7/3/43	F	ALSTROM, V.B.	ALSTROM, Mary Belle [Smith]	43-3 1	ROMULS, MI	1	L-2M	8/19/43
9/28/44	7/3/43	F	CONNEL, L.	CONNEL, Lillian M. [Roberta-Nelson]	43-3 7	ROMULS, MI	1	P-51	9/28/44
6/1/43	7/3/43	BT	DEUSER, B.J.	DEUSER, Betty Jane [Bucke]	43-3 11	SWEETWATER, TX	1	A3-6C	6/1/43
6/15/43	7/3/43	BT	NIELSEN, L.V.	NIELSEN, Laurine V.	43-3 31	SWEETWATER, TX	1	A3-6C	6/15/43
6/21/43	7/3/43	BT	CRINKLAW, V.B.	CRINKLAW, Virginia E. [Perce]	43-3 10	SWEETWATER, TX	1	A3-17C, 1	6/21/43
6/21/43	7/3/43	BT	FOOLE, F.	FOOLE, Esther D. [Barrett]	43-3 34	SWEETWATER, TX	1	A3-17C, 2	6/21/43
7/7/43	7/3/43	BT	FRANKMAN, A.E.	FRANKMAN, Avra E. [Alwood, Darvitt, Isabel]	43-3 15	SWEETWATER, TX	1	A3-6C	7/7/43

Summary of 43-3 Accidents

Class 43-3 was involved in a total of 22 accidents involving 24 pilots. Five accidents occurred in basic training, with 4 of those after their move to Sweetwater. Seventeen occurred after graduation from Sweetwater. Fourteen of those, including two fatalities, occurred as part of the more hazardous tow target service and three accidents occurred at two of the Ferry commands.

Two accidents were fatal, five were minor injury and 15 had no injury except to the plans. Of the five minor injuries, one was while ferrying at Love, one while training in Houston, and three in tow target. Two of the tow target accidents were at Biggs and one at Camp Davis. The two fatalities were at Camp Davis and Otis.

	No Injury	Minor Injury	Major Injury	Fatality/ Missing	Total
WASP Total	360	28	7	38	433
Ferrying Command #	79	9	1	9	98
Tow Target/Other #	281	19	6	29	335
18 Class Average	20.0	1.5	0.4	2.1	24.1
Class 43-3 Accidents	15	5	0	2	22

WASP Accident Summary and Comparison with 43-3

- Denotes Army Accident List

In terms of total accidents and total hours flown by ferrying/other, WASP ferrying accidents occurred at a rate of 10.6 per million miles of flying while all other accidents occurred at a rate of 6.6 per million miles. This is based on the chart above and the total miles shown on page A-103/P of Granger's book.

Basic WASP Training (Houston/Sweetwater):

During training for class 43-3, it is interesting to note that while in Houston, this class had only one accident after five months in Houston, but after their move to Sweetwater, the class was involved in four in less than a month. During basic training in Houston, Bertha Link (Trasky) suffered minor injuries during touch-and-go landings, when her plan flipped over and landed upside-down after colliding with another plan. Bertha was the second of three plans in the air and was taking off while the third plan was landing. The pilot in the third plan had lost sight of Bertha's plan and caught up with her.

Based on other analysis of all classes and all their accidents, <http://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/accidents.html>, there might be a couple of reasons for this dramatic change. First, the flying weather in Houston negatively impacted completion of the required hours the trainees had to complete. Second, graduation dates were set in concrete and were never delayed, so to meet the minimum flying requirements, they had to fly more hours in a shorter time to satisfy their 170 hours of total flying. Add to that the new training facility and over 500 new trainees for other classes that were twice the size of the Houston classes and both the ground and sky were far more crowded with planes.

Camp Davis:

While at Camp Davis for initial Tow Target training, class 43-3 was involved in four accidents. As already mentioned above, one of those was fatal for **Mabel Rawlinson**, <http://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/mabel-rawlinson.html>. One other, resulted in minor injuries for **Joyce Sherwood (Secciani)** on 8/25/43, just two days after Mabel's death. Again there were engine problems with another A-24. It quit during a waved off landing attempt and they were forced to land with gear up.

Biggs Army Air Field:

There were two minor injury accidents at Biggs AAF. The first involved **Lois Brooks (Hailey)**, and the second involved **Kay Menges (Brick)**.

Lois was the safety pilot in a PQ-8 when the nose wheel hit a ridge of dirt and the plane flipped upside down. She lost her two front teeth, which the Army replaced with dentures.



**Lois Brooks (43-W-3) after her PQ-8 accident,
Biggs AAF, El Paso, Texas - TWU Library**

Kay had finished an instrument training flight at Biggs with an instructor and the instructor was attempting to land when the plane cartwheeled off the runway. The instructor suffered a broken nose and Kay had only minor injuries, but the plane was a total loss. More pictures here: http://www.wwii-women-pilots.org/uploads/4/4/5/2/44527045/kbrick43-3_biggs_6-14-44.pdf.



BT-13 after cartwheeling during landing at Biggs AAB.

Otis Army Air Base, Falmouth, MA (Jan to April 1944):

On March 27, 1944, while flying an A-24, Frances F. Grimes, died in service to America. Again the engine was cutting in and out during take-off and during attempts to return to the field and land. As she attempted a second landing, she was at very low altitude when the plane when nose down and crashed, inverted at the start of the runway. The plane burst into flames on impact. Icing of the carburetor was a possible factor.

Love Field, 5th FG Dallas, TX. (Jan 1943 to Dec 1944):

About a month after graduation from Sweetwater and while serving at Love Field, Gretchen Gorman lost control of a PT-13 during a landing at Davis-Monthan Field in

Tucson. While trying to control a ground loop, she “applied too much pressure on the brakes and the airplane went over on its back.” She suffered a scratch on the forehead.

Conclusion:

Two members of class 43-3 lost their lives for their love of flying and in support of the American effort to end war. All the other graduates went on to live their lives, attend WASP reunions, raise families, pursue careers, share their war stories, and finally get recognition for their accomplishments as veterans in 1977 and receiving the Congressional Gold Medal in March of 2010.



Andy Hailey presents CGM to his mother, Lois B. Hailey



Lois's CGM on her WASP scarf



Lois's CGM on her WASP scarf