

MARY S. FEIK
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After overhauling her first automobile engine for her father when she was 13, Mary Feik turned to aircraft engines and military aircraft at the age of 18 and taught aircraft maintenance to crew chiefs and mechanics for the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942. During WWII, Feik became an expert on many military aircraft and is credited with becoming the first woman engineer in research and development in the Air Technical Service Command's Engineering Division at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio.



She flew more than 6,000 hours as pilot in fighter, attack, bomber, cargo and training aircraft. She qualified as a B-29 Flight Engineer and was an engineering analyst in test aircraft for flight and maintenance requirements.

She participated in engineering "mock-up" evaluations for new aircraft proposed for production at the various aircraft manufacturing plants to determine flight and maintenance training requirements.

She authored pilot training and maintenance manuals for many of the military aircraft. She further wrote aviation-related reports in engineering and the physical sciences for distribution throughout the Armed Forces.

She retired from the National Air and Space Museum's (NASM) Paul E. Garber Restoration Facility as a Restoration Specialist. She restores and teaches the restoration of antique and classic aircraft and has participated in the construction of reproduction WWI aircraft. At the Garber Facility she was a member of the restoration teams that restored NASM's 1910 Wiseman-Cook aircraft; the WWI Spad XIII fighter; and the 1930 Northrop "Alpha" mail plane.

She serves often as judge and advisor for antique, classic and warbird aircraft restorations and has received craftsmanship awards from many aviation organizations. She conducts and participates in many aircraft restoration workshops as a part of her commitment to aviation education.

Her aviation-related memberships include: Civil Air Patrol (Aerospace Education); the EAA - Experimental Aircraft Association; the 99's; Women in Aviation International; the Aircraft Owner's and Pilot's Association; PAMA – Professional Aviation Maintenance Association; AWAM – Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance; IWASM – Women's Air and Space Museum; and the aircraft type clubs: International Comanche Society and the Short Wing Piper Club.

She is a frequent speaker to many aviation, civic, educational, professional and historical organizations on the subject of aviation history, women in aviation and aircraft restoration and preservation.

She is regarded as an "Eagle" aviation pioneer in the CAP National Congress on Aviation and Space and Education (NCASE).

On October 17, 1985, she was honored in the first group of Women in Aviation to receive recognition by the National Aviation Club.

In 1989, because of her long-standing experience with non-commissioned personnel in flight and maintenance projects, she was given a Life Membership in the Air Force Sergeants Association.

On March 12, 1994, at the International Conference of Women in Aviation, she was inducted into the Women in Aviation Pioneer Hall of Fame.

During the World Aerospace Education Congress held in Birmingham, UK, on August 9-12, 1994, she was awarded the Order of Merit for outstanding leadership and support of aerospace education worldwide.

On January 11, 1995, she was honored as a Pioneer in the salute to Women in Aviation and Aerospace on the 20th Anniversary of the International Women's Year. The event was co-sponsored by the 99s and the Zontas.

On February 24, 1996, she was presented The Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award by the FAA in appreciation for dedicated service, technical expertise, professionalism and many outstanding maintenance contributions to further the cause of aviation safety. The award honors the Wright brother's mechanic and engineer. The recipient must have more than 50 years of experience. She was the first woman to receive this award.

She has had a life-long dedication to aviation education with the U.S. Air Force, the Civil Air Patrol and other aviation organizations and for this effort has received many awards.

Additional Awards:

Civil Air Patrol

Designated as a Life Member - 2008

Awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and promoted to the rank of Colonel - 2004

Civil Air Patrol – Aerospace Education

Frank G. Brewer Awards – Regional – 1984, 1990, 1998
Anniversary Award – 2000

Crown Circle Award – 2001 (Highest Aerospace Education Award)

Civil Air Patrol – Cadet Programs

Mary S. Feik Achievement – 2002 - Third achievement in the Cadet Program

Air Force Association – Thomas W. Anthony Chapter

Woman of Distinction - 1989

The 99s Organization of Women Pilots

Individual Aerospace Education Award – 1995 – Middle Atlantic Section of the 99s

Inducted into The International Forest of Friendship in Atchison, Kansas, created to honor Amelia Earhart – 1999

Maryland Aviation Historical Task Force

Maryland Aviation Pioneer – 1998

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Included in the 100th Anniversary of Flight “Premier American Women in Aerospace” poster - 2000

Women in Aviation International

Named one of the “100 most influential women in the aviation and aerospace industries over the past 100 years” - 2003

Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance

Richard C. Wellman Award – 2004

National Aeronautics Association

Katherine and Marjorie Stinson Award for Achievement – 2003
Frank G. Brewer Trophy – 2006

Fédération Aéronautique Internationale

Paul Tissandier Diploma – 2006

Aircraft flown in the military (over 6,000 hours as pilot):

Fighters

P-51	"Mustang"	North American
P-47	"Thunderbolt"	Republic
P-38	"Lightning"	Lockheed
P-63	"King Cobra"	Bell
P-61	"Black Widow"	Northrop

Jets

P-80	"Shooting Star"	Lockheed
T-33	"T-Bird"	(Based on the design of the P-80 with a stretched fuselage to accommodate a second pilot – used for flight training)

Attack Aircraft

A-26	"Invader"	Douglas
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Bombers

B-17	"Flying Fortress"	Boeing
B-24	"Liberator"	Consolidated
B-25	"Mitchell"	North American
B-26	"Marauder"	Martin
B-29	"Super Fortress"	Boeing (Flew both as a pilot and flight engineer)

Cargo

C-47	"Dakota"	Douglas
C-46	"Commando"	Curtiss
C-121	"Constellation"	Lockheed
C-82 & C-119	"Packet/Flying Boxcar"	Fairchild

Glider

CG-4A	"Hadrian"	Waco (Flew test flights with the new synthetic fiber tow rope to determine changes in flight training)
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Note: Many of these flights were made to determine flight, maintenance and safety training requirements.