

## WAI Congratulates the 2022 Pioneer Hall of Fame Inductees



**December 13, 2021** - Women in Aviation International (WAI) has selected the 2022 inductees for its International Pioneer Hall of Fame. These women will be honored during the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Women in Aviation Conference, which will be held March 17-19, 2022, in Nashville, Tennessee. The induction ceremony and celebration dinner will take place on Friday, March 19, 2022, from 6-8 p.m. at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center.

### **The 2022 Pioneer Hall of Fame inductees are:**

[Cornelia Clark Fort](#) earned an instructor rating in March 1941 and became Nashville's first female flight instructor and the only one in Tennessee at that time. She became famous for being part of two aviation-related events. The first occurred while conducting civilian training flight at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, when Cornelia was the first U.S. pilot to encounter the Japanese air fleet during the attack of Pearl Harbor. She and her student narrowly escaped a mid-air collision with the Japanese aircraft. The following year, Cornelia became the second member of what was to become the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). She was stationed at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ferrying Group base at Long Beach, California, and on March 21, 1943, became the first female pilot in American history to die on active duty. While flying in formation enroute to Love Field in Dallas, Cornelia's left wing of her BT-13 was struck by the landing gear of flight officer Frank Stamme Jr's airplane. She went into an irreversible dive and crashed 10 miles south of Merkel, Texas. Cornelia was portrayed in the film *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and the Cornelia Fort Airpark in East Nashville is named after her.

[Capt. Rosemary Bryant Mariner, U.S. Navy](#), earned her private pilot certificate on her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. She was the first woman admitted to the Purdue University Professional Pilot program, and after graduation was selected in the first group of eight women to train as naval aviators in 1973. Rosemary received her Navy wings of gold in June 1974 and became the first military woman to qualify in a tactical jet aircraft, the A-4 Skyhawk, in 1975. The following year, she broke another barrier, becoming the first female naval aviator to fly the A-7E Corsair II. Rosemary continued to add many "firsts" to her accomplishments including the first Navy woman to fly the vintage F-86, the first woman aviator to qualify as a Surface Warfare Officer, and the first military woman to command an operational aviation squadron. She flew over 3,500 flight hours and 17 carrier landings and was awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal among many other awards in her naval career. Rosemary passed away at age 65 and was honored by the Navy with a four F/A-18F aircraft flyover at her funeral in East Tennessee.

[Col. Peggy A. Phillips, \(retired\)](#) of the U.S. Air Force, was the first woman selected by the 702<sup>nd</sup> Military Airlift Squadron to attend undergraduate pilot training. After graduating in April 1981, UPT Class 81-05, Peggy returned to McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey, to fly the C-141 Starlifter. She upgraded to Aircraft Commander in minimum time, and then became an instructor pilot, flying global missions. She rose to the position of first female C-17 squadron commander and served more than two years during Operation Iraqi Freedom. After logging over 5,200 hours, including 240 combat hours, she was promoted to the rank of Colonel and transferred to the Tactical Airlift Command Center, where she fulfilled the role of senior director of operations for five years. During that tenure, Peggy became the first female reserve pilot to serve as director of mobility forces supporting the Katrina Operation. Serving for 30 years as an Air Force Reserve officer, Peggy retired from military service in 2010. A recipient of numerous service medals, Peggy is also a charter member of Women Military Aviators and a WAI Lifetime member.

"Our 2022 inductees reflect the excellence represented by our members," Allison McKay, WAI CEO says. "Our International Pioneer Hall of Fame celebrates not merely women of great accomplishment, but women who have carried the weight of future female aviators on their shoulders as they broke down gender barriers and proved that women could succeed and contribute to aviation in powerful ways."

The Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame was established in 1992 to honor women who have made significant contributions as record setters, pioneers, or innovators. Special consideration is given to individuals or groups who have helped other women be successful in aviation or opened doors of opportunity for other women. Each year, the organization solicits nominations from throughout the aviation industry for the WAI Pioneer Hall of Fame. For more information on the WAI Pioneer Hall of Fame, visit [pioneers](#).

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Women in Aviation International is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing networking, mentoring and scholarship opportunities for women and men who are striving for challenging and fulfilling careers in the aviation and aerospace industries. For more information, contact WAI via email [waihq@wai.org](mailto:waihq@wai.org); phone (937) 839-4647 or through [www.WAI.org](http://www.WAI.org).

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