

**Lillian Lorraine Yonally
Veteran**

**Wayne Clarke
New York State Military Museum
Saratoga Springs, New York
Interviewer**

**Interviewed on
August 27, 2009
at New Bedford, MA**

WC: Today is the 27th of August, 2009. We are in Colonie, New York. My name is Wayne Clark and I am with the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. Ma'am for the record, would you state your full name, and your date and birth please.

LY: Lillian Lorraine Yonally, born in Lynn, Massachusetts 1922.

WC: Okay, and whereabouts did you attend school?

LY: I moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts and grew up there and attended school there through high school.

WC: What year did you graduate from high school?

LY: 1940. My high school was at Lincoln School in Providence Rhode Island, it was a Quaker boarding school. At that point, my father remarried, because he was divorced before, and he started a second family and I flew the coop.

WC: And you went onto some schooling after high school?

LY: I went to Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School in New York City. At the same time, occasionally on weekends, I took flying instructions. I finally got my private pilot license.

WC: Where did you take that instruction?

LY: On Long Island and various places. I did start in Massachusetts, in Rochester which was a little field actually with two airplanes. I soloed there in the summer before I went to Katherine Gibbs. I think my father thought it would be a good idea for me to tackle something else rather than see how I could drive his car. Which by the way had a big spot on it that said "Lorraine's good coffee, best coffee in town." So everyone knew where I was. Anyhow, when I went to Katherine Gibbs I lived in New York City and I flew on weekends.

WC: What kind of airplanes did you train on?

LY: Mostly J3-Cubs [Piper MJ-3 Cub popular for its lightweight design and reliable short-field performance] and some Aeroncas [single engine two-seater lightweight craft]

WC: Had there been anyone else in your family who had flown?

LY: Both my aunt and uncle started flying at the same small airport as I did in Massachusetts. They both ended up with commercial licenses and airplanes.

WC: Now at that point you just had a private license?

LY: Yes, I had a private license and was looking for a job. I got a secretarial job which I had to

stay in for six months because that was the requirement. After that I tried Pan Am [Pan American Airlines] but I did not fit there very well. I got a job at Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation in Beth Page, Long Island.

WC: What did you do at Grumman?

LY: I was the secretary to the Vice President for a while. They were building a new hangar and it was going to have a new control tower so they needed more personnel than the two men who were doing it at that point. So they asked my boss if he would let me go because I had license and understood a lot about flying. I think he probably was very glad, anyway I was! [Lillian laughs] I got to go to the old control tower until the new one was built.

WC: Were you flying during that period on the weekends, or at all?

LY: No, I couldn't. They closed flying on Long Island because of submarines and so forth. Everything was blacked out at night.

WC: This was after the Pearl Harbor attack or was that before it?

LY: I believe it was before still. I finally bought a car, it was a Model A Ford for thirty-five bucks and felt really special. [Lillian claps her hands together and they both laugh]. I could now drive to Grumman instead of taking the Long Island Railroad.

WC: Do you remember much about the attack on Pearl Harbor? Where and when did you hear about it?

LY: Just that it happened. I think it was the final blow for getting the WASPS [Women Airforce Service Pilots] going. It was so obvious that there was going to be a shortage of men flying and they did not need them to be delivering airplanes back and forth. Or doing any of the other jobs they finally let us into. They started us out fairly small, but there was one group, Nancy Love's, that had pilots, some who had logged a thousand hours. They were mostly wealthy and had their own airplanes and so forth. They formed a group and worked for the ferry service.

WC: When did you join the WASPS?

LY: I had to be twenty-one I turned twenty-one on May 5th and I had already applied for the WASPS. I had a physical at Mitchell Field in Long Island by a male doctor who had never done a female, which was interesting. [both laugh] I passed all the way through so I was ready to go whenever they called which was about mid-May when I got the telegram saying "please show up in Sweetwater, Texas for the seventh class. "

WC: Did you have to go through any aptitude tests before you were accepted?

Y: No, I had an interview and I spoke with someone there. You get a pilot's license and they do check you fairly well. I guess they figured I had what it took to go through the training and see if I could pass.

WC: So how did you get to Sweetwater, Texas?

LY: My previous boss gave me some money to work with, loaned me some money. I got a flight to Chicago, Illinois and a flight down to Dallas, Texas and then took the train. There were a lot of gals on the train that were coming in for that class.

WC: What was that like when you arrived at Sweetwater, Texas?

LY: It was hot and dirty. It wasn't dressy, it was very casual. And it was fun with a lot of nice people.

WC: Were you given uniforms to wear when you arrived?

LY: No, once we got out to the airbase, which was a couple of days later after we stayed at the hotel there for two nights, they gave us G.I. (Government Issued) coveralls. The kind the mechanics wear, size forty or up! And we weren't that big. [laughter] So we went back into Sweetwater and bought heavy shoes to wear, tan pants and white shirts and an overseas cap for our uniform. We wore the zoot suits and we got two. We found out a good system for washing them was with a scrub brush and a cake of soap. You stand in the shower, get wet and scrub them. Then you rinse off and hang them on a hanger and in Texas they dried fairly fast.

WC: Were you wearing them as you were washing them?

LY: Yeah, it was the only way to do it! [Lillian laughs]

WC: What was your training like down there, was it pretty intense?

LY: We had both alternating flight line and ground school. We would have flying in the morning and ground schooling in the afternoon. And then the following week we would reverse it. We started off with primary training and a PT19-A was the airplane that was low-wing with an open cockpit. It was entirely different from a Piper Cub, believe me, but great fun.

WC: Was it easier to fly or more difficult than the Cub?

LY: Well, we did a lot of things I had not done before but they were explained to you and there was no problem with doing them.

WC: Did you receive any sort of aerobatic training?

LY: Minimal. I think the pilots liked to do that too so we cut loops and, of course spins. We did snap rolls and slow rolls, that kind of thing but not anything major. The Air Force pilots, the guys, were going to do combat so they were flying in all positions. Our main thought at that time was just delivery of airplanes. To relieve them so they could do other things. At the end of Primary Training we had a check ride by an Army personnel.

WC: Was your training given by civilians?

LY: Yes, except for the PT (Physical Training), which was given by Lieutenant Larue (@10:54 spelling of name) and he yelled a lot of "hip/hip/hop" you know. He wasn't taking anything slowly. It had to be right and he would call you out if you did not do it right. You were pooped when you were finished, but he wanted healthy gals.

WC: Once you completed that Primary Training, did everyone in your class finish or did some dropout?

LY: Some did dropout, some were excused and left. You would come back to your bay. We had six people in our long barracks, which we called bays. There were six in one room at the end, a bathroom with two stalls, and then six in the next room-that is twelve girls to a bathroom of two, so it kind of got busy. But you got to be very quick at things and you had to fall-out into position in a marching group squadrons with a flag. Wherever we went, we sang. Some songs were nice.

WC: What about your meals, did you eat in a mess hall? Were they run by the military?

LY: Yes, a regular mess hall. But I don't believe they were run by the military. I believe most of this wasn't because Cochran [Jacqueline Cochran founder of the WASPS] was trying to find out if this would fly if you want to call it that. She was very secretive about what we did in the beginning. She did not want pictures taken.

WC: She was the one who started the WASPS.

LY: Jacqueline Cochran, she was a famous flier and a wonderful person.

WC: Yes. Did you ever get to meet her or see her?

LY: I have met her once and I'm very proud of her. She believed that girls could do this. I don't think anyone in the Army thought so. General Arnold [Henry Arnold commander of Army Air Forces in victory over Germany and Japan in WWII] did not think that was the place for ladies. But Eleanor Roosevelt said "put the girls in" quoted in a book and President Franklin Roosevelt sanctioned it. It was needed, it really was. I mean there were girls flying combat in Russia and before we were started Cochran took a group of girls over to England to fly. There were people from eight other countries who were helping fly in England, both men and women. So it was proven it could be done.

WC: Once you finished your Primary Training, where did you go next?

LY: The same airfield, Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. Basic was BTs aircraft and they had a large radial engine where as the PT19 was inlaid and they fired and made a great racket and it was entirely different. They also had the blackout front section so that you could practice instruments and that was the beginning at that point of our training, we had a great deal of learning in ground school. The worst deal of flying at that point was the radio and signals with the Morse Code. I did a lot of that.

WC: Did you find any of the training intimidating or difficult?

LY: No, but it was trustworthy. Once we had been checked out on instrument training, and that is flying in the front, not seeing anything just doing it all by the needle, ball, airspeed. And a gal sat in the back so you trusted one of the girls and she trusted you to watch making sure you did not run into an airplane or do something silly up there. There were quite a few airplanes up there while you practiced. So you learn to trust whoever was with you and you make good friends that way.

WC: Sure. Once you completed that phase of the that training, did you go on to multi-engine aircraft?

LY: After we finished that, and the check ride by the Army, which was a sweat-job, you were scared because they threw everything at you [Lillian laughs]. They wanted to be sure you could do this and I think that was wise probably.. The AT-6 came next. [North American Aviation Harvard T-6, a single-engine advanced trainer aircraft]. The Harvard, they are used all over, they are wonderful airplanes. They will do anything. We had BTs at night, so we did night flying also. A major part of our training was the cross country. We had to know map navigation, etc. because that is what they thought we would be doing – flying airplanes from the factory to the base. Flying deficient airplanes back to the factory to be fixed and so forth. They did not know what size we would be capable of handling but as time went on we got more and more convinced that we could fly the bigger ones.

WC: When you were flying across the country in the AT-6, did you fly as two students or an

instructor and a student?

LY: You flew alone.

WC: Okay, you flew alone so you had to do all the navigating as well as the radio work?

LY: Well, you were trained in the BTs and you should be able to do it. We flew the BTs at night and had a general knowledge of what we were doing. We had to find out if you could find where you were going, check in, and come back. The checking in did not mean you had landed. You just had to call in and they had to see you.

WC: Then you just turned around and went back?

LY: Yes. But you just don't turn around. [both laugh] That was good. Yep, and after the check ride with the AT-6s, which was much tougher because our instructor wanted that spin to come out right where he wanted it. The first one I did did not happen that way and I was scared. He said "try it again, I think you can do it" and I did. But you were to come out on a certain heading when you do a spin. They don't teach spins incidentally anymore.

WC: No, no when I got my pilot's license they did not practice spins, just stalls.

LY: That guy who was in Buffalo who pulled up when he should have pushed down and stalled the airplane and killed the people should have had our training or better training. You don't pull up when you are shaking, you get some air speed first. [Lillian demonstrates with her hands] [[@18:51 reference to story link provided here](#)]

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/TRAVEL/02/02/continental.crash.inquiry/index.html>

After the AT-6 airplanes, we went to the UC-78s [Cessna UC-78 Bobcat]. We called them the Under-powered Coffin [initials UC]. It is a Cessna twin-engine and we learned to manipulate two throttles and fly with one engine and do all of those things. The last thing we did was the night cross-country training in one of those. That was interesting. We would leave, check in and come back. So as I said, ground school was extremely tough and a lot to face. We had Link Trainers to give us more help with night flying and blind flying.

WC: What did you think of the Link Trainer?

LY: When I found out you could spin in them, they went "whoosh/whoosh"! I thought they were fun, But they were very confining and when it was hot, they were hot and sticky, though it was a good way to learn.

WC: When did you get your wings?

LY: In November of 1943. I had been there since May of '43. They changed as time went on, they took girls who were younger and people with less flying background training, etc. They were trying to figure out just where we fit and how much you could ask, I think. It made a lot of sense because this was something that was new at that time.

WC: After you were trained in the Cessna, did you go on to other twin-engine aircraft?

LY: When I graduated, twenty of us were chosen to go to Mather Field in Sacramento, California for B-25 [Boeing made, mid-range bomber] training. And except for one girl who found a guy she wanted to marry and quit... I can't imagine picking a guy over an airplane! I mean those B-25s were beautiful, I loved them. [both laugh] I stayed until I graduated with the class.

WC: Tell me about the B-25 training.

LY: Well it makes a heck of a lot of noise. We did all kinds of special things. Colonel Wimberly (@21:50 spelling?) was in charge of us and he was great for that type of job. He would try new things with us and so forth. He didn't figure we had any problems at all, which was a good way to approach it, so we didn't. Of course we had ground school, engines, weather, and cross-country information training there. All kinds of stuff.

WC: There must have been an awful lot to learn wasn't there?

LY: We were young with open minds, a lot of room to set new things in. We did a day-night cross-country trip with two gals. This was in the winter by the way, which meant sheepskin lined pants, jacket, helmet, boots and heavy gloves. We always carried a flashlight with our parachute on our backs and books, so we were well loaded and strong. On this day-night cross-country trip we went down in the daytime in Texas, just north of Mexico; then we flew back at night over the mountains so it was proof that you could do it. Two girls, no men, no one else it was fun. It felt good.

When we graduated we had a break, I did not go anywhere. Then about half of us when to Biggs Field in Texas and half to March Field in Riverside, California. It was an attachment on March Field, but it was the 7th Tow Target Squadron. Now I did not know what tow target was going to be, that was a new faction. In the Mojave Desert at Camp Irwin, which is now Fort Irwin, I know this because my son took a group there for summer training. He is a Major in North Carolina. But back then Camp Irwin was very deserty and had a lot of people working as non-coms [non-commissioned officers] along with our regular guys and the flight line. Our job was to tow targets in SBDs [Scout Bomber Douglas scout plane and dive bomber made by Douglas Aircraft] . When you get a sleeve [target flag trailing behind the aircraft] out back, you would fly with a tow-reel operator in the stern of the airplane. They would let the sleeve out from there when you were on course and it would take all of the power for that SBD having the throttle almost full forward.

WC: So there was a lot of drag resulting?

LY: A lot of drag, yes. That was fine, we would tow the target for four hours, two two-hour shifts for the guys down below. They were firing live ammunition at the sleeve. Each group, or battery would dip their bullets in a different primary color. It would be the A-Battery, or the B-Battery. When they hit the sleeve, which was made of clear nylon material, you could read who had made hits and who did not. After the two-hour flight you would drop the sleeves as close as you could to the battery and go off and put on another sleeve for the next two hours.

WC: How long did you do that assignment?

LY: This went on most all of the time until the end, about December 1944. I went to Orlando, Florida to learn how to become part of the Army Air personnel, but like I said I did not like the idea of sitting behind a desk. That is what your friend did that you mentioned earlier, and she rose in rank very well and had an exciting life. I chose to become married with six children rather than continue and that's okay, we all have our priorities.

WC: It must have been heartbreaking to find out that the group was being disbanded.

LY: When I came back from Orlando I was shipped to Hamilton Army Airfield in San Francisco, California where the people were returning from the island battles. [Pacific Theater battles]. I did not do many things there, I could fly anything they had, and I did. I was used as a co-pilot on one flight to Mitchell Field [Hempstead Plains, Long Island, New York]. Then I returned in a Grumman TBF [Avenger Torpedo Bomber] and I flew in the back of them, in

the gunner's section.

WC: How were you women treated by the men pilots and ground personnel?

LY: They kind of avoided us I think. We were in the Officers' Mess and we did not have any confrontations or anything. It was generally accepted that we had qualified and we were doing our thing.

So that was good, but I did have one dispatching officer though who did not like us. He gave us some bum jobs, but that was alright as long as we could do them. For example, fly a BT [Vultee-BT 13] as high as you can get it at night for searchlight training is sort of a while-away type of thing, especially on my birthday! [laughter] but that is what he chose, so that is what I did. He designated what we did. [@29:00 possible name Dwayne Strong?] Anyway, we were available for anything with any of the airplanes that we had qualified up to fly.

We also did radar-tracking out of the Pacific with A-24s [Douglas A-24 Banshee Dive Bomber aircrafts] which are rather big and clumsy. When you get in one of those, you don't know what you are going to be doing, but you find out before you land how to make it work. Three of us would go out in formation and someone in the back would drop out cut-up aluminum foil and see if they could track it from one place, and then another place. It was the beginning of radar work, that was interesting.

Then we would be sent to other fields for the week or less. We did whatever they wanted us to do with the airplane we had or what they had.

WC: Were you allowed to talk about the work you were doing at all?

LY: We were not exposed to any people to talk to, as much as I could see, so no. It was getting more interesting for the girls because tow-target work was one thing they decided to see if we could do. We proved that we could. I think it was done with twin engines in other places, but we were given SBDs so that is what we did with them. We did have one really interesting trip with them. Three of us were asked by the head of the camp if we would come out early in the morning, before everything started and do some diving on the troops which were in hollows between the hills. They wanted to give the troops a feeling of airplanes and so forth. We were very willing and had a great deal of fun. [Lorraine motions with her hand an impression of looping her airplane dipping downward as she smiled.] We stayed out for about a half hour. When I landed, the fellow who took care of my airplane said "did you know that your propeller is green on the ends and your wings have green along the leading edge? And your air scoop underneath is quite green?" I said no and I did not hurt anybody, nor hit anyone. He said "No, and you came back in good shape but you were kind of low. Your plane has sagebrush in it!" So they did not ask us to do it again, that was too bad.

We also did what they call Equiangular [triangular] firing at nighttime in twin-engine aircraft, usually Beechcraft or such with two of us. This was without a horizon, it was total blackness up there you had to use instruments. They would aim at you, but the guns would fire to the side of you. It was done with mirrors or something. So you would be flying and these great bursts would come along side of you so you had better focus on what you were doing, yeah. We went into Palm Springs after that and they had a young male cadet group and that was kind of fun too. You could not get into March Field until about ten in the morning because of the fog, always. Flying out of there was okay going up over the mountains and into the desert, but not flying into it until after ten.

WC: What did you do during your time off?

LY: We had dates, we had a lot of things to do between us. Sharing, laundry and all of that stuff too. They kept us pretty busy.

WC: Did you meet your husband in the service?

LY: Yes, he was down on the firing line. My friend Ann [also a WASP] went down, she met George and I met Jim. She married George at the end of her service. I did not marry Jim until he came back from Korea. He had been in England, France, and Germany, through all the worst of that.

WC: Was he an officer?

LY: Oh yes, and he went through [34:16 unclear] to Korea. He was there during the typhoon and several other of the happenings and then finally came home. So that is how that went.

WC: You mentioned when the WASPS were disbanded you

LY: When the WASPS were disbanded they said "thank you". I think they said thank you, at the time I wasn't listening very closely. It was December 20th and they said to get home however you can.

WC: Were you in a state of shock when you heard that?

LY: I wondered when they started this officer training at AF SAC [Air Force Strategic Air Command] in Orlando if there wasn't something in the wind. I mean rumors go around all the time in the service. So when I was sent to Hamilton Field I thought, well this is sort of a goodbye place probably. I caught a B-24 part of the way and then I don't remember what I got into, whatever I could find. I also took ground transportation and showed up on the east coast on Christmas Eve.

WC: Did they give you any sort of discharge pay or anything?

LY: I don't remember any.

WC: Did you have any sort of rank structure as a WASP?

LY: No, no rank.

WC: Were you allowed to keep any of your flight gear,, like your flight jacket?

LY: Nope. I think some girls managed to, I don't know whether they paid for it, or what they did. We had just received uniforms at the very end of this time. We did not have uniforms until we were flying in the desert, so toward the end of it. I did have some of those items, but I did not have much. I had been wearing pinks and greens, the mens' uniform shirts and pants. After I got married, my husband did not want much to do with the WASPS and said to give my uniforms to the Salvation Army and I was a fool, I did. So I don't have a uniform, I don't think I could wear it even if I had it. [laughs]

WC: Did you keep the WASPS insignia?

LY: I have my wings. I could not find them this morning, so I don't know exactly what I did with them. But I do have them somewhere, yep. I had them made into a bracelet. We were the last class that was a Woman's Air Force Flying- Training Detachment - [The Wolf Tits @37:30?]. After that they used the wing with the diamond or the lozenge in the middle. So mine original wings are the WF FTD. Those you cannot replace. So they have to be somewhere. I have moved many times from place to place. I have been here since November and it is a very good situation because I am independent of all family connections. Except for Jack who is very good with calling me and taking me places. For instance I went to Fort

Ticonderoga for a week with Ruth. I have friends in various places.

WC: Once you got back in civilian life, how did you end up in the Albany area?

LY: Oh goodness, well I got a job on Long Island finally. I worked for Sperry Gyroscope Company in the lab for a while testing Venturi tubes [a plane instrument]. Then I got a job as the secretary to one of the head guys [@39:04 name unclear] and stayed there for a while. I left to get married and got a job in the Department of Aeronautical Engineering, an interesting job really and it worked out very well. They had a part of the Sperry company in Mineola and I lived in Garden City at that point in Roosevelt Field. I bought an airplane with three guys, it had a radio in it...I'll say that for it. [laughs] Because my family was near Cape Cod, New Bedford, that area, I could fly it home on the fourth weekend I could just go off Montauk Point. I did not have to take the Long Island Railroad, it was so much more convenient. I flew it to many other places too.

WC: Did your husband fly with you?

LY: This was before I was married. Jim did take some flying lessons but it wasn't his thing, that was mine.

WC: What about your children, did any of them become pilots?

LY: No. My son Jim is a Major. He did not take flying lessons, he was a Green Beret. He parachuted out of airplanes in the night and day with big packs on his back and so forth. He has done very well in the service and I am very proud of him. He has followed the right way to go and is very proud of what he has done and approaches things with sincerity.

WC: Have you stayed in contact with the girls you were stationed with?

LY: Oh yeah, sure when you go through something like that you are really quite close. We've had reunions and the last reunion was this past year. At the reunions, you see everybody and have a wonderful time. It makes you feel like you are young again!

WC: How do you think your time in the WASPS changed or affected your life?

LY: Oh, a great deal. I have a very high respect for the government in flying connections. I am very proud of my country. I don't think I would have been as fussy about flights going up and coming down at the right time. Items like that which are respect for what you have and for the country. I met a lot of people that I would not have met because there would not have been this connection. Yes, I am very proud of my country.

WC: Have you joined any organizations such as the American Legion?

LY: No I have not.[@42:55 unclear] but when I was living in Messina, after my husband died I had two teenagers and my Bureau of Labor Statistics job in St. Lawrence County for the CPI(Consumer Price Index). I did that for about eighteen years. Besides that he left a liquor store which I decided I surely could run, so I did. I had eight salesmen and they helped me to understand the business. There was one who did not, so I threw him out. He came back later and that worked out fine, he just did not know who I was.

My husband managed the Boston store in Messina. He was highly respected by the major clubs, etc. He was a good merchant and he was a good father. I am very proud of all my children, I really am. Each one is doing well, they are all individuals and do their own thing they are not programmed. I have one granddaughter in Baltimore that works on a tall ship. She has been to Bermuda with his crew, down the St. Lawrence Seaway and back.

WC: How many grandchildren do you have?

LY: Thirteen.

WC: You have some photographs to show us?

LY: I would like to, yes. My father sent me colored slides when I was in training in Sweetwater.

And as I said, that was not legal because they said no pictures so I was kind of careful about the pictures I took.

All these 8x10 images look professionally framed.

1) This is how you look in a zoot suit, that is when I was in Primary Training, so fresh from New York:

- Lillian standing in overalls on an airfield with sunglasses holding a backpack

2) This is how we marched in squadrons singing "hup/hup/hee haw" or dirty songs [laughter] and we marched to everything we did:

- rows of women in blouses and slacks standing in line (black and white)

3) This one is our graduation from B-25 school at Mather Field in California. I have taken the picture, so I am not in it:

- Women in uniform standing in front of propeller of the B25

4) I am in my new uniform with a SBD (Douglas SBD Dauntless) which we towed in, but I did not wear that when I towed. There were girls which towed using other airplanes, but that is what we were given:

- Two photos of Lillian alongside this aircraft

WC: Do you want to show us some pictures from your album? Let me focus first on the image on the album cover. Close up on patch showing a winged female flying.

LY: That is Fifinella a woman gremlins who were safe and they helped you. It was made by Walt Disney. So it was our good-luck gremlin so we stayed with her. [designed by Walt Disney for a film/given permission to be used as the official WASPS insignia].

These next listings are pages are from Lillian's memory album:

> That is early on. I have a uniform here, we did not have them for graduation.

- Black and white photo of Lillian in uniform

> I don't think there is anything else major in here except all my qualification documents. I have a commercial and an instrument rating. [The camera zooms in on some mementos and black and white WASP personnel snapshots.]

> We lined up for what we did.

- Ladies in formation, woman looking at small aircraft

> I had been in almost everything at one time and just pictures

- Several membership cards and lots of images of WASPS, newspaper articles and of various size aircraft

WC: Were most of these pictures taken in Texas?

LY: Yep, almost all of them. These are all training pictures in Texas. I've got a slew of B-25 pictures.

[Lillian flips through her album which contains a wonderful array of all that she experienced.] I think that is about all.

WC: You mentioned that you finally got your Veterans status and that was through President Carter?

LY: Yes, in 1977. It was also through Barry Goldwater and some other people who worked for

us to get us that. It was a blessing because it made it possible to be a Veteran and go to the Veterans Affairs for physical needs, etc. It was something we really needed.

WC: Do you want to tell me about the photo you are holding?

LY: This is a Long Island Republic Aviation and the Collins Group brought in a B-24 and I got a ride in it with two other WASPS. We dropped flowers out onto the National Cemetery in honor of one of the WASPS who was buried there. It was great. [color photo of older Lillian in front of B-24 and three other women]

WC: Is there anything we may have missed, or that you would like to talk about?

LY: Just to get the book in.

WC: Oh, can you show us the book and tell us a little bit about it?

LY: This is Yankee Doodle Gals by Amy Nathan. Betty Jane Williams knew Amy and gave her the information and helped her with the book. [Lillian holds up a hard cover book with a cover photo showing a female pilot in overalls and goggles walking away from a propeller aircraft.] I found it on Amazon and decided it was the perfect book to give out throughout the United States somehow. I knew it was what I wanted to do, but didn't know how, but I already started with three different places in Massachusetts. Their libraries have been very happy with them. My daughter decided she could help me and we got in touch with Betty Jane Williams and we bought over one thousand books and kept on reordering as we needed. We sent a letter of introduction to every WASP saying they could send in for a copy at a very minimal price. With the little amount we made, we could pay for the shipping costs back to the girls. So they are distributed throughout the United States. We sent out over one thousand books. There is going to be a signing or something with the author Amy Nathan in Washington D.C. They asked if I would come, so Lynn said she would drive me. So I am all for it because the WASPS were not known. Now with the Congressional Medal of Honor, we will be recognized.

WC: Yes. Do you want to tell us about that and how it came about? Now every women who was a WASP is entitled to that medal.

LY: I don't know how it came about, I am just glad that it did. Every woman, or the family of the deceased will receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. We lost thirty-eight members during the WASP "evolution" if you will, while we were flying. And, of course, many more since. There were one thousand and seventy-four women who got wings. We are down to somewhere of just over three hundred. A lot of them are physically unable to do a great deal. I keep a record of the ones who are deceased in my roster with Lynn's help. And with her unceasingly help, I have been able to do a lot of things I would not have thought of doing. We had a couple of girls who took fifty books, paid us for them and distributed them. They have done well. So if anyone wants to do a thing on the WASPS....get the book! [both laugh]

WC: All right, thank you so much for your interview and thank you for your service.

LY: Oh, you are most welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW. Total 54:45 minutes