



The AMA History Project Presents: History of the JORDANETTES



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The following article was printed in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin on April 21, 1924.

Model Plane Club is All Girls

Jordanettes Designated First of Sex in Junior Air Reserve

Chalk up a unique national “first” for Philadelphia’s war effort- a Junior Miss first to keep ‘em flying.

At the Sherwood Recreation Center, 56th and Christian sts., 28 girls, all under 17, who have been meeting to build and fly model planes, have received a telegram from Washington designating them as the first all-girl squadron in the National Aeronautic Association’s Junior Air Reserve.

Mrs. Harry T. Jordan, 5005 Pine st., the originator and sponsor of the project, began her model plane club because “in these days of increasing aerial warfare it is important that young America learn the fundamentals of aviation. Girls, especially, should be preparing for the growing opportunities of women’s wartime service.”

And suiting Mrs. Jordan’s words to action, the first youngster to solo her half-ounce Class A glider successfully was nine-year-old Jean Burton, 5302 Willows av., youngest member of the Jordanettes, as the club is called after its founder and Senior Flight Leader.

Jean’s tiny plane sailed from the hand of its young builder, soared directly over a target placed on the floor of the Center’s new gymnasium, and landed easily, completing a flight of some 35 feet, well over initial specifications.

Each of the Jordanettes must construct her models wholly by herself. Donald Rothera, veteran Philadelphia model plane club instructor, helps Mrs. Jordan supervise the girls’ two-hour weekly meetings. And, said Rothera, “no group has ever shown greater aptitude.”

It was Rothera who taught Mrs. Jordan model plane building. She is now an officially-qualified instructress, besides being a licensed pilot and a graduate of Franklin Institute’s Weems School of Navigation.

Mrs. Jordan believes it is essential that model plane builders learn the whys and wherefores of aeronautics, as well as proficiency with knife, sandpaper, and ruler, tools of model construction. Already the Jordanettes know the function of all principal parts of a plane, the fundamentals of thermal currents and streamlining. The lectures will become more technical in the weeks to come.

Next model on the Jordanette schedule is a Class A-R.O.G. (Rise Off Ground) – a more complicated problem with rubber-band motor and propeller, which the girls are already intricately carving from blocks of balsa wood. After this follows the Class B-R.O.G., somewhat larger, and later indoor and outdoor fuselage models. All must be according to exact Government specifications.

Lots of Homework

There's homework, too, for the Jordanettes, voluntary homework. For to make these delicate gliders fly true requires skill and patience. The fragile wood is warped with breath moisture to give tail rudders that added lift or wings greater balance. And you have to know just how much clay to fasten to the nose for proper driving power.

Flight leaders for the all-girl club are Catharine O'Connor, 13, of 5850 Walton av., and Sarah Apoian, 14, of 5604 Catharine st. Edna McDermott, 16, of 5703 Cedar av., and Bernice Fern, 15, of 5553 Walton av., are assistant flight leaders

As a special reward, the older girls who meet all qualifications and pass their final examinations best, will be given ten hours' flying instruction to become future pilots, thereby enabling the release of more men fliers for service in the United States Army Air Corps.



*Tuesday, April 21, 1942: The Evening Bulletin – Philadelphia,
“These young ladies, meeting at Sherwood Recreation Center, 56th
and Christian sts., compose first all-girl group organized by
National Aeronautic Association to build model planes.”*

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