

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



Second Officer Mary Zerbel Hooper Ford

Mary Zerbel was born on August 4, 1920 in Marquette, Michigan, which was also the birthplace of her parents and sister Joyce. She received her primary school training in Marquette, but spent succeeding years in Ann Arbor, Houghton and finally Menominee. She was graduated with the Class of '37 following which she attended Lawrence College, in Appleton, Wisconsin.

In the fall of 1938, she enrolled at the University of California in Los Angeles. It was at U.C.L.A. that a lifelong yearning for flying was soon to be realized. The government had inaugurated a civilian pilot training program. Mary was one of three girls and twenty-seven boys who passed the required examination for acceptance and she began her training in 1940. In 1942, she was one of eighteen American women flyers selected by Jacqueline Cochrane, famous aviatrix, for duty in England. Serving in the Air Transport Auxiliary of the R.A.F., she ferried warplanes from factories to airdromes in England. By August 1943, she had more than 1,000 hours of flying in this service, piloting two-engined bombers as well as fighter planes.

On August 17, 1942 she married Roy Wesley Hooper of Monterey, California, a pilot officer in the coastal command of the Royal Air Force. The marriage was featured prominently in the London papers inasmuch as it was the first military wedding in England in which both principals were Americans.

TJ Mudge, Jan. 2004