



Eleanor Wadsworth nee Fish 1917-2020

WW2 Spitfire Women

Eleanor from Vivian Avenue Sherwood Rise and went to Nottingham High School. She then worked at Eberlin and Derbyshire Architects and did RIBA exams. She wasn't able to find work so she left and went to work for the Air Transport Auxillary as an architects assistant in 1942. She then applied to the ATA - a civilian service that transported fighter aircraft and crew in 1943 having seen an advert for female pilots with free training and was one of the first 6 successful candidates to be accepted. She was one of about 165 women who flew without instruments, flying instructions or radios. She enjoyed flying Spitfires the most but also flew 22 planes including Hurricanes, Barracuda bombers, Mustang fighters and Spitfires. She was interviewed about her experience, by the author Karen Borden, for an upcoming book and said "like many of the women pilots, she was incredibly humble about her contribution to the war effort". About 165 female and 1,153 male pilots flew planes from factories to the frontlines during the war. It was incredibly dangerous work, with the pilot's only map strapped with elastic to their calf. Fifteen women died in action. After the war she married and lived in Bury St Edmunds where she had children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Eleanor died in a nursing home aged 103 in 2020 after a short illness.