

Outstanding Women in Aerospace: Margrit Waltz World Record Ferry Flights [982 Ocean Crossings]



[MargritAward_LindbergFoundation_1](#)

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The Lindbergh Foundation held its 99th Anniversary Gala in Saint Louis, Missouri, on May 20, 2026. That same day, in 1927, at 7:52 a.m., Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field, on Long Island, New York, with his Ryan NYP called "Spirit of Saint Louis".



<https://lindberghfoundation.org/events/99th-anniversary/>

14 m in wingspan, 8.41 m in length, a 223 hp Wright J-5C engine and a capacity of 1700 L of fuel the "Spirit of Saint Louis" was custom built for its mission and its designation. It was designated NYP for "New York to Paris", because its mission was to make the first non-stop flight over the Atlantic, from the American Continent to the European Continent. In 1919, John Alcock and Arthur Brown had flown a twin-engine Vickers Vimy from Newfoundland, Canada to Ireland, making it the first transatlantic flight but from an island to another. In September 1926, the French war hero René Fonck attempted the flight but crashed on take-off, at Roosevelt Field, killing two of the three crew members. In April 1927, US Navy aviators Lieutenant-Commander Noel Davis and Lieutenant Stanton Wooster crashed during a test flight before making an attempt. And French war hero Charles Nungesser and François Coli disappeared with their "L'Oiseau Blanc" after taking off from Paris and last being seen west of Ireland, a couple weeks before Lindbergh's attempt. Six men had died trying to achieve the flight.

But Charles Lindbergh succeeded. 33:30 hours later, he landed at Le Bourget airfield, northeast of Paris, France. His trajectory accuracy was phenomenal. When he reached the coast of Ireland, he had deviated only by 5 km from his intended flight path.

In 1927, crossing the Atlantic in a single engine aircraft wasn't a small, easy, meaningless task. It still isn't. I once had the privilege of listening to Daher TBM test pilots Stephane Jacques and Thibaud Brouze talk about their preparations for transatlantic ferry flights and what they need in case of a ditching in the unforgiving, freezing North Atlantic. It was fascinating to hear, but also scary.

As of today, Margrit Waltz has done it 982 times. Yeah, you read that right. 979 times. In several types of aircraft, such as a simple Cessna 172. Most of the time, alone in the cockpit, waltzing with the clouds and the sunrise in the cold skies. Who is she? Simply one of the very best ferry pilots in the world. After 50 years of flight, she has ferried more than 300 aircraft, among which many TBM's, and has totalled more than 25,000 hours of flight. In 2002, after Eric Lindbergh followed his grand-fathers path flying the "The New Spirit of Saint Louis" from Long Island to Le Bourget, she is the one who ferried the aircraft back to the United States.



The 960th cross over with a TBM 960 aircraft in April 2024. Her 960th journey was completed in a flight time of 15 hours, 38 minutes from Tarbes (France) to Pompano Beach (Florida).

Aviation has done a marvellous job leveling the playing field for women. The airplane doesn't discriminate on gender, race or creed. If you can fly it, it doesn't care who or what you are or what you claim to be. You're either able to fly it or you're not. No bigotry, no discrimination. Nothing else than your ability. And no one can cheat. Women have an unknown yet astounding history of ferrying airplanes in World War Two. Over 1074 American women of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) flew 60 million miles to ferry 12 650 aircraft, from B-29s heavy bombers to P-51 Mustang fighters, and from C-47 transporters to PT-17 Stearman trainers, sometimes in the same day. In Great Britain, 166 women became Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) Pilots, ferrying anything from the Spitfire to the Lancaster and from Hurricanes to Mosquitos. The logbooks of these ladies are a dream for any aviation enthusiast, including the one writing this. Margrit Waltz's logbook and career are direct line heirs to those of the WASP and ATA.

But wait, there's more...

Margrit Waltz was born in Germany in 1957 and began flying at 18. My jaw dropped to the floor when I learned who was her Flight Instructor. Margrit was taught to fly by none other than "Bubi", also nicknamed "Der Schwarze Teufel" (The black devil), Colonel Erich Hartmann, the Luftwaffe's top scoring ace in WWII (and in history) with 352 air kills, mostly on the Eastern Front. After his retirement in 1970, having flown Me109s, F-84 Thunderjets, F-86 Sabres, and F-104 Starfighters, Erich Hartmann became a flight instructor near Bonn. The young Margrit was one of his trainees, before becoming herself Germany's youngest Flight Instructor at 19. She went on to lead a remarkable career as a ferry pilot and earned such respect in the aviation world that, in 2002, after Eric Lindbergh followed his grand-fathers path flying the "The New Spirit of Saint Louis" from Long Island to Le Bourget, she is the one who ferried the aircraft back to the United States.

When she's in the Final Assembly Line in Tarbes, there is a kind of awe and hushed silence around her. She is the most experienced TBM ferry pilot to walk our factory, and she receives the kind of respectful deference that only legends get.

On May 20, 2026, the Lindbergh Foundation rightfully awarded Margrit Waltz the Spirit of Saint Louis Award and it's difficult to think of someone more worthy of that honour than her, a phenomenal aviator who has spent her life as a graceful waltz in the blue skies of our world.



Margrit has delivered more than 300 TBMs to the North American continent, while flying others to Africa, Asia and Australia.

PS: Did I mention that Saint Louis, Missouri, was founded by a Frenchman named Pierre Laclède, from a small mountain village called Bedous, in the Aspe Valley, about 70 km west from Tarbes where the TBMs are made?

Fly Differently with the **New TBM 980**



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