

**Margaret Rutledge**

Film Summary: Rutledge was a pioneer in Canadian aviation, setting up an all female “Flying Seven” Club in Vancouver. Useful as a case study of the sexual division of labour and summarizes historical obstacles facing women as commercial pilots. This episode is a good extension to discussions on the BCATP and women’s limited non-combat, ground-based “support roles” in WWII.

Curriculum Application:

Social Studies 11 and
Social Justice 12

The Essential Question:

Why have women historically been underrepresented as pilots in the Canadian aviation industry?

Summary of the Lesson Activities

1. Focus questions for the vignette provides a short lesson option. (15 Minutes)
2. Students have a variety of writing assignments to complete after watching the vignette and reading the biography of Margaret Rutledge.
3. An extension activity where the students write letters to the editor in response to an event created by Margaret Rutledge from multiple perspectives.

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize historical factors limiting opportunities for female pilots in early days of aviation.
2. Suggest plausible reasons explaining why female pilots in general have been historically underrepresented as pilots in private and commercial aviation.
3. Identify the work of Margaret Rutledge as an example of human agency in history.
4. To examine the role women played in the Canada’s military engagement in the Second World War.

Materials and Resources Provided

- ["Margaret Rutledge" Episode 3- Working People – A History of Labour in British Columbia](#)
- Appendix 1: Teaching Strategies
- Appendix 2: A Brief History of Women in Canadian Aviation
- Lesson Activity 1: Activities for Students
- Lesson Activity 2: Vancouver Sun article 1940
- Lesson Activity 3: Synthesis of Women in Aviation

Additional Suggested Materials

- ["These were the reasons...." Chapter 7 Fighting for Equity" The 30's, the War Years, and a Shoreworker's Story](#)
- <http://www.canadianflight.org/content/margaret-fane-rutledge>

Vignette Questions

1. Why was Margaret Rutledge's 1st Commercial Pilot's license a significant achievement in 1935?
2. Was her acquisition of a commercial pilot's license a "ticket" to employment in her field?
3. Which famous female aviators group did Margaret and 6 colleagues try to join in California?
4. Who were the "Flying 7"?
5. What flying related job did Margaret get in Zeballos in 1938? How did she leverage this hire to get into the cockpit of the airplane?

Lesson Activities

1. At the teachers discretion lesson ideas can be applied to a Social Studies 11 class, English/Humanities class or Planning 10. Students are encouraged to read the article in Lesson Activity 2: A Brief History of Women in Canadian Aviation after viewing the vignette and before proceeding to the various activities in this lesson outline.
2. For individual assignments, students can select or be assigned one or more of the 6 writing assignments outlined in Lesson Activity 1. These activities cover biography, historical context, Letter to the Editor, Diary or Journal entry, Synthesis of Women in Aviation , and a job application for a pilot to a fictitious airline in 1946 (Extension Activity 2).
3. Have the students individually or in pairs write responses to the article in the Vancouver Sun "Women Fliers Drop "Pamphlets" on City. (Lesson Activity 2: Vancouver Sun article 1940)
4. As a summative exercise students can complete the Synthesis of Women in Aviation exercise using the diagram provided in Lesson Activity 3.

Credit: Teaching Activities and Lesson Plan developed by Tony Arruda

Appendix 1: Teaching Strategies

Lesson: Margaret Rutledge

Introduction.

These lessons are readily incorporated into Social Studies 11 during discussions of the

- role of the airplane and bush pilots in the development of Canada's isolated resources;
- BCATP and women's significant, but defined role not as pilots, but as "ground-based" support for male-oriented aerial combat;
- role of women and social expectations of women in the post-war "cult of domesticity" from the late 1940s through mid-1960s;
- Sexual division of labour, or "gendered work" and efforts to break the gender barrier.

The lessons are easily incorporated in Planning 10 discussions of diversity of occupations open to men and women. The inherent gender conflict and social expectations of women's work makes this a fertile lesson for Point of View writing in English and Humanities classrooms.

The lessons were designed to provide Teachers and Students with considerable options. Teachers may choose one or more of the following assignment options while taking care not to overlap learning outcomes (for example, giving two assignments that both lead to the same summary of historical reasons limiting women's opportunities as pilots in Canadian aviation)

Teaching Suggestions

Note that all assignment options should involve

- Viewing the Knowledge Network vignette, *Margaret Rutledge*;
- Reading a brief online biography of this female Canadian pilot found at: <http://www.canadianflight.org/content/margaret-fane-rutledge>
- Reading the article, *A Brief History of Women in Canadian Aviation*.

Teachers should lead their classrooms through a debriefing of the video and a reading of the article, *A Brief History of Women in Canadian Aviation*. Students should have an opportunity to read the online biography of Margaret Rutledge – either through a printout, their own computers, or via classroom laptop and projector.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Before engaging in one or more of the six Activities suggested below, teachers should review and emphasize the following points:

- Rutledge had an early passion for flying, geared her education to becoming a pilot, and continued to subsidize her dream through related work either by bookkeeping at the flying club, or through aircraft fabric maintenance;
- Gendered expectations of women's work persisted from the late 1920s, through the Depression, and into the 1960s: women might enter the professions of teaching, nursing, or clerical work – at least until they were married at which point began their “real jobs” as mothers and attentive housewives;
- In becoming a private, then commercial pilot, and in setting up the “Flying Seven” Club with six other women, Rutledge provides a good example of “human agency”, or personal resistance to mainstream's society's expectations, in her case, expectations of gendered roles including work roles.
- Women were not merely passive victims, but pushed the boundaries and exerted influence where they could. Hoping to participate beyond the war time traditional “home front” roles (factory work), and unable to join in the British Commonwealth Air Training Program as pilots, or instructors, a few women went to Great Britain to fly for the Air Transport Auxiliary. In Canada, Margaret and her club of female pilots formed the “Flying Seven Auxiliary” in advance of the creation of the Women's Division of the RCAF. Their work dropping “bomphlets” over Vancouver in 1940 in order to fundraise “to buy our boys more planes,” illustrates *both* continuity and an expansion of the idea of “women's work” on the Home Front.

Lesson Extensions

This lesson might lead to classroom discussions of students' own career aspirations and the factors including income, as well as personal and family expectations imposing upon their own career choices. The lesson also naturally leads to some discussion of other occupations traditionally regarded as proper men's work. In the mid-1970s, some women found work not in the offices but on the production lines of Lignum's sawmill in Williams Lake, as well as in the mines of Northern Ontario – in the latter case in the above-ground mill but not in the actual underground mine. Teachers might explore why more women are not engaged in delivery or long distance truck driving. When asked in Planning 10 classrooms why there are so few female commercial pilots in Canada, students commonly cite reasons such as “I want to have a family,” or “I wouldn't want to spend so much time away from family and friends.” Generally, students do not always consider critically that might women aspire to become flight attendants but not pilots – despite the fact that once trained, both occupations have similar layover time commitments on inter-city and international flights. This is a discussion worth pursuing.

Lesson: Margaret Rutledge

Appendix 2: A Brief History of Women in Canadian Aviation

Margaret Fane Rutledge (April 13, 1914 – December 2, 2004) was born in Edmonton, Alberta. She took her first airplane ride in 1928 at the age of seventeen. Margaret grew up with a father who had built his own glider, and around age twenty she was inspired to become a pilot by “dare devil” pilots performing in her hometown. At the time there were few women pilots. In 1930, Daphne Paterson became the first Canadian woman to obtain a commercial pilot license. Eiliane Roberge Schlachter obtained hers in 1932. Margaret enrolled in flight training and obtained a private pilot's license in 1933 and in 1935, aged twenty one, became the first woman in western Canada to obtain a commercial license.



CanMusFlight-na-MargaretRutledge-nd-NIS
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While a few Canadian women such as Rutledge began to get licenses they nonetheless faced overwhelming odds landing jobs as pilots. Rutledge worked as a secretary and bookkeeper. In order to pursue her passion of flying, she earned flying time at the Edmonton and Northern Alberta Aero Club by performing bookkeeping and chores such as fabric stretching over the wooden ribs of airplanes. In the late 1920s, the Canadian government encouraged and funded flying clubs across Canada. As women were not envisioned to ever become pilots, no law prohibited them from flying with these clubs. Eiliane Schlachter, for example, was first hired as a secretary at Yukon Southern Air. Only after convincing owner, Grant McConachie, of her pilot skills did she sometimes accompany McConachie on flights in the right hand seat as his unofficial co-pilot. Not one female was hired as a pilot in Canada before the Second World War.



Title: Margaret Fane Rutledge and other aviatrices.

After meeting in California with Amelia Earhart who had formed a flying club called the 99s, Margaret Rutledge realized there were too few female Canadian pilots to establish a chapter in Canada and so Margaret formed the “Flying Seven” in Vancouver on October 15, 1936. This was a milestone in Canadian aviation as the club goals including encouraging more female pilots, and promoting higher flight standards in general.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

When World War II broke out in 1939, and at a time when clerical, teaching or nursing work were the occupations seen open to women, the job of engine or plane repair, and especially of flying an airplane into the masculine arena of combat was not seen as proper women's work. Women applied to the Royal Canadian Air Force, 10,000 of them finding jobs in virtually all departments except flying airplanes. By 1943, however, five Canadian women had moved to Great Britain to fly in its Air



CVA-CVA 371-987-SixOfFlyingSeven-c1940-NIS.jpg

Transport Auxiliary, a civilian organization that flew new and repaired military airplanes, sometimes on trans-Atlantic flights. Meanwhile, despite applications to do so, no woman flew in the massive British Commonwealth Air Training Program stationed under relatively safe Canadian skies. When Rutledge and the women of the Flying Seven Club applied as pilots, they were flatly denied, but offered jobs as cooks. In response, they formed the Flying Seven Auxiliary, a school for women who trained in aviation-related work such as parachute

packing and fabric work. The Auxiliary disbanded upon the formation of the Women's Division of the RCAF which concentrated on ground-based support for flying men with thousands of women working under the banner, "We serve that men may fly."

Considering the post-war cult of domesticity, it is not surprising women remained on the fringes of Canadian aviation even as commercial flights expanded enormously throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Flying Clubs and then bush operators were the first to begin to accommodate females in the cockpit. The Canadian public simply did not regard as plausible the idea women should fly commercially. Grant McConachie, who became president of the Canadian Pacific Air Lines in 1947, and who had once flown with Schlachter as his unofficial co-pilot, considered it uneconomical to hire women as pilots because the public would simply boycott their flights. As Shirley Render remarked in her book, *No Place for a Lady: the Story of Canadian Women Pilots, 1928-1992*, women who hoped to become pilots thus remained on the fringes of aviation activity. At best they became flight instructors. Considered the lowest paid and least prestigious of paid flying positions, instructing was "the first and last rung on their career ladder."



Title: Zeballos Gold Rush, Foreground - Airplane "Fairchild" ...

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

The 1970s marked the entry point of women pilots into major Canadian airlines, in the military, and in a limited manner, for the government. In 1973, Rosella Bjornson joined Transair to become the first female pilot to be hired by a major Canadian Airline. In 1978, Judy Cameron became the first female pilot at Air Canada. Women pilots were, and still are a minority. Aviation, like mining and logging, illustrates the sexual division of labour. Most women who work in the three industries fulfill roles other than being a “pilot,” “miner,” or “logger,” each of which is still perceived as a “gendered occupation.” Today, for example, according to Canadian census data, 6.5% of private and only 3% of commercial pilot’s licenses are held by women. This level of participation compares very poorly with the 45% average recorded for women working in other occupations in Canada.

Appendix : A Profile of Commercial Pilots by Gender; 1996

<i>Type of Pilot</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Specialty Aerial Work	283	12	241	5
Air Taxi	372	16	126	3
Commuter	188	12	48	1
Airlines	1,005	33	—	—
Corporate	207	8	34	2
Government	109	1	53	1
Military*	46	-	22	1
Cargo	226	14	61	1
Flight Schools	214	29	20	2
Other	139	12	50	2
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Airplane Sector		Helicopter Sector		

Source: Commercial Pilot Survey, 1996. * indicates civilian pilots working for the military.

Lesson Activity 1

Lesson: Margaret Rutledge

MARGARET FANE RUTLEDGE -- Activities for Students

You have a choice of six diverse assignments:

1. Biography. Write a short (150-200 word) biography of Mary Fane Rutledge in your own words. You must situate her personal information in the context of the times in which she lived. This means you must write about Rutledge while considering the political, social, and economic factors at the time that affected the lives of women and girls.
2. Historical context. Carol Davis, (a pseudonym) grew up around Williams Lake, British Columbia, and earned a pilot's license as a teen in the 1970s. Carol's dreams of becoming a bush pilot was crushed by a father, himself a pilot, who discouraged her from the occupation, warning, "only a cage around the cockpit would keep her safe from the men in the bush."
 - a. First, list and briefly describe reasons that historically have kept women from flying.
 - b. Second, considering the vignette and related sources, how relevant are Carol's story and the father's narrative to the story of Margaret and female aviators in Canada?
 - c. Examine table "Profile of Commercial Pilots by Gender." Is the story of Margaret and Carol relevant today? Suggest factors that keep women from becoming pilots
3. Letter to the Editor. Assume two individuals, one of them an early feminist, watched as Margaret and the "Flying Seven" dropped "bombphlets" on Vancouver on Thursday, June 20, 1940, in the early days of the Second World War. The event was later described in "Vancouver's Women Fliers Drop 'Pamphlets' on City." Read the copy of the article. Write two short (100 -150 words) Letters to the Editor of the *Vancouver Sun* reacting to the event and to the article. Note the two letters should reveal different viewpoints or perspectives on the same event. One must be from the feminist; the other is a person of your choosing.
4. Diary or journal Assignment. It is 1946. Assume the role of Margaret Fane Rutledge. Write a diary or journal entry (minimum 100 words per entry) for any three days in which you describe living and working at Ginger Coote Airways, at Zeballos, a small west coast Vancouver Island mining town located 300 kilometres north of Victoria, B.C. It is suggested the first journal entry be dated February 20, the second, June 21, the third December 24th. This assignment involves fiction, of course, but your task is to employ your knowledge of the Rutledge vignette and articles in this lesson, as well as your general knowledge of women in Canadian society during this period in order to make this as realistic as possible. You might look online for photographs of Zeballos and west coast Vancouver Island to get a visual sense of the place in this time period. Remember a good test for successful "historical fiction," sometimes called "creative non-fiction" makes readers feel they are "really there." The successful writer uses historical facts together with their knowledge of society at the time. They create a sense that while the events as

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described didn't actually happen, they clearly resemble similar events that did happen. Good writers create events that the educated reader knows could reasonably have happened.

5. Synthesis of Women in Aviation. (Lesson Activity 3 Synthesis of Women in Aviation)

This graphic organizer requires students (individually or as a class) to review the Rutledge vignette and associated sources in this lesson in order to consider the factors that historically kept women from becoming pilots. Use the organizer to list important facts and ideas by time period, i.e. the 1920s and 1930s. Complete the organizer by summarizing the main connections (the factors working against women becoming pilots) between all time periods.

6. Pacific Coastal Aviation Application. This is a simple, unusual, but effective manner to summarize the reasons why worthy applicants such as Margaret Fane Rutledge faced gender discrimination by companies as well as by society in general. The Application has two parts. First, assume it is 1946, the Second World War has ended, and you are Margaret Rutledge applying for a job with Pacific Coastal Airlines, a fictional company located in a small isolated logging settlement of 300 people (including five women and twenty children), along the coast north of Nanaimo, B.C. Second, you must now assume you are an employee of Pacific Coastal Aviation who is processing the application that was completed by Margaret. Using a different coloured pencil or ink, your task is to complete the Company portion of the application. List both the reasons for and against hiring her as a pilot. You must keep in mind social expectations regarding women's work in 1946. Remember too that you have an obligation to satisfy your company bosses who are males, and you must also consider the future economic well-being of the company which employees you. Your teacher may choose that you work with a partner on this assignment to better brainstorm and reflect upon different points of view.

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PACIFIC COAST AVIATION Application for a Commercial License

(Special Note: do not write in the space "Reserved for Company Use Only")

Full Name: _____ Date of Application: December 15, 1944

D.O.B.: Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

Place of Birth: _____ Town/City: _____

Prov./State: _____ Country: _____

Why do you want to become a pilot?

Relevant Biographical Information. List anything you believe is important or relevant to consider in this application, for example, early interests and experience with aviation.

What qualifies you to become a pilot? State all relevant or related skills and experiences which will assist this application.

What other skills, aptitudes, or abilities do you feel Pacific Coastal Aviation should consider in this application? (i.e. why should we consider you above other qualified applicants?)

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Who may be contact for a reference? Provide the name of at least one individual or organization that can support your application (no addresses required at this time).

Note to Applicant. This space is “Reserved for Company Use Only”). Employees are requested to make any notes/observations/opinions as they consider this applicant. (use reverse if needed)

List strengths of applicant or factors why we SHOULD hire this individual.

List weaknesses of applicant or factors why we SHOULD NOT hire this individual.

In your opinion and considering the above would you hire this individual? Circle One: Yes/No Briefly explain your opinion while being fair to individual, to our flying customers, as well as to the company's future well-being (continue comments on reverse of this paper if necessary).

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Sources Referenced and for Student Research

(Research credit: Laura Hope)

Newspaper articles or stories with first or second hand accounts of stories

“The Flying Seven in 1936, Canada's first all-women flying club.” *Vancouver Sun*. Nov., 16, 1936.

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6) Bibliography of referenced material

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“Flying Seven” BC Aviation – Hall of Fame, n.d. Web. Accessed Oct. 1, 2012.

Hawthorn, Tom. “Margaret Fane Rutledge and the Flying Seven” *Globe and Mail*. January 5, 2005. Web (at canadianflight.org)

Mills, Albert J. and Mills, Jean Helms. “Masculinity and the Making of Trans-Canada Air Lines, 1938-1940: A Feminist Poststructuralist Account.” *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*. 23.1. St. Mary’s University, 2006. 1-11.

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Parker, David and Stoddart, Paul. *The Magnificent Distances – Early Aviation in British Columbia 1910-1940*. Duffy, Dennis and Crane, Carole (Eds.) Sound Heritage Series, No.28. Sound and Moving Image Division, Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Government Services, Provincial Archives: 1980.

Render, Shirley. *No Place for a Lady – the Story of Canadian Women Pilots 1928-1992*. Winnipeg, Portage & Main Press: 1992.

Vancouver History “Flying Seven” The History of Metropolitan Vancouver. *Vancouver History.ca*. n.d

Lesson Activity 2: Vancouver Sun Article

Vancouver's Women Fliers Drop 'Pamphlets' on City

Vancouver was successfully bombed from the air Wednesday when four smiling members of Vancouver's famous "Flying Seven" winged a spectacular course over the city to release 100,000 "bomphlets" appealing to citizens to support the Vancouver Air Supremacy Drive.

The ladies came across the city in two flights to scatter the handbills from New Westminster to English Bay. Sirens wailed throughout the city as the sky filled with the fluttering bits of paper.

"Smash the Nazi" read the handbills, and "Swing in behind Vancouver Air Supremacy Drive." The pamphlets, which appealed for "dimes or dollars to buy our boys more planes," were donated to the drive committee.

A Strong southeast wind, combined with a civic ruling forbidding airplanes to fly over the city lower than 3000 feet, partially destroyed the effectiveness of the attack by widely scattering the "bomphlets" and sweeping many of them into English Bay and the waters of Burrard Inlet.

(*Vancouver Sun*, Thursday, June 30, 1940)

Student Written Activity: writing a Letter to the Editor of Vancouver Sun

Assume two individuals, one of them an early feminist, watched as the Margaret and the "Flying Seven" dropped "bombphlets" on Vancouver on Wednesday, June 19, 1940, in the early days of the Second World War. The event was described the next day in "Vancouver's Women Fliers Drop 'Pamphlets' on City," in the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. Read the copy of the article. Write two separate short (100 - 150 words) Letters to the Editor of the *Vancouver Sun* reacting to the event and to the article. The two letters are dated at two different times and should reveal different viewpoints or perspectives on the same event.

- The first letter must be from the feminist, dated Friday, July 1, 1940.
- The second is written by a person of your choosing (a businessman, a married woman, etc.). This letter should not only provide opinion on the Flying Seven event, but also take into account what the feminist wrote. Date this second letter Monday, July 4, 1940.

Lesson: Margaret Rutledge

Lesson Activity 3: Synthesis of Women in Aviation

Individually or as a class, summarize information from the sources, including the Rutledge vignette and other sources, in the appropriate rectangle. In the centre block, place factors which you believe have worked against women becoming pilots.

Women Pilots in the 1920s and 1930s	Women Pilots in the 1940s
<div></div>	
Women Pilots in the 1950s-1960s	Women Pilots in the 1970s to present