

## Review of 'Spitfire Girl' by Candy Adkins Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 in Exmouth Pavilion

"Many thanks - an excellent talk today by Candy Adkins", "As ex WRAF this excellent talk was particularly meaningful." "A fantastic talk about a wonderful woman" and "What an inspiring presentation. An amazing life - told in such a compelling way." Just some of the comments by our members following an illuminating and engaging presentation by Candy Adkins about her mother Jackie Moggridge at February's monthly meeting in Exmouth Pavilion.

Members had the opportunity to see some of the memorabilia associated with 'Spitfire Girl'; a wonderful display containing newspaper cuttings, photos, badges, books and much more. Candy Adkins entertained and informed members with her fascinating tale of her mother's passion for flying; the first woman to undertake a parachute jump in South Africa who went on to fly planes for the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War."



Candy has been interviewed by Michael Portillo and Antiques Road show and has shared her memorising story about Jackie Moggridge's pioneering work with the RAF, schools and many others. Each extraordinary story that Candy told our members was followed by another, all impelling and captivating.

Members learnt that Jackie was determined to succeed in all she did, often at great risk to herself. Jackie had only been at Aeronautical College for a year when war broke out and she really wanted to be part of the action flying planes for the RAF, but as a woman she wasn't allowed to. Determined to be involved she joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) as a Radar Operator. Despite being very much wanted for her radar work Jackie could fly and so it was that she ended up in the vital role of ferrying planes from factories to Aerodromes around the country.

Candy's descriptions were vivid and almost unbelievable but as Candy pointed out, the numerous planes that Jackie flew from Lancasters to Spitfires, had no radio or contact with the ground. Based at the all-women's number 15 Ferry Pool in the Hamble, Jackie and the others had to rely on a small ring binder for information and their own wits.

After the war Jackie ferried Spitfires from Cyprus to Rangoon, to the Indian Air Force and to Burma, having gained her Commercial Pilot's licence. Applying to be a pilot for Channel Airways in 1958 without stating her gender she was appointed due to her monumental flying record and became the first British female airline captain to fly passengers on scheduled flights.

At the end of Candy's talk members queued to see the memorabilia, to purchase books and to share their own stories, in some cases their own memories of WW2.

Review and photo by Christine Chittock, Chair