THE GOVERNMENT OF ST PETERSBURG COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION

State Budgetary Secondary Institution School of General Education No 625

with a special status in mathematics of Nevsky administrative district of Saint Petersburg

named after the Hero of the Russian Federation V. E. Dudkin

Adress: 193318, Saint Petersburg, 6 John Reed St

Tel./Fax 7-812-4421794, e-mail: school625@mail.ru

RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE PROJECT TOPIC**

**Women in War**



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Tutors:  Bataleva Natalya  Petrovskaya Yadviga,  English language teachers  Students:  Kurmanaevskaya Alexandra  Magamaev Aslan,  Class 8 A |

Saint Petersburg

2015

Contents

Introduction 3

«Night witches» 3

Marina Raskova 4

Natasha Meklin 4

Lilya Litviak 5

Problems the women came across 6

Common qualities of women pilots 7

What it means to be a real hero 7

Conclusion. Why it is important to remember heroes and their deeds 7

Sources 8

Appendix I 9

Appendix II 10

# Introduction

This year is very important for all Russian people because 70 years ago the Second World War was finished with a great victory of Soviet people. The largest military conflict in history brought unimaginable suffering to millions of people. Hitler was defeated in 1945 but Russia and all Soviet people paid the highest price for the victory.

We decided to study women’s contribution to the Victory in the Second World War because the Soviet Union was the only country in the world where women fought shoulder to shoulder with men as front line soldiers and could become fighter pilots. Their extraordinary courage, determination and endurance made victory possible.

In our project we set some goals:

1. find information about famous women pilots who were often called the «night witches»;
2. study the problems they came across;
3. find out what women pilots had in common;
4. decide what qualities real heroes should have;
5. answer the question why it is important to remember heroes and their deeds.

# «Night witches»

Everything started in 1941. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Major Marina Raskova, a famous Soviet pilot, went to Stalin with an idea to set up three women's fighter and bomber regiments. Stalin agreed and a special training center for women was set up in a small town not far from Stalingrad.

All the girls were volunteers and most of them were about 20 years old. Among them were Marina Raskova, Natalya Meklin, Nadya Popova, Lidia Litviak. Some of them, like Marina Raskova, had been pilots before the war, but many had to learn from scratch. However, in a few months, the women, known as «night witches» were taught what it takes most men four years to learn.

# Marina Raskova

Marina Raskova was born in 1912 in the family of a singer and a teacher. Marina didn't show a great interest in aviation in childhood because she had another dream. She wanted to follow in her father's footsteps and become an opera singer. When the girl was seven her father died and Marina felt depressed. She decided to quit music and started to study chemistry. In 1929 she had to work in a dye factory as a chemist to help her family.

Marina married an engineer and started to work in the Aero Navigation Laboratory of the Air Force Academy as a draftswoman. Raskova became a famous aviator as both a pilot and a navigator for Russia in the 1930s. She was the first woman to become a navigator in the Soviet Air Force in 1933. She set a number of long distance records and was the first woman before the war who was awarded the Hero of the Soviet Union. During the Second World War Raskova commanded one of the women's fighter and bomber regiments until her death in a flying accident 1943.

# Natasha Meklin

Natasha Meklin was born in 1922 in a small town in Ukraine. In 1940 Natasha finished a secondary school with a gold medal and became interested in gliding. In 1941 she entered Moscow Aviation Institute but couldn't graduate from it because of the war. In 1941 at the age of 19 Natasha joined a women's Fighter Aviation Regiment under the command of Marina Raskova. By the end of the war Meklin had flown 980 night missions. After the war she graduated from the Military Institute of Foreign Languages and became an interpreter and a famous writer. Natasha Meklin wrote a lot of books about the war. The most known are «On a burning plane» and «Return from the flight!» She died in 2005 and was buried in Moscow.

# Lilya Litviak

Lydia, also known as Lilya Litviak, was born in 1921 in Moscow. She became interested in aviation at an early age. At 14 she joined a flying club. Lilya performed her first solo flight at 15, and later graduated at Kherson military flying school. Her passion for aviation grew as she was inspired by a new generation of female aviators who were conducting record breaking flights in Russia. Her role model was Marina Raskova. Soon, Lilya Litviak became a flight instructor at Kalinin Airclub, and by the time the German-Soviet war broke out, had already trained 45 pilots. That is why she was selected for the women's Fighter Aviation Regiment. She had a rebellious and romantic character. She never believed that she was invincible. Lilya believed that some pilots had luck on their side and others didn't. She firmly believed that, if you survived the first missions, the more you flew and the more experience you got your chances of making it would increase. But you had to have luck on your side.

Lilya Litvak was awarded a Gold Star of a Hero of the Soviet Union and nicknamed the White Rose of Stalingrad for her courage and skills as a fighter pilot. She once shot down an experienced Knight's Cross German ace (20 kills). When the German pilot realised that he had been hit by what he thought was a «schoolgirl», he tore off his decorations and threw them out the cockpit. Lilya was only 21 but she had already shot 10 enemy planes. She was so short that she couldn't reach the pedals in her plane when she first started flying. Her mechanic, also a woman, had to adjust them for her. Nobody knows exactly how she died but, according to witnesses, Lilya was last seen being chased by eight enemy aircrafts.

# Problems the women came across

To study the problems these women came across we found the interviews with Nadya Popova and Serafima Tamsova-Teranenko.

The aim of a women's Fighter Aviation Regiment was to fly at night and not to let the enemies have a rest. The Germans called them «Night Witches» because the airplanes sounded like a witch's broomstick when they flew overhead.

One of the problems the women came across was that they flew old PO-2 planes known as «kukuruzniks» which were made of plywood and canvas and were the slowest in the air force. That is why men pilots often laughed at them.

Being fighter pilots was a tough job. Ground temperatures ranged from 40 degrees in summer and -50 degrees in winter. Some parts of the aircraft were so cold that they ripped the skin off if they touched them. All women were excellent skiers and many learnt to take off and land their aircraft on ice and snow.

Being fighter pilots was a very dangerous job because the women had to fly without radios or radars, they had only maps and compasses. They flew without parachutes. The death rate for pilots was very high. «To fly a combat mission is not a trip under the moon. Every attack, every bombing is a dance with death», said SerafimaTamsova-Teranenko.

Years after the war, Nadya Popova added, «At night sometimes, I look up into the dark sky, close my eyes and picture myself as a girl at the controls of my bomber and I think, «Nadya, how on earth did you do it?»

# Common qualities of women pilots

All the women were from different parts of the Soviet Union, they had different education and character, but they had a lot in common.

They were young and ordinary, but courageous, determined, brave, confident, enduring, loyal and responsible. They loved their motherland and gave their lives for peace and future of their native country. They are real heroes!

# What it means to be a real hero

What does it mean to be a real hero? We asked our parents, teachers and schoolmates to answer this question and we are ready to share the results of our research. (appendix I**)**

A real hero

* is very courageous and honest;
* always sets examples of brave behavior;
* demonstrates his heroism through his deeds;
* always stands up for what is right and never gives up in difficult situations;
* is never afraid to overcome hardships on his way.

So, a hero is a person, who is very brave during the war; it’s a person that we admire because of his (her) particular skills and qualities, someone who we respect and look up to because of his (her) deeds.

# Conclusion. Why it is important to remember heroes and their deeds

Every year there are fewer and fewer heroes of the Second World War left to tell their stories. People say that without the past, there can't be any future, so it is important to remember and appreciate what those amazing men and women did for us. (appendix II**)****Sources**

1. I.M.Tsvetkova. The «Night Witches»: Soviet women pilots // Speak Out. 2005. №2. p.22-23
2. K.М.Simonov «Wait for me, and I'll come back» // Speak Out. 2005. №2. p.7
3. Lilya Litviak. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia_Litvyak>
4. Marina Raskova. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina_Raskova>
5. Natasha Meklin. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natalya_Meklin>
6. Night Witches. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_Witches>
7. «Night Witch» Flew Bomber Planes During World War II. NPR: National Public Radio. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=202401669>

# Appendix I

**Diagram with the results of a research**

88 people took part in the research. Among them were 13 teachers, 23 parents and 52 students from the 7th to the 9th grade. They were asked to choose one variant of answer on the question what a hero is.

A real hero

1. is very courageous and honest;
2. always sets examples of brave behavior;
3. demonstrates his heroism through his deeds;
4. always stands up for what is right and never gives up in difficult situations;
5. is never afraid to overcome hardships on his way.

# Appendix II

**Poem «Wait for me, and I’ll come back» by K.М.Simonov**

Wait for me, and I’ll come back!

Wait with all you’ve got!

Wait, when dreary yellow rains

Tell you, you should not.

Wait when snow is falling fast,

Wait when summer’s hot,

Wait when yesterdays are past,

Others are forgot.

Wait, when from that far-off place,

Letters don’t arrive.

Wait, when those with whom you wait

Doubt if I’m alive.

Wait for me, and I’ll come back!

Wait in patience yet

When they tell you off by heart

That you should forget.

Even when my dearest ones

Say that I am lost,

Even when my friends give up,

Sit and count the cost,

Drink a glass of bitter wine

To the fallen friend –

Wait! And do not drink with them!

Wait until the end!

Wait for me and I’ll come back,

Dodging every fate!

“What a bit of luck!” they’ll say,

Those that did not wait.

They will never understand

How amidst the strife,

By your waiting for me, dear,

You had saved my life.

How I made it, we shall know,

Only you and I

You alone knew how to wait –

We alone know why!

translated by Mike Munford