

WWII ARMY AIR FORCES PILOT TRAINING PIPELINE

1. PRE-FLIGHT / CLASSIFICATION (5-10 WEEKS)

- > **Screening:** Physical (Class 1A), academic, psychomotor testing
- > **Military Indoctrination:** Drill, uniforms, regulations
- > **Ground School:** Theory of flight, meteorology, navigation, engines, Morse code, aircraft/ship ID
- > **Physical Training:** Conditioning, calisthenics, team sports
- > **Elimination:** Unsuitable candidates steered to bombardier/navigator tracks



2. PRIMARY FLIGHT TRAINING (9-10 WEEKS)

Aircraft: PT-17 Stearman (biplane), Waco, Fairchild PT-23/26

Flight Hours: 65-75 hours

- > Master basic aircraft control & develop "air sense"
- > Solo flight
- > Takeoffs, landings, turns, spins, pattern work
- > Instrument familiarization
- > **Instructors:** Civilian contractors initially
- > **Washout Rate:** 20-30% (key filtering stage)



3. BASIC FLIGHT TRAINING (9-10 WEEKS)

Aircraft: Vultee BT-13/15 "Valiant" (the "Vibrator")

Flight Hours: 70-80 hours

- > Transition to complex monoplane (more powerful engine, radio, variable-pitch prop)
- > Precision formation flying
- > Instrument flying under hood
- > Long-distance cross-country navigation
- > Night flying
- > **Environment:** Dedicated Army airfields, military instructors



4. ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINING (9-10 WEEKS)

Specialization based on performance, aptitude, and service needs



SINGLE-ENGINE TRACK

For: Fighter pilots

Aircraft: AT-6 Texan ("pilot-maker")

Flight Hours: 70-110 hours

- > Gunnery
- > Aerobatics
- > Tactical formation
- > Combat maneuvering
- > Final instrument qualification

TWIN-ENGINE TRACK

For: Bomber, transport, or multi-engine fighter pilots

Aircraft: Curtiss AT-9, Cessna AT-17, Beech AT-10

Flight Hours: 70-110 hours

- > Twin-engine procedures
- > Coordination
- > Navigation
- > Instrument flying
- > Final instrument qualification



5. GRADUATION & OPERATIONAL TRAINING

Commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant or Flight Officer/Sergeant

Report to OTUs/RTUs for:

- > Transition to frontline aircraft (P-51, B-17, B-24, etc.)
- > Bomber pilots: Integration into crew (pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, navigator, gunners)
- > Intensive tactical training: combat formation, gunnery, bombing, evasion, mission profiles
- > **Result:** Combat-ready pilot