
Private First Class Emma Jane Burrows Windham

Before joining the Women's Army Corps (WAC), Private First Class Emma Jane Burrows Windham majored in aeronautical engineering at the University of California, held a civilian pilot's license, and was credited with 349 flying hours. She was the Director of Flying for the New Mexico Wing of Women Flyers when asked to join the WAC. PFC Windham was the Army's first WAC crew chief and flight engineer. She served in the European Theater of Operations where her wings were a matter of such curiosity that Military Policemen stopped her on the streets to ask her authority for wearing the air crew member's insignia. Windham earned her wings while stationed at Gore Field, Montana. Qualifying for the dual rating of crew chief and flight engineer, Windham completed many flights from Montana to Fairbanks, Alaska, and cross-country from Montana to Florida. In England, she was assigned to the Air Inspector's Office of the Air Transportation Command's European Division. She was killed on March 31, 1945 when the C-17 she was in collided with a C-47 over England. The research done by the Army Women's Museum and Windham's family has unearthed evidence of more than 500 women on flight status during WWII.

