When Marta Bohn-Meyer graduated from high school in the 1970s, her parents gave their teen pilot an aviator’s watch engraved with CAVU, an aviation acronym for “ceiling and visibility unlimited.”

The words were prophetic, for Bohn-Meyer would go on to become the first woman to fly as a crew member aboard the high altitude, triple-sonic research aircraft, the SR-71 Blackbird. The aircraft flew at 2,200 mph at 85,000 feet, giving its crew the ability to see 400 miles. Ceiling and visibility unlimited, indeed!

Aviation started as a hobby for Bohn-Meyer and became a spectacular career as both a pilot and a NASA engineer. As a test engineer, she also flew in F-104 Starfighter, F-111 Aardvark, F-16 Fighting Falcon, B-57 Canberra, F-14 Tomcat, and F-18 Hornet aircraft.

She began working as a research and operations engineer at NASA Dryden Research Center on Edwards Air Force Base in California in 1979 and was named chief engineer of the center in 2001.

Even when she was not working for NASA, she still loved to fly on her off-duty time. She was an accomplished aerobatic pilot and a member of the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team. Tragically, Bohn-Meyer died in a crash of an aerobatic plane she was flying in 2005. The first woman crew member of triple-sonic SR-71,

Marta Bohn was born in 1957 on Long Island, New York. She had a fascination with airplanes since seeing her father’s friend fly an F-14 Tomcat as a young girl.

When she was a girl, her family stressed she pick a hobby. Her second choice was horseback riding. Her first choice was a much more modern form of transportation: flying airplanes.

Her parents gave her a Christmas present of flying lessons when she was 14. By age 17, she passed her private pilot check ride.

In high school, Bohn-Meyer knew she wanted to be a test pilot, which presented some challenges for a person not in the military and for a woman, as well. Instead, she studied aeronautical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. While a student, she was part of an engineering co-op program at Langley Research Center in Virginia. She graduated with a degree in aeronautical engineering in 1979 and accepted a position at NASA’s Dryden Flight Research facility at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 2001, Bohn-Meyer was named chief engineer of Dryden. Through her years there, she was involved in a variety of research projects including testing heat-resistant tiles for the space shuttle and using F-16XL aircraft to test airflow over wings with the goal of building faster and larger commercial airliners.

When the Air Force retired the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, a spy plane, Dryden received three of the planes for testing. She and her husband, Bob Meyer, who also worked at Dryden, were the only two flight engineers assigned to fly in the Blackbird flight research program. Bohn-Meyer was the first woman crewmember assigned to the Lockheed SR-71, serving as navigator during studies of aerodynamics, propulsion, thermal protection, and sonic booms that used the SR-71 as a test bed.

NASA used the SR-71s to obtain high-speed, high-altitude data for application on design improvements in civil and military aircraft of the future.

Though she was the only woman on the crew, she did not feel discrimination in her career. If anything, she told writer David Wharton of the Los Angeles Times in 1992, **“my entire flying career has been people giving me more opportunities because I am a woman.”**

Bohn-Meyer was a frequent speaker at schools, forums, and workshops. In motivational talks, she called the key to success “the four rights”: the right time, the right place, the right qualifications, and the right enthusiasm.

She was an FAA-certified instructor, and when not working at the research center, her hobbies included aircraft building and classic car restoration. But, her first love was aerobatic flying.

“That’s why I fly the biplanes on weekends,” she told Wharton of the LA Times. “You can never get enough flying.”

Bohn-Meyer died Sept. 18, 2005, when the Giles G-300 aerobatic aircraft she was piloting crashed in Yukon, Oklahoma. She was practicing for the upcoming U.S. National Aerobatic Competition.

At the time of her death, center director Kevin Petersen called Bohn-Meyer “an extraordinarily talented individual and a most trusted technical expert and manager at NASA Dryden.”

“She committed her life and career,” Petersen continued, “to aviation and the advancement of aeronautics and space in the United States.”

Marta Bohn-Meyer served as chief engineer for NASA Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards, California. In 2014, the facility was renamed the Neil A. Armstrong Flight Research Center to honor the first man to walk on the Moon. Just as Bohn-Meyer tested research aircraft during her time at the center, crews continue to perform flight research at Armstrong.

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VERIFYING QUESTIONS NYW AEX 2022 - 2 OF 6:

Prior to her becoming an aeronautical engineer at NASA, she studied aeronautical engineering at

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Bohn-Meyer was the first woman crewmember assigned to the SR 71¸serving as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

List her four rights. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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