

Fig. 1.
First Licensed Woman Pilot in Germany

Melli Beese

[13 September 1886 - 22 December 1925]



Special Scientific Achievements

First licensed German aviatress, aircraft constructor.

Constitutor of an own flying school.

Melli Beese applies for several patents of various airplane types, e.g. a demountable airplane, a waterplane, and a light plane.

1886 Hedwig Amelie Beese is born in Dresden, Germany, on September 13. "Melli" is her nickname.

1906 - 1909 Melli Beese studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm. Her father supports her financially. She hears of the first trial flights in Germany. She starts yearning for flying.

1909/1910 She returns to Dresden and hears guest lectures in mathematics, ship building, aircraft engineering and mechanics at the *Politechnikum*.

1910 Her father supports the plans of his daughter to become a pilot. But many flying schools refuse to take Melli Beese as a student; her being a woman, they doubt her capabilities. In November though, her first training flight takes place.

1911 On September 8, Melli graduates as first German woman pilot at the airport Berlin-Johannisthal and receives at her 25th birthday the license no. 115. Shortly after that, Melli reaches a height of 825 meters - a French woman just reached 450 meters before.

1912 Melli Beese establishes her own flying school *Melli Beese* in Berlin-Johannisthal and works additionally as aircraft constructor.

1912 - 1914 She applies for several patents, e.g. a demountable plane, a waterplane, and light plane. Melli crashes several times and is severely injured; nevertheless, it does not keep her from flying.

1913 Melli Beese marries Charles Boutard, a French pilot.

1914 By her married status she is regarded as French citizen during World War I. Therefore her license for teaching and business is withdrawn from her.

Melli's husband, being French, is arrested. Her flying school is confiscated; her planes are used for military purposes. This is her financial ruin.

1917 Release of Charles Boutard and their forced relocation.



1925 When Melli Beese tries to renew her pilot license, she crashes the plane. The dream of flying is over. She does not receive any reimbursement for her planes damaged during war.

As a consequence of severe setbacks and depression, Melli Beese commits suicide on December 22.