Q: How did Marina Raskova and her all-female aviation regiments impact how women were viewed in society?

A: During World War Two, they demonstrated that women were able to be as effective as men on military air operations. Marina rose to the rank of major, and after her death in 1943 the regiment she commanded was named after her. So she and her fellow female pilots took on roles previously dominated by men — and received official recognition and approval for doing so, indicating a wide acceptance in Soviet society that women could be the equals of men and even outshine them.

Q: How was Marina Raskova able to convince Joseph Stalin to form all-women air regiments during World War II?

A: As a record-setting pliot, and one of the first women to be made a Hero of the Soviet Union, she was already in a position of influence. She is reputed, according to fellow female pilot YevgeniyaZhigulenko of the 46th Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment, to have told Stalin that patriotic women pilots were so keen to fight that they were going to the front regardless of whether they had permission or not, and that it would be better for them to go with official blessing than for them to steal aeroplanes and fly off into battle.

Q: How did Marina Raskova pave the way for other women to join the Red Army?

A: By becoming the USSR's first qualified female air navigator, going on to become a qualified female pilot as well, and teaching both male and female aircrew. She thus acted as an inspiration and role-model for other women to follow in her footsteps.

Q: How did Marina Raskova's record-breaking long distance flight affect the way women were viewed in society?

A: In pre-war Soviet Russia, Marina and her fellow record-flight aircrew were seen as the equivalent of the USA's Amelia Earhart — heroines of man's quest to conquer the skies. Marina was an exemplar of courage, stamina and beauty — a powerful combination. At a banquet in their honour, Stalin said "Today these three women have avenged the heavy centuries of the oppression of women" — they had excelled in a male-dominated field of activity. But according to Soviet conventions of matriarchy, they were still also seen as devoted mothers, and were pictured with their children.

Q: Did her actions (of forming the first all-women air regiments in the USSR during World War II) affect other countries? Is so how?

A: I'm not sure that she had a great deal of international impact — her achievements were little-known outside Russia.

Q: Today are women aviators viewed in a more positive light because of Marina Raskova's actions during World War II?

A: Yes — along with Amelia Earhart, Amy Johnson and other great aviatrices, Marina helped to raise the profile of women pilots and show that they were capable of world-class achievements.