



# SPECIAL EDITION



## THE TORCH HAS BEEN LIT

*"Any nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure."*

President Abraham Lincoln

Tuesday, March 17, at approximately 2:20 pm Eastern time, Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison became a true CHAMPION for the WASP when she introduced a Bill to honor the Women Airforce Service Pilots of WWII with the

### CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest and most distinguished award that Congress can award a civilian.



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

For over 10 years, Wings Across America has been an online, interactive presence on the World Wide Web. However, because so many WASP are not connected to the internet, we felt that THIS NEWS was something ALL WASP needed to hear, sooner rather than later.

I hope you are all as excited as we are. At the very least, I hope this news lifts your spirits and reminds you how proud we ALL are of the service you gave during WWII.

-Nancy Parrish

Along with Senator Hutchison and original co-sponsor Senator Barbara Mikulski, D, MD, **EVERY FEMALE SENATOR in the UNITED STATES SENATE** is now a co-sponsor of this bill and WASP CHAMPION! Seventeen female Senators said "YES" -- this is important and it is time.



Major Nicole Malachowski

This is a **long overdue honor for the WASP**. Wings Across America had been working on this project for over a year with two high ranking officials in the Pentagon, but their efforts took on an entirely new energy and focus in November of 2008.

At the opening of the Wings Across America "Fly Girls of WWII" WASP exhibit, Major Nicole Malachowski, the first female Thunderbird pilot, took the lead. She had the passion, the clout and the connections to get it to the right Senator, and we were more than willing to

furnish her the ammunition she needed for the mission. Why does she care so much?

*"I am convinced every opportunity I've been afforded, from flying combat patrols in the skies over Iraq, to the honor of being a USAF Thunderbird, to representing the military as a Fellow, is because of these pioneering women. There couldn't be a more principled use of time and effort than seeking the Congressional Gold Medal for my personal heroines, the courageous WASP of WWII."* **Major Nicole "Fifi" Malachowski**

Major Malachowski submitted a draft bill and convinced our Texas Senator and her staff that it was of the utmost importance and urgency. Senator Hutchison enthusiastically agreed, so from there, with WAA's additional suggestions and corrections, her staff ran with it. What a force of nature--a female pilot on a mission!

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? WASP, ask your family, friends and fans to **PREPARE TO PICK UP THE TORCH!** Email, call or write their Senators and Representatives.

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## HEART-FELT RESPONSES ON THE INTRODUCTION OF BILL S.614

🔥 This is such fantastic news! These women deserve this wonderful honor. --Keith Rubin

🔥 This is way past Exciting!!! Thanks for sending the press release. -- I'll start trying to see how I can get it on our website. Thanks!

--Peggy Carnahan, Women In Military Aviation

🔥 I have tears in my eyes --- I am speechless. This is one of those moments when I need to just run outside and hug everyone in sight -- but I won't do that. So, will you give your mom a big hug for me. Thank you for letting me be a tiny, tiny, tiny part of this adventure over the years. God Bless America!

--Margaret Kramer, Baylor University, Waco, Texas

🔥 Hooray for our WASP!!! I can't wait to travel to Washington, D.C. and see my dear friends receive this great honor that they are so deserving of. I think 2009 is going to be the Year of the WASP -- yipeeee!! :-)

--Amy Strebbe

🔥 This is all a long time coming for these remarkable ladies. Darlene Sowder Ram Aircraft Ltd Partnership

🔥 Thanks on behalf of my Mother, Betty A. Thompson (maiden name) Betty A Sharr (married name). Mom has passed away. I am very proud of my Mother and what all WASPS accomplished. Just today, A restored B-17G landed at Meadows field, Bakersfield Ca. and I told the guys, "My mom used to fly those!". Thanks again, --Weldon T. Sharr

🔥 8 pm I just got off the phone with WASP Winnie Wood. She does not have internet any more because of her vision, so I read her your message, every word. She was amazed and very pleased. 8:45 pm I just got off the phone with Emmy Drummond, and after I read her your email, she was just amazed. Pat Thomas

🔥 "Mamma Mia!" Jeff Boshart

🔥 This is amazing. I'm so happy our Mom's get to see this. not only as it happens, but also again and again at the link given in your note for the Sen. Kay Bailey's u-tube site. It will be my mom's first u-tube watch! Yea for our MAMA's !!!!! They rock. Boo Fields

🔥 Thank you more than words can say for working so diligently toward such an amazing finale for the Women AirForce Service Pilots. Barb Linder, proud daughter of WASP Codye Clinkscales Linder

🔥 Thanks for the heads up on the Hutchison speech; it was wonderful and I have recorded it to show my mother, Shirley Ingalls Thackara who lives in Carmel, CA this weekend when I go out to see her with my kids. She is 90 years old and going strong and was so truly happy to hear all about it over the phone... I am a very proud daughter of WASP Shirley Ingalls!!! Lucy Kennedy, CA



🔥 These women were trailblazers. They displayed honor and courage and flew the most complex aircraft of the age. They are patriots. They are an inspiration to today's women in aviation. They opened the door for today's women to fly in the military in aircraft ranging from cargo and trainers, to fighters and bombers, and even the space shuttle. They inspire young girls to pursue technical fields and aviation. They are role models who deserve to be honored. We owe the WASP our "thank you"--not in words, but in deeds. For their courage, service and dedication to our Nation, they deserve the most distinguished honor Congress can give: the Congressional Gold Medal. **Senator Barbara Mikluski, Maryland**

🔥 The women of the Women Airforce Service Pilots were not just part of the Greatest Generation, they were trailblazers who had a tremendous impact on the role of women in the military today. By honoring these American heroines with the Congressional Gold Medal, we can finally commend and celebrate their courage, loyalty, and service to country that brought about a historic change in our armed services and our nation," **Senator Maria Cantwell, Washington**

🔥 We are forever indebted to the courageous women who served as part of the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II, valiantly fighting to protect our homeland and defend our everyday freedoms," **Senator Olympia Snowe, Maine**



"If the nation ever again needs them, American women will respond. Never again will they have to prove they can do any flying job the military has. Not as an experiment. Not to fill in for men. They will fly as commissioned officers in the future Air Force of the United States with equal pay - hospitalization - insurance - veterans' benefits.

THE WASP HAVE EARNED IT FOR  
THESE WOMEN OF THE FUTURE'

*Josephine B. Boshart*



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Ask them to CO-SPONSOR **S.614** honoring the WASP of WWII with the Congressional Gold Medal. **THIS IS IMPORTANT.** They pay attention to EVERY phone call and EVERY email. YOU could be the one who makes the difference. Congress has already awarded this prestigious honor to the Tuskegee Airmen and the Navaho Code Talkers. It is now time for the courageous women pilots, who paid their way to serve their country, and preformed so valiantly in the face of enormous challenges and gender bias--to step into the national spotlight, where they have always belonged. *"This is an extraordinary opportunity for our entire nation to say thank you to a group of women who served their country without question and without expectations of honor or*

*glory. Their patriotism, sacrifice, service, faith, honor, courage, integrity and determination in the face of enormous odds are inspirational.*

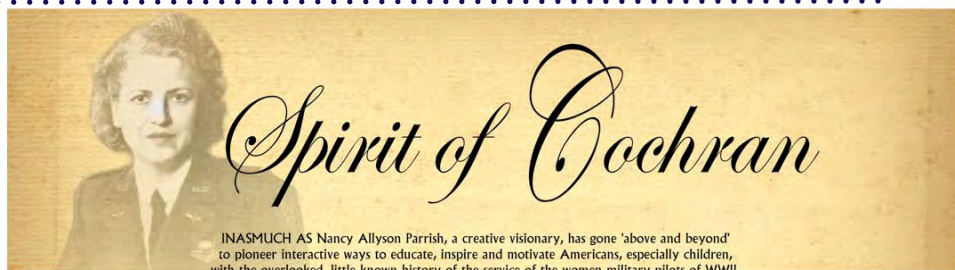


*This is an honor the WASP did not seek, yet, in awarding this highest civilian honor, the United States Congress has the privilege of coming together in a righteous cause. We owe it to the WASP and to those who will follow in their footsteps."*

**Nancy Parrish, Director  
Wings Across America**

**FYI:** Some of you have asked if what I am doing is, in any way, part of the National WASP WWII Museum, which I created and founded a few years ago. Thank you for asking. The answer is NO. We (five other members of the Board and I) resigned from the Board, and two years ago, turned over all the operations of the WASP Museum to the local Board members. We all wanted to work on projects that are MORE NATIONAL in scope to honor the WASP.

EVERYTHING I have done since that time, including the Fly Girls Exhibit, the "Faces of ALL the WASP" mosaic and the campaign to award the Congressional Gold Medal, is what WINGS ACROSS AMERICA is all about. We will continue those 'outside the box' kinds of projects that will educate and inspire generations to come with the history of the WASP. This includes helping other museums create WASP exhibits, helping school children with research for their History Fair projects, and sharing the history of the WASP on youtube and facebook!



## THANK YOU, WASP!

I was sincerely humbled by the WASP at their final reunion in Irving, Texas, when President Jan Goodrum and VP Dawn Seymour called me to the stage and presented me the **"Spirit of Cochran Award."** Even more special is the language of the award: *"For exemplifying the courage, persistence and indomitable, pioneering SPIRIT of Miss Jacqueline Cochran, founding Director of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, WWII..."* Wow. That is overwhelming.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank ALL the WASP for this tremendous honor--with a special thanks to WASP Millie Dalrymple and WASP Shutsy Reynolds.

I consider my years volunteering to share the history of the WASP--first as web designer for WASP on the WEB, as Director of Wings Across America, as the Founding Director and creator of the WASP Museum, and most recently the designer of the Fly Girls of WWII Exhibit, as the most rewarding and enriching of my life. My journey has been blessed with friendships, laughter, challenges, mountains and some molehills that sure looked big at the time. Through it all, I have been guided by God's hand and my mother, the WASP' gentle encouragement and partnership. Needless to say, I have never walked alone.

I've been uplifted by all of you--your stories, your spirit and your humility. You continue to touch my life and inspire me in ways you could never imagine and to go beyond what is possible. Of course, like mom always says, "With God's help, nothing is impossible!" May He continue to bless you all.

*Nancy*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

1. Is this for all the WASP or just the survivors? Once the bill passes, the medal will be awarded to all WASP or to their surviving family members.
2. Will there be a ceremony? Yes. Customarily, the President of the United States awards the medal, with both houses of Congress in attendance. He does this on behalf of the people of America and Congress.
3. Is this the same as the CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR? NO--that medal is a military award--the highest in the land. This is the highest CIVILIAN honor that Congress can bestow.

# Fly Girls OF WORLD WAR II

Wings Across America's "FLY GIRLS OF WORLD WAR II" opening at the Women's Memorial, Nov. 14, 2008. Attended by WASP, family, friends, Generals, Master Sergeants, Colonels, and retired everything. John Truesdell, former Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force for Reserve Affairs and his wife, Diane, came, as did Brig. Gen Linda McTague and other familiar Air Force faces.



The opening ceremonies included speeches by Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught (Pres. of WIMSA Foundation), Nancy Parrish (creator/designer of Fly Girls), Cokie Roberts (with her mom, former Ambassador and Congresswoman Lindy Boggs, who helped the WASP receive veteran status in 1977), and Major Nicole Malachowski, the first female Thunderbird pilot. The most special speakers were the WASP themselves, each given a chance at the mic—they charmed us all.





# CARRYING THE TORCH TO WIMSA

## ‘FLY GIRLS OF WWII’ WASP EXHIBIT

Since not every WASP will travel to see this wonderful exhibit, here are a few samples of ‘what’s on the wall!’

‘Fly Girls of World War II’ shines a light on the untold, inspirational history of the pioneering Women Airforce Service Pilots of WWII, the first women in history to fly America’s military aircraft. These courageous women pilots are ‘larger than life’ in this colorful, visual history of the WASP: from the 200’ x 2’ WASP film strip, with the shining faces of 163 WASP, to the 7 foot tall WASP standups. Also featured in this educational exhibit : mannequins dressed in original uniforms, a visual history mural, photo collages, a 26 foot WASP timeline, a scale replica of the Stearman primary training aircraft (PT-17), and the unique WASP mosaic, which features the faces of EVERY WASP (1,102) in one amazing photo.



The WIMSA “GALLERY” where Fly Girls shines. Overhead the PT-17, on the walls ‘larger than life’ WASP standups!



Mannequins, training & Fifinella along with the WASP film strip, which runs 250 feet.



Twenty-six foot long WASP TIMELINE



Historically accurate and beautifully re-created model of a PT-17. Handcrafted and donated by Roxanne Cotrell



One of the WASP seven foot “STANDUPS.” Giant wings on left, life-sized silver WASP Wings in black box. Each pair crafted and donated by WASP Shutsy Reynolds.

## EXHIBIT HISTORY

First on display at the Mayborn Museum Complex in Waco, Texas (Nov, 2007- April, 2008) and currently on display at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at the gateway to Arlington National Cemetery (Nov 2008 - Nov 2009), the “Fly Girls of WWII” exhibit was created by Wings Across America’s mother-daughter team (Director, Nancy Parrish, and Associate Director, WASP Deanie Parrish). “Fly Girls of WWII” is curated by Nancy Parrish.



**Kay Bailey Hutchison**  
**UNITED STATES SENATOR, TEXAS**



For Immediate Release  
March 17, 2009

Contact: HUTCHISON/ Courtney Sanders (202) 224-9767  
MIKULSKI/ Cassie Harvey (202) 224-0574

**Sens. Hutchison, Mikulski Introduce Bill to Award  
WWII Women Airforce Service Pilots Congressional Gold Medal**  
*Full Recognition of the Women Airforce Service Pilots is 50 Years Overdue*  
**--All 17 Women in the Senate Cosponsor--WASHINGTON, D.C. --**

U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), along with Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), today introduced a bill to award the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) of World War II the Congressional Gold Medal. These women pilots have never received formal or public recognition for their wartime service to the United States. The bill was cosponsored by all 17 women in the U.S. Senate.

*"More than fifty years have passed since the intrepid Women Airforce Service Pilots bravely served in World War II, but these women have yet to receive the recognition they deserve.*

*Even without formal acknowledgement, their service paved the way for all women who serve valiantly in the military today," said Sen. Hutchison. "Just as the Navajo Code Talkers and the Tuskegee Airmen served their country with distinction in World War II, and were subsequently awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, it is appropriate for us to honor the service of the Women Airforce Service Pilots with Congress' top award."*

*"The Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II were trailblazers and true patriots. They risked their lives in service to our nation, but for too long their contribution to the war effort has been undervalued or under recognized," Sen. Mikulski said. "I am proud to co-sponsor this bill to right this wrong. For their valor, service and dedication to our nation, these women deserve the most distinguished honor Congress can give."*

*"It was both an honor and a privilege to serve this country during some of the darkest days of World*

*War II. I think it's important for young people today to realize that WASP flew missions that were dangerous, but in order for our country to be free, that's what it took, and we did it without any thought of recognition or glory. However, I believe I speak for every WASP when I say 'we are humbled by Senator Hutchison and her peers' desire to honor our service with the Congressional Gold Medal," said WASP Deanie Bishop Parrish, Associate Director, Wings Across America.*

Between 1942 and 1944, the 1,102 women of WASP were trained in Texas, then went on to fly non-combat military missions so that all their male counterparts could be deployed to combat. These women piloted every kind of military aircraft, and logged 60 million miles flying missions across the United States. They were never awarded full military status and were ineligible for officer status. Following the war, the women pilots paid their own way home. And for the 38 women who died in the line of duty, their families were saddled with the costs to transport their bodies and arrange burials. It was not until 1977 that the WASP participants were granted veterans' status.

The example set by the Women Airforce Service Pilots paved

the way for the armed forces to lift the ban on women attending military flight training in the 1970s, and eventually led to women being fully integrated as pilots in the U.S. military. Today, women fly every type of aircraft and mission, from fighter jets in combat to the shuttle in space flight.

Of the 1,102 women who received their wings as Women Airforce Service Pilots, approximately 300 are living today. The Congressional Gold Medals will be awarded to all 1,102 pilots and/or their surviving family members.

The Congressional Gold Medal is awarded by Congress and, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, is the highest and most distinguished honor a civilian may receive. The award is bestowed for exceptional acts of service to the United States or for lifetime achievement. Once approved by Congress, the U.S. Mint designs and creates each gold medal so that it uniquely represents the individual or event being honored. The original medal is then displayed at the Smithsonian Institution.

- END -



## SON OF A WASP!

by Steve Robinson, RM2 (SEAL)

Son of WASP Barbara Manchester Robinson.

(During my SEAL training)... "One of the instructors had zeroed in on me and I was into my umpteenth set of 20 pushups in the surf zone, when he leaned down and growled in my face... "Robinson! Why don't you quit?!" I figured that acting tough would only get me more unwanted attention... so I told him..."

"My Dad flew B24s in the Pacific Theater during WWII. He completed his 40 missions and came home with the Distinguished Flying Cross. My Mom was a Women Airforce Service Pilot, and flew a greater variety of planes than my Dad. If I was to quit this program... MY MOM WOULD KICK MY ASS!"

He grunted (which was his version of a laugh), shifted the half-chewed cigar from one side to the other, and then told me to get up and rejoin the others. Later in the day, when no one else was around, he grabbed me up by the shirt front, nose to nose, and growled "I've got my eye on you, Robinson... you're not livin' up to your Mom's reputation!"



When I finished the training and graduated, I asked that instructor and two others to pose for a photo... which I have to this day. On that occasion I asked him "Have I lived up to my Mom's reputation now?" He smiled and gave me a thumbs up and said "You're getting' there."



First Lady, Michelle Obama, visits Wings Across America's "Fly Girls of WWII" display at the WIMSA Memorial. Photo: reading the "ABOVE & BEYOND" tribute to the 38 WASP and trainees who gave their lives flying for their country.

### PROGRESS OF THE BILL TO DATE:

**S.614:** A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP)

Sponsor: Sen Kay Hutchison (R-TX)

Status: ☒ Introduced  
☒ Referred to Committee  
 Reported by Committee  
 Voted on in Senate  
 Voted on in House  
 Signed by President

2/3's both  
houses required  
for next step

This bill is in the third step in the legislative process. Introduced bills and resolutions first go to committees that deliberate, investigate, and revise them, if necessary before they go to general debate.

Last Action: Mar. 17, 2009: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

## YES, I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT WINGS ACROSS AMERICA!

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Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

CHECKS: payable to **WINGS ACROSS AMERICA**

For more information on other ways to give:

**Larry Smith**, Assistant Vice President for Gift Planning

1-800-BAYLOR-U, option 4

or call Nancy Parrish, 254-366-1436



Mail form to:

Wings Across America  
 Baylor University  
 1620 South Ninth St.  
 Waco, Texas 76706

Wings Across America is a non-profit, all-volunteer project, administrated through Baylor University:  
 Project ID: RDVY-4510.



*Wings  
Thanks*

You are looking at  
our entire  
volunteer staff.



Asso. Director, WASP Deanie Bishop Parrish, BA, Summa Cum Laude, 1976 University of Houston (L) and Director, Nancy Parrish, MA in Directing, Baylor University, 1980 (R).

However there are people behind the scenes who continue to support us in so many different ways. THANK YOU to Barby Williams, Baylor University Development, Film and Digital Media Dept., WIMSA, L-3 Communications Integrated Systems Waco, Texas State Technical College. Last, but by far the most important, to the many WASP who have supported us over the years, whether by inviting us into your homes to share your story on digital video, sending a check for \$5 or \$500 or sharing our brochures with your family and friends.

We continue to be blessed!

**Senate Co-Sponsors for  
S.614 so far:**

\*Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX)  
John Cornyn (R-TX)

\*Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)  
Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)  
Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)  
Mark Begich (D-AK)  
Diane Feinstein (D-CA)  
Barbara Boxer (D-CA)  
Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)  
Charles Schumer (D-NY)  
Patty Murray (D-WA)  
Maria Cantwell (D-WA)  
Olympia Snow (R-ME)  
Susan Collins (R-ME)  
Mary Landrieu (D-LA)  
David Vitter (R-LA)  
Claire McCaskill (D-MO)  
Chris Bond (R-MO)

Blanche Lincoln (D-AR)  
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)  
Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)  
Kay Hagan (D-NC)  
Tom Harkin (D-IA)  
Sherrod Brown (D-OH)  
James Inhofe (R-OK)  
Roland Burris (D-IL)  
Robert Byrd (D-WV)  
Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)  
Edward Kaufman (D-DE)  
Ron Wyden (D-OR)  
Saxby Chambliss (R-GA)  
Thad Cochran (R-MS)  
Lamar Alexander (R-TN)



Wings Across America

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