

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2014

To award a congressional gold medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots
("WASP").

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 21, 2009

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. BARTLETT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. EDWARDS of Texas, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mrs. MALONEY, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. SNYDER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. MASSA, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. GOHMERT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. BERKLEY, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KLINE of Minnesota, Mr. KISELL, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. SPRATT, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WOLF, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. TURNER, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. SCALISE, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. TITUS, Mr. FILNER, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. ROGERS of Michigan, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Ms. FALLIN, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. HARMAN, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. BONNER, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. MACK, Mr. WEINER, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. LEE of New York, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. UPTON, Mr. CLAY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. MARCHANT, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. SHULER, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCKEON, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. TANNER, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. SESTAK, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Ms. MOORE of Wis-

consin, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. REYES, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. OBERSTAR, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, Mr. ADLER of New Jersey, Mr. WU, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. DREIER, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. LANCE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. BARROW, Mrs. BONO MACK, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. CARTER, Mr. OLVER, Mr. MORAN of Kansas, Mr. CAO, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mrs. LUMMIS, and Mr. ADERHOLT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To award a congressional gold medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots (“WASP”).

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds that—

5 (1) the Women Airforce Service Pilots of
 6 WWII, known as the “WASP”, were the first women
 7 in history to fly American military aircraft;

8 (2) more than 60 years ago, they flew fighter,
 9 bomber, transport, and training aircraft in defense
 10 of America’s freedom;

11 (3) they faced overwhelming cultural and gen-
 12 der bias against women in nontraditional roles and

1 overcame multiple injustices and inequities in order
2 to serve their country;

3 (4) through their actions, the WASP eventually
4 were the catalyst for revolutionary reform in the in-
5 tegration of women pilots into the Armed Services;

6 (5) during the early months of World War II,
7 there was a severe shortage of combat pilots;

8 (6) Jacqueline Cochran, America's leading
9 woman pilot of the time, convinced General Hap Ar-
10 nold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, that women, if
11 given the same training as men, would be equally ca-
12 pable of flying military aircraft and could then take
13 over some of the stateside military flying jobs, there-
14 by releasing hundreds of male pilots for combat
15 duty;

16 (7) the severe loss of male combat pilots made
17 the necessity of utilizing women pilots to help in the
18 war effort clear to General Arnold, and a women's
19 pilot training program was soon approved;

20 (8) it was not until August 1943, that the
21 women aviators would receive their official name;

22 (9) General Arnold ordered that all women pi-
23 lots flying military aircraft, including 28 civilian
24 women ferry pilots, would be named "WASP",
25 Women Airforce Service Pilots;

1 (10) more than 25,000 American women ap-
2 plied for training, but only 1,830 were accepted and
3 took the oath;

4 (11) exactly 1,074 of those trainees successfully
5 completed the 21 to 27 weeks of Army Air Force
6 flight training, graduated, and received their Army
7 Air Force orders to report to their assigned air base;

8 (12) on November 16, 1942, the first class of
9 29 women pilots reported to the Houston, Texas
10 Municipal Airport and began the same military
11 flight training as the male Army Air Force cadets
12 were taking;

13 (13) due to a lack of adequate facilities at the
14 airport, 3 months later the training program was
15 moved to Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas;

16 (14) WASP were eventually stationed at 120
17 Army air bases all across America;

18 (15) they flew more than 60,000,000 miles for
19 their country in every type of aircraft and on every
20 type of assignment flown by the male Army Air
21 Force pilots, except combat;

22 (16) WASP assignments included test piloting,
23 instructor piloting, towing targets for air-to-air gun-
24 nery practice, ground-to-air anti-aircraft practice,
25 ferrying, transporting personnel and cargo (includ-

1 ing parts for the atomic bomb), simulated strafing,
2 smoke laying, night tracking, and flying drones;

3 (17) in October 1943, male pilots were refusing
4 to fly the B-26 Martin Marauder (known as the
5 “Widowmaker”) because of its fatality records, and
6 General Arnold ordered WASP Director, Jacqueline
7 Cochran, to select 25 WASP to be trained to fly the
8 B-26 to prove to the male pilots that it was safe to
9 fly;

10 (18) during the existence of the WASP—

11 (A) 38 women lost their lives while serving
12 their country;

13 (B) their bodies were sent home in poorly
14 crafted pine boxes;

15 (C) their burial was at the expense of their
16 families or classmates;

17 (D) there were no gold stars allowed in
18 their parents’ windows; and

19 (E) because they were not considered mili-
20 tary, no American flags were allowed on their
21 coffins;

22 (19) in 1944, General Arnold made a personal
23 request to Congress to militarize the WASP, and it
24 was denied;

1 (20) on December 7, 1944, in a speech to the
2 last graduating class of WASP, General Arnold said,
3 “You and more than 900 of your sisters have shown
4 you can fly wingtip to wingtip with your brothers. I
5 salute you . . . We of the Army Air Force are proud
6 of you. We will never forget our debt to you.”;

7 (21) with victory in WWII almost certain, on
8 December 20, 1944, the WASP were quietly and
9 unceremoniously disbanded;

10 (22) there were no honors, no benefits, and very
11 few “thank you’s”;

12 (23) just as they had paid their own way to
13 enter training, they had to pay their own way back
14 home after their honorable service to the military;

15 (24) the WASP military records were imme-
16 diately sealed, stamped “classified” or “secret”, and
17 filed away in Government archives, unavailable to
18 the historians who wrote the history of WWII or the
19 scholars who compiled the history text books used
20 today, with many of the records not declassified
21 until the 1980s;

22 (25) consequently, the WASP story is a missing
23 chapter in the history of the Air Force, the history
24 of aviation, and the history of the United States of
25 America;

1 (26) in 1977, 33 years after the WASP were
2 disbanded, the Congress finally voted to give the
3 WASP the veteran status they had earned, but these
4 heroic pilots were not invited to the signing cere-
5 mony at the White House, and it was not until 7
6 years later that their medals were delivered in the
7 mail in plain brown envelopes;

8 (27) in the late 1970s, more than 30 years
9 after the WASP flew in World War II, women were
10 finally permitted to attend military pilot training in
11 the United States Armed Forces;

12 (28) thousands of women aviators flying sup-
13 port aircraft have benefitted from the service of the
14 WASP and followed in their footsteps;

15 (29) in 1993, the WASP were once again ref-
16 erenced during congressional hearings regarding the
17 contributions that women could make to the mili-
18 tary, which eventually led to women being able to fly
19 military fighter, bomber, and attack aircraft in com-
20 bat;

21 (30) hundreds of United States servicewomen
22 combat pilots have seized the opportunity to fly
23 fighter aircraft in recent conflicts, all thanks to the
24 pioneering steps taken by the WASP;

1 (31) the WASP have maintained a tight-knit
2 community, forged by the common experiences of
3 serving their country during war;

4 (32) as part of their desire to educate America
5 on the WASP history, WASP have assisted “Wings
6 Across America”, an organization dedicated to edu-
7 cating the American public, with much effort aimed
8 at children, about the remarkable accomplishments
9 of these WWII veterans; and

10 (33) the WASP have been honored with exhibits
11 at numerous museums, to include—

12 (A) the Smithsonian Institution, Wash-
13 ington, DC;

14 (B) the Women in Military Service to
15 America Memorial at Arlington National Ceme-
16 tery, Arlington, Virginia;

17 (C) the National Museum of the United
18 States Air Force, Wright Patterson Air Force
19 Base, Ohio;

20 (D) the National WASP WWII Museum,
21 Sweetwater, Texas;

22 (E) the 8th Air Force Museum, Savannah,
23 Georgia;

24 (F) the Lone Star Flight Museum, Gal-
25 veston, Texas;

1 (G) the American Airpower Museum,
2 Farmingdale, New York;

3 (H) the Pima Air Museum, Tucson, Ari-
4 zona;

5 (I) the Seattle Museum of Flight, Seattle,
6 Washington;

7 (J) the March Air Museum, March Reserve
8 Air Base, California; and

9 (K) the Texas State History Museum,
10 Austin, Texas.

11 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

12 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tem-
13 pore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-
14 resentatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the
15 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
16 of appropriate design in honor of the Women Airforce
17 Service Pilots (WASP) collectively, in recognition of their
18 pioneering military service and exemplary record, which
19 forged revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces of the
20 United States of America.

21 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
22 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
23 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
24 retary”) shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems,

1 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
2 retary.

3 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
5 gold medal in honor of the Women Airforce Service
6 Pilots, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithso-
7 nian Institution, where it will be displayed as appro-
8 priate and made available for research.

9 (2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense
10 of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution
11 shall make the gold medal received under this Act
12 available for display elsewhere, particularly at other
13 locations associated with the WASP.

14 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

15 Under such regulations as the Secretary may pre-
16 scribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
17 bronze of the gold medal struck under this Act, at a price
18 sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor,
19 materials, dyes, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

20 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.**

21 Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national med-
22 als for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States
23 Code.

1 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS**
2 **OF SALE.**

3 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
4 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
5 Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000
6 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section
7 2.

8 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
9 sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 3 shall be
10 deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise
11 Fund.

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