



#HonorTheWASP with WAI

Visit a WASP gravesite to honor a WASP

May 18, 2020 – Women in Aviation International members and friends will honor the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) by visiting their graves and leaving an appropriate decoration in the form of flowers or other remembrances. In its third year, the #HonorTheWASP program was originally envisioned to take place over the Memorial Day weekend each year. In an effort to allow participants to observe best social-distancing practices, WAI offers that large groups can be easily avoided by visiting gravesites over the next two weeks as opposed to just on Monday, May 25th, Memorial Day.

“The WASP served in traumatic and challenging times during World War II, and their dedication and sacrifices deserve our attention. We recommend that members and visitors participate while also staying safe...wear masks, visit outside of the Memorial Day weekend, and maintain distance from others in your party. We will not let COVID-19 stop us from honoring these incredible women who risked their lives to do their part for the war effort,” says WAI CEO Allison McKay.

You don’t have to be a WAI member to #HonorTheWASP. A database of WASP gravesites, including Google maps to their locations, may be found HERE [<https://www.wai-crc.com/honor-the-wasp>]. The original database was provided by Texas Woman’s University (TWU), the home of the Women Airforce Service Pilots archives, and is regularly augmented through research efforts of WAI staff.

“Remembering the WASP at Memorial Day is important because it honors their service as mentors, friends, and as an inspiration for whole new generations of women in aviation,” says Kate Landdeck, an associate professor of history at TWU. “I am grateful for the genius of the late Patricia Luebke of WAI and the dedication of WAI chapters across the country in continuing this annual tradition to honor the WASP.”

In each of the previous two years, #HonorTheWASP participants have visited and decorated nearly 100 WASP gravesites annually. WAI and TWU continue to improve the database and add WASP burial sites regularly.

Participants are asked to tweet a photograph of their visit and include who they visited and where they are located using the hashtag #HonorTheWASP. WAI will retweet all posts to its over 18,000 Twitter followers and other social media outlets.

As many cemeteries have changed their hours of operation due to COVID-19, WAI also suggests that participants contact the cemetery to plan for hours to visit the gravesites, and to check the database to confirm that their list is current as additions are made as necessary.

About the WASP: The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) were inducted into WAI's International Pioneer Hall of Fame in 1993. The WASP flew for the U.S. Army Airforce from September 1942 to December 1944. Some 1,102 women wore the silver wings flying over 70 million miles and delivering 12,650 airplanes across the country during their time of operation. Today, there are 32 WASP still living.

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Women in Aviation International is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing networking, mentoring and scholarship opportunities for women and men who are striving for challenging and fulfilling careers in the aviation and aerospace industries. For more information, contact WAI at 3647 State Route 503 South, West Alexandria, OH 45381, Email: waihq@wai.org or visit www.WAI.org.

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