

NATIONAL

WASP • WWII
MUSEUM

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NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM CELEBRATES 13TH ANNUAL HOMECOMING

Five Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II return to Avenger Field for the 75th WASP Anniversary



AVENGER FIELD, SWEETWATER, TEXAS – National WASP WWII Museum celebrated Homecoming 2018, themed “We Remember”, over Memorial Day weekend. Five Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) were welcomed back to the place they trained to serve our country during World War II. Accompanied by military escorts carefully selected from a competitive application process, the WASP returned to The Wishing Well, where they gathered for a reunion photo.

The WASP (with their class numbers) Left to Right are:

Dorothy Lucas 44-W-7 (TX)

Nell Bright 43-W-7 (UT)

Kay Hilbrandt 44-W-10 (FL)

Mildred Jane Doyle 44-W-4 (MI)

Millicent "Millie" Young 44-W-10 (CO)

For more than a decade, the WASP have been gathering each year at the WASP Museum to remember their days at Avenger Field; the long hot days of training and study, the rare leisure time, sometimes spent at Lake Sweetwater, and those 38 fallen who gave their lives in service to our nation.

Ann Hobing, President & CEO of the National WASP WWII Museum shared some military heritage by saying, "WASP came from across the United States, to serve our nation, to defend our homeland and to protect our freedom. They stirred in others the same sense of duty. For 75 years, Women Airforce Service Pilots have left a burning legacy. On 28 May 1943, the 43 women of Class 43-2, known as "The Singing Second", graduated here at Avenger Field, the first and only all women air base in U.S. history."

Homecoming 2018 also welcomed two U.S. Air Force women officers to share their stories and give homage to the WASP who blazed the trail for those after them. Colonel Andrea Themely, Commander of the 80th Flying Training Wing at Sheppard AFB, shared the spotlight with her fellow women pilots, telling their stories.

"When I was a young girl, I told my mom I wanted to be a flight attendant. She asked me why I would not rather be a pilot, and I remember saying that girls can't be pilots. My mom said, "Yes they can! The WASP did it during World War II!" And because the WASP showed the next generation of women they can be whatever they want to be, my friends and I fly military aircraft all over the world and keep America safe", Colonel Themely said.



Dinner guest speaker, Major General Linda S. Hemminger, USAF (Ret), former military flight nurse, spoke of women in the military and the numerous firsts that continue today. "WASP were the first women to fly America's military aircraft and without them, women like Ann Dunwoody, the first woman in U.S. military history to reach a four star officer rank, would not have been possible. Thank you for showing all of us, men and women, how to fiercely face challenges and bravely serve our country", said General Hemminger, to an audience of more than 350 dinner guests in Hangar No 1.



In addition to the fully sold out luncheon and dinner, Homecoming 2018 provided fun for the entire multi-generational family. A record breaking event for EAA Young Eagles Chapter 471, flying more than 110 youth taking their first flight, were generously flown by the EAA Young Eagles. More than a dozen warbirds landed at Avenger Field to provide entertainment and education, including the AT-6 "Texan", a beloved WASP flown plane. Liberty Jump Team conducted a WWII paratrooper jump over Avenger Field, and two members of the cast of *Sweetwater*, a musical about the WASP, provided additional family fun.



Lindy Segall, proud son of WASP Muriel "Mimi" Lindstrom 44-W-2, who goes by call sign "Lucky", described his connection with the celebration of Homecoming. "I lost my WASP in 1999. The National WASP WWII Museum gives me a place to reflect, remember and honor her service to our nation. It provides an important history lesson for visitors from around the globe. And each Homecoming to Sweetwater extends the untold story...one to inspire future generations that there are no limits to the human spirit."

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About National WASP WWII Museum

Adjacent to a Texas Historical Commission Landmark and a destination on Texas Forts Trail, National WASP WWII Museum at Avenger Field was incorporated by the State of Texas in 2003 and held its grand opening in 2005. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit relying on contributions is dedicated to honoring the legacy of Woman Airforce Service Pilots and inspiring future generations. The National WASP WWII Museum hosts an annual Homecoming, welcoming WASP and their families to remember those with whom they served. Home to archives, exhibits and aircraft preserving the story of WASP and those who served at Avenger Field, National WASP WWII Museum tells the story of Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War II and the years after their service in which they continued to seek the veteran status and full military honors due them.

For more information, visit www.waspmuseum.org or Facebook @waspmuseum.