

NATIONAL  
  
WASP • WWII  
MUSEUM

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**NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM PRESENTS 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FIFINELLA 5K RUN FOR THE WASP**

Museum receives flag flown over the Texas Capitol during Veterans Day celebration



AVENGER FIELD, SWEETWATER, TEXAS – The National WASP WWII Museum celebrated Veterans Day with the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual FifiNELLA 5K Run for the WASP on Saturday, November 10. The race venue changed slightly this year due to construction near the Museum. The entire race and ceremony took place at Texas State Technical College West Texas campus. More than 50 racers braved the cold morning to honor those who served our nation valiantly.



Fifinella 5K Run for the WASP Co-Chairs, Rosie Tovar, mother of a Marine veteran, and Robert Moore, were thrilled with the community's show of support. Together, these Lions Club of Sweetwater members planned this event for months, garnering support of volunteers, racers and sponsors. Tovar said, "As a civilian with many veterans in my family, including my son who fought in Fallujah, I was honored to serve with Robert as Co-Chair of this important annual celebration of veterans. Thank you to all who raced today in honor of a veteran."

Ann Hobing, President & CEO of the National WASP WWII Museum, welcomed the racers. Assisted by Lieutenant Colonel Yukio A. Kuniyuki III, former commander of 344<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion at Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, Texas, Hobing honored all veterans with the words, "For more than 240 years, our U.S. military has protected our Republic; our veterans served to keep us safe, to secure our liberties and to defend our Constitution. We thank the tens of millions of U.S. veterans, who gave of themselves, so we might live in Freedom. If you are a veteran, please raise your hand and accept a sincere round of applause for your service and sacrifice."

On behalf of Veterans of Nolan County, past and present, SFC Robert McBride, U.S. Army (Ret), Nolan County Veteran Service Officer, received a WASP flag to be hung in his office in the Nolan County courthouse, as a reminder of the legacy of pioneering WASP Veterans.

Lt Col Kuniyuki gave a heartfelt tribute to Women Airforce Service Pilots saying, "These women deserve our respect and honor this year during the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first graduation at Avenger Field. They fought for our nation along with all veterans." Lt Col Kuniyuki also recognized Marine Veterans on the 243<sup>rd</sup> birthday of the Marine Corps, November 10, 1775.

Then the Museum was presented with a Texas flag, thoughtfully acquired by the Honorable Stan Lambert, Texas State Representative of the 71<sup>st</sup> District. The certificate reads, "This flag flown over the Texas Capitol is presented to National WASP WWII Museum by Representative Stan Lambert in honor of the Women Airforce Service Pilots and the Museum that so beautifully shares their stories of valor and sacrifice."

After the awards ceremony and flag presentations, Melissa Stevenson, Director of Youth and Family Ministries at Elmwood West United Methodist Church, delivered an invocation to conclude the program and honor all veterans and active military. She shared a prayer and asked all present to participate in a moment of silence to remember the fallen, including the 38 Women Airforce Service Pilots who died in service.

Thanking the sponsors, racers, volunteers, race committee, board members and the entire Museum team, Hobing said, "Congratulations to all the first finishers, and to all who came out this brisk morning. Despite the cold, you did something extremely important. You showed up. You showed up, as did those who served at Valley Forge and the Battle of the Bulge and in the cold mountains of Afghanistan. By showing up today, you showed your appreciation for our veterans."

Top finishers in their age category (by time): Kevin Buff, Kelly Hall, Andrew DeLeon, Sarah Penny, Sammie Harrison, Weston May, Mary Bankhead, Ruby Shaw and Samantha Solis.  
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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 and dedicated to honoring the legacy of Woman Airforce Service Pilots and inspiring future generations, 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 WASP during WWII 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](http://www.waspmuseum.org) or Facebook @waspmuseum.



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