

**WOMEN'S AIR FORCE SERVICE PILOTS RECEIVE HONOR FOR THEIR BRAVE SERVICE DURING WWII**

**March 31, 2010**

Washington, DC –Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today joined with his colleagues in honoring, , the brave women who served as Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) during World War II with a Congressional Gold Medal. DeFazio was particularly pleased to recognize Kathryn Miles of Eugene.

“Answering our country's call at one of the most desperate times in our nation's history, these women served their country during WWII,” DeFazio said. “The service and sacrifice of these brave women played a vital role in the country's war effort. This award is much deserved and long over-due. These inspiring women also set the stage for generations to come, paving the way for future female soldiers. It is with great pride that I join with my colleagues in recognizing Kathryn Miles and the other WASPs for their distinguished service.”

The WASP organization was officially formed in August of 1943. These brave women served our nation by ferrying aircraft, including bombers and fighters; towing targets for gunnery; and as instrument instructors in the Eastern Flying Training Command. Jacqueline Cochran, the WASP director, and General Arnold hoped to militarize and commission the WASPs, but by late 1944 the improving military situation and lower than expected attrition rates among male pilots reduced the need for female pilots, and the WASP organization was terminated. WASPs remained civil service employees who did not receive the pay and benefits given to male pilots sharing the same risks. Finally, in 1977, congress passed and President Carter signed legislation which granted WASPs veteran status, although with limited benefits. By mere coincidence, this was in the same year that the Air Force graduated its first female pilots.

Kathryn Miles largely retired from flying after the war, but she counts fellow WASPs among her close friends. After she left the WASPs, she was married in Alaska and later moved to Eugene where she taught in the Bethel School District. She is the mother of four children. Her son joined her in Washington, D.C. for the award ceremony. She recounted some of the more exciting moments of her career as a WASP to Congressman DeFazio this morning at a breakfast honoring Oregon's WASPs. Pictures of the two of them at the event can be found at: <http://ww>

[w.defazio.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_joomgallery&func=detail&id=183&Itemid=65#joomimg](http://w.defazio.house.gov/index.php?option=com_joomgallery&func=detail&id=183&Itemid=65#joomimg)