

- 
- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Outdoors](#)
- [Lifestyle](#)
  - [Health & Wellness](#)
  - [Home & Garden](#)
  - [Food](#)
  - [Life Celebrations](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Directories](#)
  
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Cars](#)

---

## Grand Junction honored for service as World War II pilot



During World War II, Annabelle Moss was a Women Airforce Service Pilot. She and other WASPs

were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in March.

---



Christopher Tomlinson

During World War II, Annabelle Moss was a Women Airforce Service Pilot. She and other WASPs were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in March.

By [Melinda Mawdsley](#)

Saturday, April 17, 2010

During her lifetime, Annabelle Moss has fulfilled both her biggest dream and experienced her worst nightmare.

Not surprisingly, Moss, 88, prefers to talk more about fulfilling her dream of becoming a pilot in 1944 during World War II.

The Grand Junction woman spent nearly one year as a Women Airforce Service Pilot, or WASP. During that time, Moss was one of 1,200 American women who successfully passed an aptitude test to be a

domestic pilot, freeing male pilots to fly abroad in combat.

As a WASP, Moss flew officers from the U.S. Army from base to base in a single engine AT-6 trainer plane. She was among the first women in history to fly American military aircraft.

“It taught me I could do anything,” Moss said.

Well, almost anything.

Moss spent the better part of her life loving the skies, particularly flying and traveling. However, within the past year, Moss has begun to lose one thing she treasured as a pilot: her eyesight.

“I had perfect eyesight,” Moss said of what she feels is a nightmare. “The one thing I didn’t want was to be blind.”

She needs help cooking and reading, and she definitely doesn’t drive. She has friends and family to support her. She is thankful for that.

But failing eyesight can’t erase the fond memories Moss has of her time as a WASP. In fact, all Moss’ memories flooded back in early March when she went to Washington, D.C., to be honored along with other women who graduated from WASP training in the early 1940s.

An estimated 300 women who were part of WASP were still alive at the time of the March 10 ceremony, Moss said.

Nearly 200 of those women, including Moss, attended a ceremony to accept the Congressional Gold Medal. It is one of the highest honors civilians can receive for courage, service and dedication.

“There were a lot of wheelchairs,” Moss joked.

About 2,000 family members and friends of surviving and deceased WASPs also were in attendance. Moss had 15 family members from all over the country who were there, including her daughter, Marcia Sadler of Grand Junction.

Sadler accompanied her mother to the nation’s capital, a visit that included a stop at the World War II Memorial. There, the magnitude of Moss’ service “really hit me,” Sadler said.

Growing up, Sadler heard her mother share stories about being a WASP. Moss went to WASP reunions in California and displayed pictures and books about the WASPs.

“I grew up thinking that’s just what mothers do,” Sadler said.

It wasn’t until March that Sadler finally understood that what her mother did was unheard of at that time. Women weren’t called on to fly planes because men did it. But women were needed during World War II, and her mother wanted to help in the best way she knew how.

As Eleanor Roosevelt said in 1942: “This is not a time when women should be patient. We are in a war and we need to fight it with all our ability and every weapon possible. Women pilots, in this particular case, are a weapon waiting to be used.”

After Moss graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1943, she began training to become a WASP, saying the country was so patriotic at the time it never occurred to her to do anything else.

She was 22 at the time, and she had an edge. She had earned her pilot's license in the summer of 1942 while on break from college. In the summer of 1942, the U.S. government was offering to teach boys how to fly. One girl out of every 15 boys was extended the same courtesy.

"I didn't have anything to do that summer and got my license," Moss said.

It came in handy in 1943 when she decided to become a WASP. She needed to have a pilot's license and then train for six months in the same way men had to train.

"We flew all kinds of planes in all kinds of conditions, including target practice planes so men could practice shooting planes down out of the sky," Moss said.

The WASP program only lasted from 1943 until 1944 when it was disbanded toward the end of World War II.

After the war, Moss moved to Michigan to teach kindergarten for one year and then began to have her own children. She had three daughters and never returned to teaching.

She and her husband moved to Grand Junction in 1955. Pictures, books and even a quilt recognizing the WASPs are in her Grand Junction home.

The March ceremony in Washington, D.C., was a validation for her service, but the medals and compensation were never necessary, Moss said.

She would have flown for free.

"I loved to fly," she said. "I needed to fly ... It was a wonderful experience and an adventure."

## COMMENTS

Please [Login](#) or [Register](#) to leave a comment.

## SHARE

        More

## RELATED

- [Health Briefs, Oct. 13, 2009](#)
- [Police Blotter, Oct. 2, 2009](#)