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August 10, 2009

## Local woman recognized for WWII service

by Rodger Nichols  
*The Chronicle*

Anna Flynn Monkiewicz of The Dalles was honored Sunday with a reception at the Discovery Center and a presentation from Sen. Ron Wyden for her work as a member of the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs during World War II.

WASP members ferried planes from manufacturing sites to airbases all over the United States and were promised, but never received, military status.

Last month, Congress passed a bill honoring their service and awarding them a Congressional Gold Medal.

The medals are still being designed and minted, but Sen. Wyden presented Monkiewicz with a framed copy of the legislation and a flag hat had been flown over the U.S. Capitol Building.

"Oregon and trailblazers have always been interchangeable, but never more so than in the story of Anna Monkiewicz," Wyden said.. "In World War II, Anna was one of the 1,000 pilots to join the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, known as WASPs. They logged more than 60 million air miles, serving the war effort by delivering every type of aircraft to military bases all across the country. One of the reasons we're here, Anna, is that people like you and the other WASPs showed the very best of American character, of values, of patriotism for this country. We are here especially so you know that a grateful community is recognizing the fact that you answered the call. Every young woman out there, including my daughter, otherwise known as the troublemaker, is now able to dream of a wider future because of what you and other pioneers have done."

Wyden added noted that WASPS and denied more than military status. "When victory was at hand, the WASPs were disbanded, and to add insult to the short shrift, had to pay their own way home."

Wyden was a co-sponsor of S 614, which recognized the contributions of the WASPs and awarding them a Congressional Gold Medal.

"Anna, in recognition of the fact that you flew many of the same missions as men, it is high time you received the same recognition that they did, it's time to make amends."

After the presentation was made and photos were taken, Wyden asked Monkiewicz to say a few words.

"The only thing I can think of is, 'Thanks,'" she said, "and I don't know how many times you can say that. This is great."

The 30 members of the audience gave her a standing ovation.



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