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## ARMY APPROVES MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS FOR ACTIVE DUTY DESIGNEES AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

The Army announced today that individuals from 37 groups known as Active Duty Designees, who served the country during World War I and World War II in a capacity considered civilian or contractual service at the time, may now receive military honors when their remains are inurned at Arlington National Cemetery. The groups include Women's Air Force Pilots (WASPs), Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs), Flying Tigers, battlefield ambulance drivers, female civilians who served with the U. S. Army Nurse Corps at Bataan and Corregidor, ocean-going members of the Merchant Marine and defenders of Bataan and Wake Island.

The groups were recognized in 1977 by Public Law 95-202 as eligible, subject to Secretary of Defense approval, for all laws administered by the Veterans' Administration. Active Duty Designees already are eligible for inurnment at the Columbarium at Arlington as a result of the 1977 law, but they remain ineligible for burial there.

The military honors the Active Duty Designees will be given at Arlington include a military chaplain and a detail of up to 16 servicemembers to serve as body bearers, conduct a rifle salute, fold and present the United States flag to the family of the deceased, and play Taps. The honors at Arlington go beyond those honors required by statute and are equivalent to or more extensive than honors provided to veterans at Veterans Administration and private cemeteries, which are sometimes constrained by personnel available.

The Honorable Reginald J. Brown, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, made the decision after learning of the situation of former WASP Irene Kinne Englund. As a result of the decision, Englund, who died in February, will be inurned with Air Force military honors on June 14, 2002, at the Arlington National Cemetery Columbarium. Englund was already eligible for inurnment there because of her service with the WASPs and because she was the widow of an Army officer, but she was not previously eligible for military honors.

"We want to thank Mrs. Englund's daughter, Dr. Julie Englund, for bringing this issue to our attention. The men and women who served in these groups that flew air transports, defended Bataan and Wake Island, flew in Burma and performed a myriad of other valuable and often dangerous services deserve this recognition of a grateful nation," said Brown.

Extensive legal research was required before the Army could determine the eligibility of the groups for military honors. Section 1491 of Title 10, U. S. Code, requires the Secretary of Defense to provide a funeral honors detail upon request to any "veteran," defined as, among other things, "a decedent who served in the active military, naval, or air service," as defined in Section 101(24) of Title 38. That Section, in turn, defines the term "active military, naval or air service" to include "active duty." Since Active Duty Designees are considered to have served on active duty for purposes of Title 38, the legal review concluded they are therefore veterans under Title 10, Section 1491, U. S. Code, and eligible for military funeral honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

Active Duty Designees performed a variety of duties in both World Wars, although most served in World War II, a conflict that called for unprecedented commitment and sacrifice by all Americans. The smallest group is three individuals who served as scouts or guides assisting U. S. Marines in offensive operations in the Northern Mariana Islands from June 19, 1944, through September 2, 1945. The largest group is probably the ocean-going Merchant Marines. About 243,000 people served in the Merchant Marine in World War II, and 9,349 were killed.

The Women's Air Force Pilots (WASPs) were formed during World War II so the nation could gain military benefit from the talent and experience of women aviators. They ferried military aircraft, transported air inspectors and medical patients, and towed aerial gunnery targets.

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) supported the Army during World War II. They numbered about 45,000 by 1943, when the WAAC became the Women's Army Corps

Also included are a number of American Field Service members who served as ambulance drivers during both World Wars, civilian employees aboard some ships, civilian Navy IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) technicians who served in the combat areas of the Pacific during World War II, and civilian crewmen of certain U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey vessels.

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Members of the media may call 703-697-7550/5343 for more information. For general information on Arlington National Cemetery, call the Military District of Washington Public Affairs Office at 202-685-4645. For questions about eligibility for inurnment and military honors at Arlington National Cemetery, call the Internment Services Office at 703-695-3250.