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For Immediate Release

National campaign to honor Rosie the Riveters of WWII with Congressional Gold Medal kicks off this week with multiple events across the country

(Washington, D.C. March 21, 2018) A national campaign is underway to honor the millions of women who made history during WWII by stepping into the jobs vacated by men who were called into service to defend freedom.

The campaign will officially kick off on Wednesday, March 21, which Congress has designated as National Rosie the Riveter Day as part of National Women's History Month.

A bipartisan bicameral group of senators and Congressional representatives have proposed a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to be presented collectively to *"the women ... who were referred to as 'Rosie the Riveter,' in recognition of their contributions to the United States and the inspiration they have provided to ensuing generations."*

The Congressional Medal of Honor Act was introduced in the Senate by Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, and in the House by Congresswoman Jackie Speier of California. A reception featuring some of the original Rosies will be hosted at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday morning.

"The challenge now is to find surviving Rosies so they can be acknowledged" said Dr. Fran Carter, who built bombers during WWII and founded the American Rosie the Riveter Association in 1998. "Unlike veterans, there is no public record of the estimated 15 million women who built aircraft, vehicles, ships and other material to support the war effort."

Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive, a nonprofit alliance of organizations and individuals that are working to preserve the legacy of the men and women of America's 'greatest generation,' is leading an innovative grassroots effort to engage the public in creating a living memorial to the Rosies in the form of a national network of rose gardens featuring a new Rosie the Riveter rose.

The goal is to plant Rosie roses in every Congressional District in time for the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII in 2020 to help promote public awareness and support for the Gold Medal Act.

"Rosies came from all parts of the country and together represent a national treasure for all America," said Linda Laurie, who is coordinating the campaign from San Diego. "We hope that the Rosie the Riveter Memorial Rose Gardens will bring people everywhere in our country together."

The first Rosie roses were planted by the National Park Service at the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front Historical Park in Richmond, CA last March. Gardens are now being planted at WWII memorials, museums, public parks, air fields, senior living communities, and other locations in more than 15 states, including Alabama, Arizona,

California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Texas, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

“We want to make sure that the contributions of women of our Greatest Generation – all who answered the call on the Home Front and those who served in uniform during WWII – are fully honored and officially acknowledged,” said Barbara Jensen. Jensen leads the campaign in Oregon where living memorial gardens are being planted in all the state’s five Congressional Districts.

A national registry is being created to help the public locate the gardens that will each feature an official plaque designating them as part of the national living memorial.

“The cost of being part of this national living memorial are minimal which means that virtually any community in America can participate” said Dr. Lois Bolin, who is leading the campaign in Florida to plant Rosie Rose Gardens in all of the state’s 67 counties.

Madeleine LeBeau, a high school student in Virginia, is urging her fellow Girl Scouts around the country to help locate Rosies and plant Rosie rose gardens in their honor. “This is a great service project that promotes the mission of Girl Scouts and provides an opportunity to show leadership,” said LeBeau.

“It’s wonderful that the Rosies are finally being recognized for what they did to during WWII,” said Elinor Marie Otto, 98, who worked as a riveter from 1942 until her 95th birthday and is the honorary chairwoman for the Gardens project. “We hope that our example will inspire a new generation of 21st century Rosies who can succeed in the high technology workplace of the future.”

For more information about the Rosie the Riveter Memorial Rose Garden campaign or to locate a Garden, visit www.Spiritof45.org/Rosies or email RosieGardens@Spiritof45.org

