

U.S. Sens. Baldwin, Daines: Introduce bipartisan WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – As the nation celebrates National Nurses Week, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Steve Daines (R-MT) introduced the *WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act* to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the brave women who were World War II Army and Navy nurses.

By the time World War II ended, more than 59,000 Army Nurses and 14,000 Navy Nurses had volunteered to serve. The story of Lt. Ellen Ainsworth of Glenwood City, WI, highlights one such instance of bravery. Second Lieutenant Ainsworth was on duty in a hospital ward in Anzio, Italy, while the area was subjected to heavy enemy artillery shelling. One shell dropped within a few feet of the ward, its fragments piercing the tent in numerous places. Despite the extreme danger, she and three other nurses calmly evacuated 42 wounded patients to safety. For her actions, Lt. Ainsworth and the other nurses involved in the attack were awarded the Silver Star for bravery – the first women to receive this commendation from the Army. Lt. Ainsworth did not live to receive this award in person, as just a few days after, she was killed by an enemy artillery shelling.

“I am honored to work with Wisconsinites on behalf of the patriotic women who cared for our wounded and served our nation during World War II,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Democrats and Republicans are coming together to introduce this important legislation because we must honor the courageous women who stepped up to serve their country and finally give them the recognition they deserve.”

“The compassion and care of nurses serving in World War II undoubtedly contributed to America’s victory, and for that they have earned Congress’ highest

honor—the Congressional Gold Medal,” **said Senator Daines.** “I am working hard to get these American heroes the distinction they deserve.”

In the Senate, the bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), and Mike Braun (R-IN). In the House, the legislation has been introduced by U.S. Representatives Chrissy Houlihan (D-PA-06) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY-21).

“When our service members courageously fought during World War II, they relied on the expertise and lifesaving care of nurses serving in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. The bravery and sacrifice of these fearless women cannot be forgotten,” **said Senator Shaheen.** “I’m proud to join this bipartisan effort to honor the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and U.S. Navy Nurse Corps members with Congress’ highest honor: the Congressional Gold Medal. Through knowledge and dedication, their innovative care revolutionized combat medicine — the historical significance of their service must be recognized.”

The *WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act* is supported by American Red Cross, Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Washington, D.C.), National Military Women’s War Memorial (Washington, D.C.), Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, Wisconsin VFW and Naples-Monte Cassino VFW (Italy).

“Like the women who the WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act will honor, Senator Baldwin doesn’t give up. I applaud her for reintroducing the Act and for her continued support of telling the stories of all who have served their nation. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs fully supports the recognition and celebration of these brave women,” **said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary-designee James Bond.**

“The Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation representing the 3 Million women that have defended the nation over the past 247 years is pleased to support the WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act to honor the incredible service of more than 70,000 Army and Navy nurses who volunteered to serve during World War Two,” **said Phyllis J. Wilson, MPA, BSN, RN, President of the Military Women’s War Memorial (Washington, D.C.).**

“The American Red Cross applauds the reintroduction WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act in honor of the brave women who served as members of the U.S.

Army Nurse Corps and U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. Despite historical inequities based on gender and race, women shared their expertise as nurses and physicians to foster wellbeing and mitigate suffering and death. I am deeply grateful for the resilience, legacy and inspiration of these extraordinary nurses and their colleagues,” **said Linda MacIntyre, Chief Nurse, American Red Cross.**

A one pager on the legislation is available [here](#).

Additional quotes of support are available [here](#).

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