

# WASP aviator of WW II welcomes visitors this Memorial Day Weekend at the American Airpower Museum

A public tribute to those who used airpower to shatter the glass ceiling



Bernice 'Bee' Haydu, a member of the WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots, WWII) will be a guest at the American Airpower Museum at Republic Airport, 1230 New Highway, Farmingdale, this Memorial Day weekend, May 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, where she will welcome visitors and sign copies of her book, "Letters Home" written while she was flying aircraft for the war effort some 65 years ago.

Some 1,100 women served the country as WASP and 38 died in the performance of their duties, but their service and sacrifice went unrecognized by the military (and/or government) after the war's end. It is only now that these women, in their 80's have finally been recognized by Congress with an appropriate medal.

Julia Lauria Blum, WASP Exhibit curator at the American Airpower Museum, and a leader in bringing the story of the WASP to the public says Haydu was accepted into the WASP in February of 1944 and upon graduation was assigned to Pecos Army Air Field in Pecos, Texas where she flew the AT-17 and UC-78 and WASP were designated as engineering test and utility pilots.

In 1975, Bee was elected WASP (alumni) president and led the charge for legislative veteran's status. In July 2009, Bee was one of three WASP present at the White House when President Obama signed legislation to award the Women Airforce Service Pilots, WWII the

Congressional Gold Medal. A medal will be on display at the American Airpower Museum on Memorial Day weekend.

She will be at the museum as the Bethpage Federal Credit Union Air Show takes off from Republic Airport where Long Islanders are offered the chance to inspect an historic lineup of aircraft that include vintage World War II bombers and patrol aircraft, Vietnam era helicopters, aerobatic biplanes, A-10 attack planes built on Long Island, a Navy Northrop Grumman Prowler, F-18 Hornets, among others, as the museum supports the air show blasting off for Jones Beach.

The American Airpower Museum will host these aircraft between Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> through Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup> between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. A gate donation will be requested of \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and veterans and \$5 for children.