

Rosies *from A1*

on trades that had previously been dominated by men.

It's estimated around 5 to 6 million women entered the workforce between 1940 and 1945.

The Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to Rosies collectively with the enactment of the Rosie the Riveter Congressional Gold Medal Act in December. The act seeks to honor the women who answered the nation's call to action during WWII, recognizing them as critical to the war effort.

The Congressional Gold Medal is one of the highest civilian awards, along with the Presidential Medal of

Freedom.

Graham, 95, echoed a sentiment heard commonly among Rosies.

"We were just doing what we needed to do," she said in reference to her contribution to the war effort.

Born in Washington, D.C., Graham grew up in Virginia.

When a representative of the Treasury Department came to her high school and offered her the opportunity to be a typist for war bonds, she jumped at the opportunity.

At 16 years old, the day after her high school graduation in 1942, Graham went to D.C. to work at the Treasury building, which overlooked the White House.

She later upgraded her



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Rosies were collectively awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their contribution to the war effort during World War II.

position and went to work for the Weather Bureau.

At one point, the work afforded Graham an invitation to the Birthday Celebration Gala for President Franklin Roosevelt. Though the president was not in attendance, Graham remembered being greeted at the door by a tall, elegant woman.

"She took our hands and said, 'Thank you for coming to the president's birthday ball,'" recalled Graham. "It wasn't until later that I realized that was Eleanor Roosevelt."

While working at the Weather Bureau, Graham met her future husband Ed, an engineer working for the Navy Department. He had a large number of patents, including for the bow doors of the LST (landing ship, tank), a vessel made famous with the invasion of Normandy.

"I think Ed and I helped save lives during the war, with his inventions and my work typing war bonds,"

said Graham.

The Rosie the Riveter Congressional Gold Medal Act enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress to bring recognition to women like Graham.

Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA), Co-Chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, introduced the bill with Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Jared Huffman (D-CA), and Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), and it passed in the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 13, 2019. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) led the companion bill along with U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), which passed in the U.S. Senate on November 12, 2020.

"Today is a banner day for our brave Rosies, who not only answered the call to duty during WWII, but who have fought fiercely and tirelessly for the recognition they so richly deserve," said Rep. Speier in December when the act was signed into law. "Their 'We Can Do It' spirit that inspired a nation grappling with the hardships of war to rise to the challenge, supercharge the war effort, and achieve victory has also inspired Congress and the White House to finally recognize their monumental contribution to the allied war effort."

Graham is one of the few remaining Rosies left in the community who are members of the local ARRA chapter.

She looks forward to a day when pandemic restrictions are eased and the Rosies can gather again.

"I wish we could be back in Washington to parade in front of the White House," said Graham. "This a great group and we're getting fewer and fewer as we get older."

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FRIDAY

46° | 37°

Rain

SATURDAY

45° | 36°

Rain

SUNDAY

46° | 37°

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