

Greater Huntsville Section Celebrates Rosie the Riveter Day During Women's History Month

*By Ken Philippart
Images courtesy of Lisa Philippart.*

The Greater Huntsville Section participated in a ceremony to honor women's contributions to winning World War II on Rosie the Riveter Day in Birmingham, Alabama on March 21. The invitation was extended on behalf of the American Rosie the Riveter Association (ARRA), a national non-profit organization of "Rosies" and descendants, totaling 6,000 members across all 50 states.

The event included a ribbon cutting for a Rosie the Riveter Rose Garden containing three newly-created rose bushes, *Rosa Floribunda Rosie the Riveter*. The Memorial Rose Garden project is a national campaign to plant a Rosie the Riveter Memorial Rose Garden in each Congressional district in the US by August, 2020, the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. The event was held at Brookdale University Park retirement community, the residence of Dr. Fran Carter, founder of the American Rosie the Riveter Association.



*Rosies Mary Louise Hodges, Mabel Myrick, Jackie Ramsbacher and Dr. Fran Carter cut the ribbon while Leanne Messer holds a picture of the namesake rose bush, *Rosa Floribunda Rosie the Riveter*.*

Greater Huntsville Section members Ken and Lisa Philippart represented AIAA and were warmly welcomed to the event.



Dr. Fran Carter with Lisa Philippart

The program began with the Pledge of Allegiance and greetings from Mr. J. J. Bischoff, Chief of Staff for the mayor of Homewood, Alabama followed by recognition of all veteran who were pinned with red, white and blue ribbons.

The four Rosies in attendance were then introduced. Mabel Myrick from Kimberly, AL worked in the War Department, has been an ARRA officer for more than 12 years and is currently the national Corresponding Secretary. Jackie Ramsbacher from Vestavia, AL worked in a factory in Mississippi sewing clothing for the military and trained as a B-29 electrician although the war ended before she could use her training. She is a member of the ARRA

Birmingham Chapter. Mary Louise Hodges, also a resident of Brookdale, answered telephones for the Red Cross during the war and is a member of the Birmingham Chapter of American Rosie the Riveter Association. And Dr. Fran Carter who was a riveter working on B-29 bombers and subsequently founded the ARRA.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Lily of the Cahaba Chapter presented each woman with a rose.

The DAR also announced the presentation of six rose bushes to Aldridge Gardens for their new Rosie Garden and announced the placing of ARRA's book of stories, *103 Rosie the Riveter Stories*, in the DAR Library in Washington, DC.

Due to inclement weather, the ribbon ceremony was held indoors rather than out in the garden. But that didn't dampen the enthusiasm as the Rosies enthusiastically cut the ribbon to dedicate "their" rose bushes.

The program concluded with a beautiful rendition of God Bless America by Ms. Gloria Parvin followed by refreshments and socializing. The Greater Huntsville Section was honored to hear each Rosie humbly relay her personal experiences from the war. The event was an especially fitting way to recognize their unsung but vital contributions to the war effort during Women's History Month.



Ken Philippart with Mary Louise Hodges