



## **Navy Aviation Quilt Challenge**

The **Naval Aviation Museum Foundation** at the **National Naval Aviation Museum** in Pensacola, Florida is sponsoring a nation-wide quilt challenge to honor and commemorate the Centennial of Naval Aviation in 2010. Special events are being planned nationwide to commemorate this milestone, including air shows, Fleet Weeks, Navy Weeks, and other displays honoring naval flight.

Quilts have an important place in American history. They have been made to comfort or honor individuals, celebrate special events, provide warmth, or be used as art. Contemporary quilt makers meet in small and large groups to share techniques and enthusiasm about their chosen art form, and to create quilts for local and national charities. Large quilt shows and exhibitions exist across the United States, allowing quilt makers access to vendors and supplies, as well as the opportunity to display their work. Those interested in competing have many opportunities, and some contests offer large cash prizes and significant prestige. One form of competition is the quilt challenge. Quilt makers are given certain criteria or requirements, such as using a special fabric or creating a quilt within a chosen theme.

Kelly Gallagher-Abbott, a quilt maker and past curator for the Hoffman Challenge, the first and currently largest international quilt challenge, will curate the navy quilt challenge. Quilters will be invited to make a 40" square quilt to commemorate 100 years of Naval Aviation. Submissions will be due on October 1st, 2010, and will undergo a jury and judging process. Selected and award winning quilts will be unveiled at the Blue Angel Homecoming Event and Air Show in Pensacola, FL, November 11th and 12th, 2010. In January, 2011, the quilt displays will begin traveling to nearly 100 events, including air shows, museum exhibitions, Fleet Weeks, military and aircraft conventions and quilt shows.

This may seem to be a strange collaboration, but it actually offers a unique and positive opportunity for both the aviators and quilt makers. The Navy will have the chance to educate and dialogue with a dimension of the public with whom they don't normally have much communication, and quilt makers have an opportunity to share their art form with individuals who are not aware of the contemporary art quilt movement. The quilt makers also have the opportunity to honor Naval Aviators, Marines, and the Coast Guard, and to recognize acts of heroism and the sacrifices made by our nation's heroes.

Quilt makers can choose to donate their entries. At the end of 2011, selected quilts will be auctioned with proceeds supporting a special education project of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation: The National Flight Academy. The National Flight Academy is poised to become the premiere aviation-inspired learning adventure for our Nation's youth, delivering a world-class experience that ignites students' passion for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The curriculum will be based on these STEM principles designed to help prepare 7th-12th graders to compete in the challenging technological future. Attendees will spend 5 ½ days in an immersive, aviation-based learning environment reaching beyond the traditional academic experience. Scholarships will be available for qualifying students.

Quilts made in the 21st century are very different from your grandmother's quilts. They can include unique and realistic imagery and complex graphic design. Several prominent quilt makers have pledged quilts for this quilt challenge. Quilt entries are anticipated to reflect a rich variety of skills and workmanship, and many will be inspired by personal stories related to naval aviation. Quilters of all ages are formulating design ideas, beginning to compile palettes of colorful fabrics, and are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to create quilts honoring this very special centennial celebration.

For more information, please contact the curator, Kelly Gallagher-Abbott at (970)224-9975, or visit [www.navyquilts.com](http://www.navyquilts.com).

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This art quilt was designed and crafted as a tribute to the men and women of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corp, and Coast Guard aviation. They serve their country's aircraft with dedicated service to ensure the safety of all citizens of the United States of America. We also salute the National Museum of Naval Aviation for preserving this aviation history for future generations.



The quilt was made by members of the Pensacola Quilters Guild and took over 4,000 hours to complete.