# UCF's Veterans Legacy Program









### Alene Bertha Duerk

1920 - 2018

Rear Admiral (RADM): US Navy

World War II, Korea, Vietnam

<sup>\*</sup>Please note that news articles published online often exist behind paywalls and require a subscription to access digitally. We have provided links, but have not reproduced them here. Similarly, many families have created remembrance pages. Again, we have provided links, when applicable, but have not reproduced any images without express written permission from the family.

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Alene's Father in the 1900 United States Federal Census

"1900 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert Duerk, Defiance, Ohio.

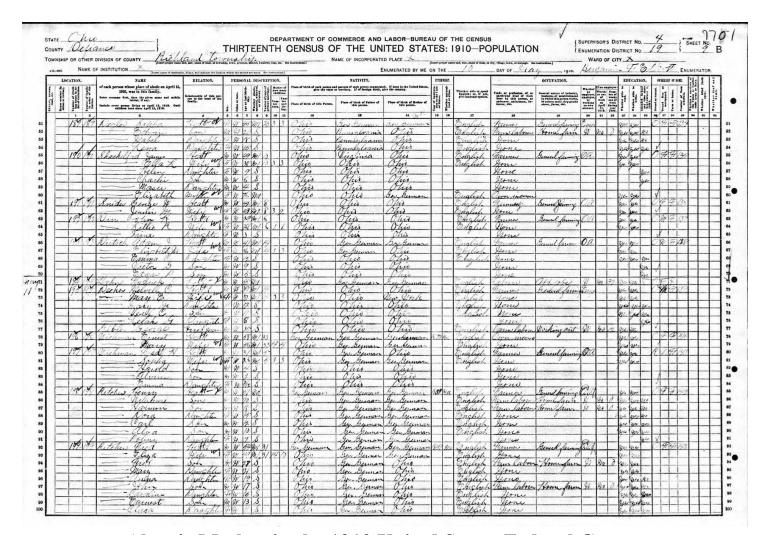
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Alene's Mother in the 1900 United States Federal Census

"1900 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Emma Dietsch, Richland, Defiance, Ohio.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/39755056:7602



Alene's Mother in the 1910 United States Federal Census

"1910 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Emma C Dietsch, Richland, Defiance, Ohio.

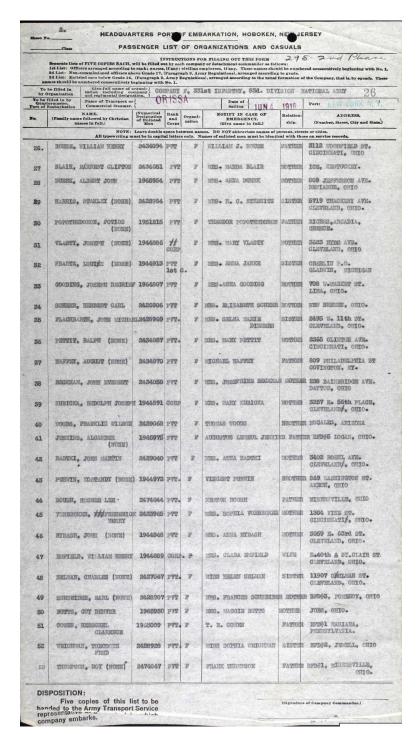
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adres 809 Jefferson ave Define Ohis	1 Tail medium or shore (specify which)? Slender, medium, or stout (which)? Slender
3 Date of birth October 31- 1895	2 Color of eyes? They Color of hair? Brown Bald? 200
Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)?	Has person lost afm, leg. hard, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)?
5 Where were of the Ohio Wald a you born? (Comp) (State) (Nation)	I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have
6 If not a citizen of what country are you a citizen or subject?	knowledge are true, except as follows:
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**World War I Draft Registration Card for Alene's Father** 

"U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert John Herman Duerk, Defiance, Ohio.

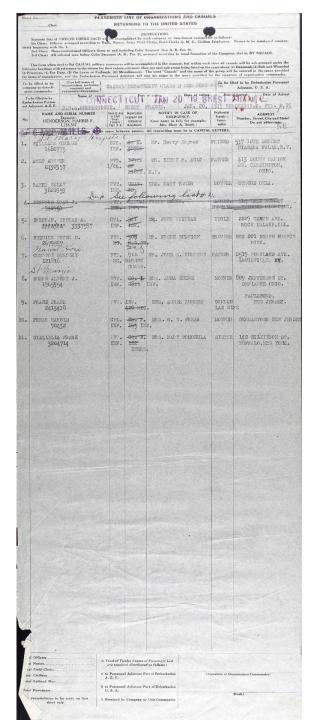
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The S.S. Orissa Embarked on June 4, 1918 from New York

"US, Army WWI Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1918-1919," database, *Fold3* (fold3.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert John Duerk, S.S. Orissa.

https://www.fold3.com/image/604152913



The U.S.S. Connecticut Embarked on January 20, 1919 from Brest. France

"US, Army WWI Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1918-1919," database, *Fold3* (fold3.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert J Duerk, U.S.S. Connecticut.

https://www.fold3.com/image/604240765

OHIO SOLDIERS, SAIN	LORS AND MARINES, WORLD WAR, 1917-18 4483	
DUENKI, KARL W., 2427900, White, 924 Buffalo St., Toledo, O.	NA Toledo, O. Apr 2/18. Br Toledo, O. 23 1/12 yrs. 158 Dep Brig to Apr 21/18; Co F 332 Inf to disch. Pvt 1cl Sept 25/18. Vittorio-Veneto; Defensive Sector. AEF June 8/18 to Apr 15/19. Hon disch May 3/19.	
DUENSING, ALBERT G., 2144677, White, Paulding, O.	NA LB 1 Joliet, Ill. Apr 1/18. Br Chicago, Ill. 22 6/12 yrs. 21 TC to disch. Pvt 1cl Dec 1/18. AEF June 7/18 to June 9/19. Hon disch June 19/19.	
DUER, JOHN, 1969857, White, 509 Water St., Troy, O.	ERC Cincinnati, O. June 4/17. Br Troy, O. 19 yrs. MT Co 790 to disch. Sgt June 4/17. Hon disch May 29/19.	
2433538, White, 818 Xenia Ave.,	NA Dayton, O. Apr 26/18. Br Dayton, O. 23 3/12 yrs. Co A 322 MG Bn to July 29/18; Co A 2 MG Bn to disch. Pvt. St Mihiel; Meuse-Argonne; Defensive Sector. AEF June 14/18 to Sept 3/19. Hon disch Sept 25/19.	
DUER, ROY J., 710039, White, 1475 Hopkins Ave., Lakewood, O.	RA Columbus Bks, O. Apr 22/17. Br Fletcher, O. 20 8/12 yrs. Hq 635 Aer Sq to Aug 21/18; 816 Dep Aer Sq to disch. Pvt —; Sgt Oct 1/17; Sgt 1cl Jan 1/18. Hon disch Jan 28/19.	
DUERK, ALBERT J., 1965954, White, 809 Jefferson Ave., Defiance, O.	NA Defiance, O. Mch 28/18. Br Defiance, O. 22 5/12 yrs. 34 Co 9 Tng Bn 158 Dep Brig to Apr 21/18; Co F 331 Inf to July 4/18; Co I 332 Inf to July 6/18; Co C 331 to Aug 13/18; Co I 28 Inf to disch. Pvt. St Mihiel; Meuse-Argonne; Defensive Sector. WIA slightly about Oct 5/18. AEF June 4/18 to Feb 2/18. Hon disch Apr 15/19. Cited in GO 1 Div dated Jan 1/20.	
DUERK, FREDERICK C., 2425007, White, 809 Jefferson St., Defiance, O.	NA Defiance Co, O. Apr 25/18. Br Defiance. O. 24 5/12 yrs. Co B 308 Engrs to disch. Pvt. Aisne-Marne; Oise-Aisne; Meuse-Argonne; Defensive Sector. AEF June 3/18 to May 24/19. Hon disch June 19/19.	
DUERR, CECILE E., Nurse, White, 418 Walnut St., Hamilton, O.	Br Hamilton, O. Nov 29/93. Nurse ANC Apr 4/18 fr CL. US Army Hosp Cp Dix NJ to June 18/18; Nurse Mob Sta Holley Hotel NY to July 14/17; BH 25 to Sept 10/18; Mob Hosp 2 to Oct 31/18; BH 25 to Mch —/19; Nurses Demob Sta Hotel Albert NY to disch. Cp Dix NJ; AEF; New York NY. AEF July 14/18 to Mch 15/19. Hon disch Apr 17/19.	
DUERR, EARL E., 1988778, White, 910 Berry St., Toledo, O.	NA Toledo, O. Sept 22/17. Br Toledo, O. 24 yrs. Sup Co 329 Inf to Sept 26/18; Div Sup Co APO 762 A Embarkation Center to May 19/19; Co F 324 Inf to disch. Pvt 1cl Oct 9/17. AEF June 12/18 to June 18/19. Hon disch June 27/19.	
DUERR, ERNEST J., 2477034, White, 351 Bedford Ave. NW., Canton, O.	NA Canton, O. Apr 30/18. Br Canton, O. 24 1/12 yrs. Hq Det 308 Engrs to May 7/19; Hq Tn 3 Corps AEF to July 9/19; Disbursing QMC 3 Corps to disch. Sgt June 14/19. Aisne-Marne; Oise-Aisne; Meuse-Argonne. AEF June 16/18 to Aug 4/19. Hon disch Aug 9/19.	

# Alene's Father's World War I Service

"Ohio, Rosters of Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in World War I, 1917-1918," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert J Duerk.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/48767:7895

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and ) M	6. 4076 MARRIAGE LIGENSE. APPLICATION.	
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The undersigned respectfully makes and the	or I That said & Said County:	1
and unon nath states	in 22	1
the said (Clared L. h) area to	is 22 years of age on the 6 day of July 1914	1
is 1 4 years of age on the 31 day of ( The soul	her residence is Meason t Two Henry County. Ohio	1
his residence is Alleganes, Ohio	her place of birth is Alefrance, Co, Chio	1
his place of birth is Aletane Ohio		1
his occupation is Sainter		
his father's name is Christ Neverte	that she was set previously married	1
his mother's maiden name was Classes 20 .00.	and is a widow or divorced woman, her married	
that he was con previously married	name heine	
and that he has no wife living.	that she has no husband living.	1
That neither of said parties is an habitual drunkard,	epileptic, imbecile or insane, and is not under the influence of any	1
intoxicating liquor or narcotic drug.  Said parties are not nearer of kin than exceed according		
Said parties are not nearer of kin than second cousins, an	nd there is no legal impediment to their marriage.	1
Sworn to before me and signed in my presence, this	is to solemnize the marriage of sald and	
21	albert & Kurk	
1) day of fire 1914	mma St. Dietoch	
Common Pleas Judge   Gonse	ent of	
	arents	
ENTRY.	Horas Court City 1	
Marriage License was this day granted to aller	t 1 1 Henry County, Ohio June 20 191 9	1 1
Luna A Dretsch	I In P. Tand	1 1
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE. No. 407	Common Pleas Judge	
I do Hereby Certify, That on the 25 day		
6	ta Area mint	1 1
Filed and Recorded 1919	i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i i	1 1
$ \downarrow D_1 A$	Creater Common Pleas Judge	
	Deputy Clerk	$\Gamma$
△ In the Matter of		+
Chaman leff	Common Pleas Court, Henry County, Ohio PROBATE DIVISION	1 1
6 1/1/11/10	MARRIAGE LIGENSE. APPLICATION.	1
- Toursel Atraha To	the Unesantis Indian de La m	1 1
and under signed respectfully makes application for a Mar-	That said Former 18	
riage License for said parties, and upon oath states:	is 2 3 years of age on the 2 6 day of august 1919	
That said & hannery Jeffery		
is 2 1 years of age on the 1 day of January 1912	her place of birth is Sellowofie	
his residence is Frank Papide Ohio	her occupation is	
his place of birth is Lucas Co, ohis.	her father's name is I rank I rake	
his occupation is Minuster	her mother's maiden name was North /	in t
	that she was tel previously married	图 3
his father's name is Clarence deffers	previously married	
his father's name is Clarence Jeffers his mother's maiden name was 11 a cy H wells	and is a widow or divorced woman	
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**Marriage Record for Alene's Parents** 

"Ohio, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1774-1993," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert J Duerk, Henry, Ohio.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/2850602:61378

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PLACE OF ABODE.	NAME	RELATION.	TORRE.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION,	CITIZENSHIP.	EDUCATION.			NATIVITY AND MO		1		11		CUPATION.	
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Alene's Parents in the 1920 United States Federal Census

"1920 United States Federal Census," database, Ancestry (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Emma K Dietsch, Defiance, Ohio.

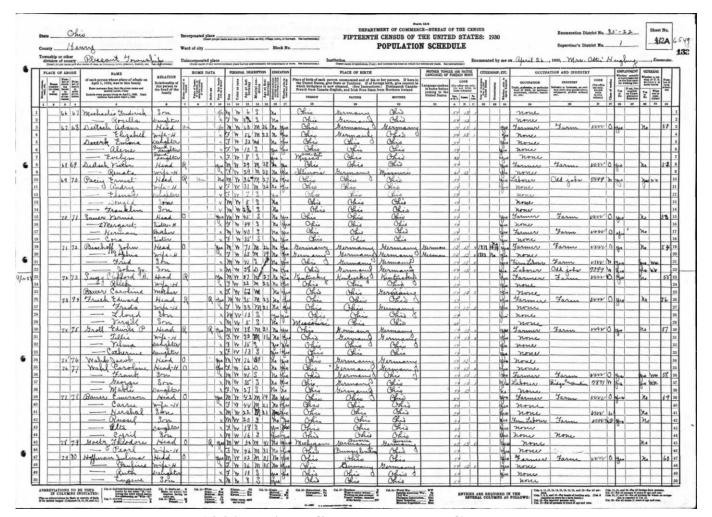
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Name	DUERK, A	LBERT			. Lance	o, Ohio
Address	Defiance,	Ohlo	**************	************************		************
Date of Death	Oct. 27.	1924	Place	Defia	ince,	Ohio
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ate Enlisted.Marc		Date Dischar	ged.Aprl	5,1919Seri	al No	1965954
Branch of Service	Army		Rank	Priva	ta	

# **Soldier Grave Registration for Alene's Father**

"Ohio, U.S., Soldier Grave Registrations, 1804-1958," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Albert Duerk, Defiance, Ohio.

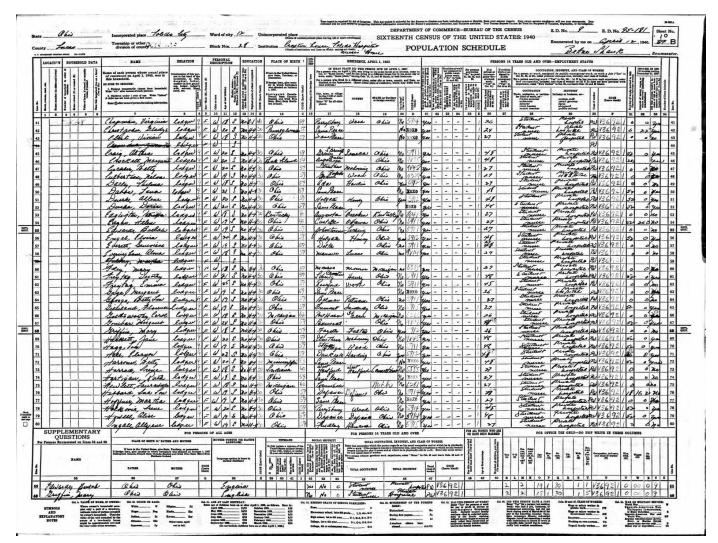
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/160477:61438



1930 United States Federal Census

"1930 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Duerk, Pleasant, Henry, Ohio.

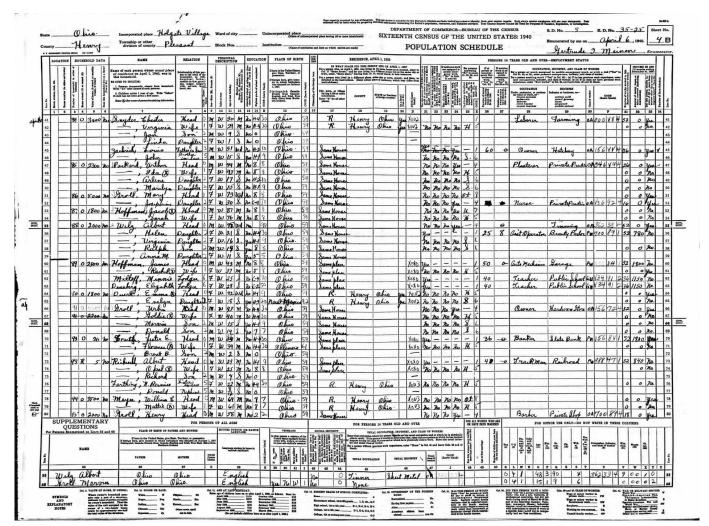
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/71713232:6224



**1940 United States Federal Census** 

"1940 United States Federal Census," database, Ancestry (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Duerk, Toledo, Ohio.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/35961799:2442



Alene's Mother and Sister in the 1940 United States Federal Census

"1940 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Emma Duerk, Holgate, Henry, Ohio.

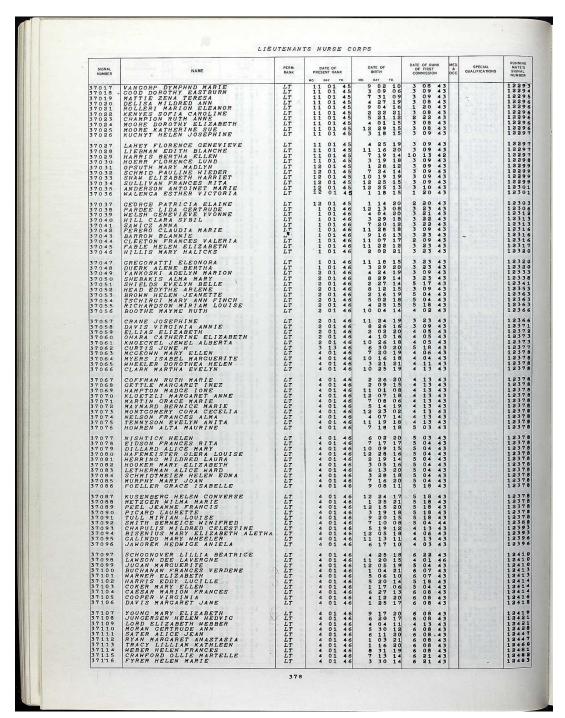
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HARTSTACK, Harold Emil	78233	Lt.Cmdr.				
FRANTZ, Donald Howard	324973	Lt.(jg)				
GRAHAM, Kendall Paul	412197	Ensign				
REID, Robert George	436613	lay Cles	rk		-	
LYNCH, John Francis	334943	Lieut.				
WALDROP, Robert Spurlin	353372	Lieut.				
RICHARDS, Erma	64734	Lieut.				
TRESCA, Virginia Peacon	95173	Lieut.				
REYNOLDS, Ruth	146399	Lieut.				
HARRIS, Myrtle Thorpe	127198	Lieut.				
GLINES, Pauline	127346	Lieut.				
LITTLE, Esther Mary	176168	Lieut.				
TORISKY, Martha Francis	177552	Lieut.				
	232137	Lieut.				
POWERS, Ruth Mary ROMANO, Frances Joanne	264515	Lt.(jg)			-	
	220575	Lt.(jg)				
BIVENS, Mary Alice	256907	Lt.(jg)				
COPPEDGE, Ruth Mary		Lt.(jg)				
DUERK, Alene Bertha	255627	Lt.(jg)			71	
PERUSH, Nellie	264455	Lt.(jg)				******************
ASPLEN, Mary Amy	277294	Lt.(jg)				
MILLER, Mary Arabella	277340	Lt.(jg)				
RISKEDAHL, Hilda Marcella	277451	Lt. (jg)				
MURRAY, Martha Elizabeth	277707					
McMAHON, Rita Mary	227501	Lt.(jg)				•
CROUCH, Madge Louise	266064	Lt.(jg)				
WILDS, Alice Rose	227522	Lt.(jg)				
SANDER, Dorothy Margaret	304500	Lt.(jg)				
ADELSHERGER, Emily Virginia	311842	Lt.(jg)				
PRICE, Mary Eleanor	319914	Lt.(jg)				
KING, Emily Elizabeth	346356	Lt.(jg)				
BULER, Ethel Marion	203585	Ensign				
UPCHURCH, Ouida Catherine	372530	Ensign				

U.S.S. Benevolence Embarked on November 27, 1945 from Yokosuka, Japan

"U.S., World War II Navy Muster Rolls, 1938-1949," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk, U.S.S. Benevolence.

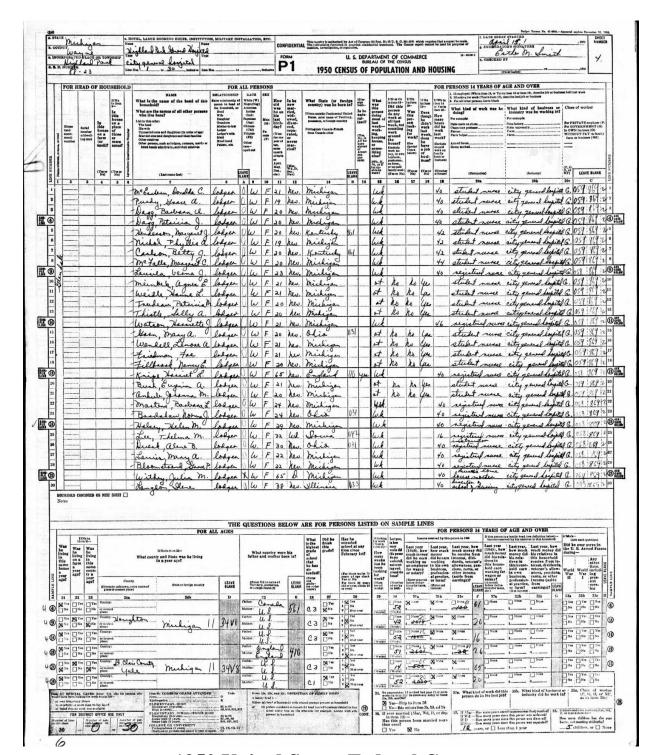
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/27915118:1143



Alene Duerk Serves as a Lieutenant in the Navy Nurse Corps

"U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk, January 1, 1946.

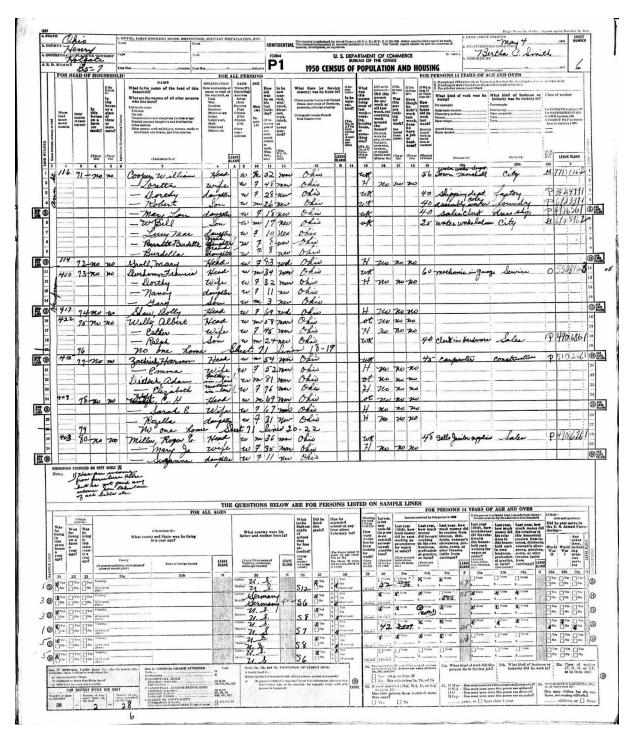
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/853472:2345



1950 United States Federal Census

"1950 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene B Duerk, Highland Park, Wayne, Michigan.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/177080857:62308



Alene's Mother in the 1950 United States Federal Census

"1950 United States Federal Census," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Emma Zachrich, Holgate, Henry, Ohio.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/205428432:62308

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# Alene Duerk Serves as a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy Nurse Corps

"U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk, September 1, 1957.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/108233:2345

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012014 012014 012014	00 10 30	SIMON LENORE WALMSLEY RITA HILDA VANGORP DYMPHNA PETRONILLA A M	15 15 15	43 43 43	2900 2900 2900	06 01 6 06 01 6	2 0	1 03 16 19 11 14 19 02 10		4 NA 4 NS 2 NE	11	23 42
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012014	50 60 70	HARRIS BERTHA ELLEN SCHMID PAULINE WIEDER	15	45	2900 2900 2900	06 01 6	2 0	7 19 14		4 NA 4 NA 4 MS	01	13 42 23 43
012014 012014 012015	90	DUERK ALENE BERTHA DAVIS VIRGINIA ANNIE COFFMAN RUTH MARIE KLOETZLI MARGARET ANNA	51 15 15	49 44 43 43	2900	06 01 6: 06 01 6: 06 01 6:	2 0	3 29 20 8 26 16 2 26 20		4 NE 4 PD	01 02 04	23 43 06 43 13 43 02 43
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012072 012079	15	MITZKA TESKA DYBETLO GALLAGHER ELEANORE MARIE	42 15	43	2905 2900	08 01 62 09 01 62	2 0	2 14 13 4 30 16 5 30 13		2 24 4 PD	09	11 42 03 42
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# Alene Duerk Serves as a Commander in the Navy Nurse Corps

"U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk, June 1, 1962.

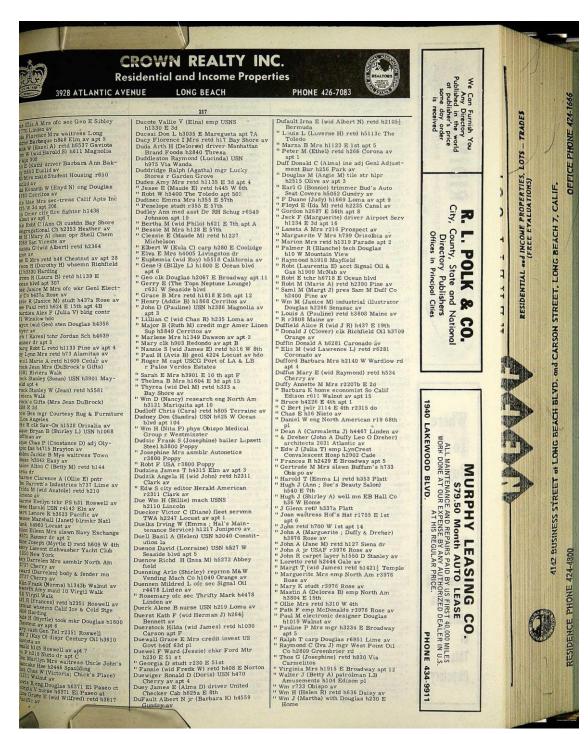
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1100663:2345



#### 1964 City Directory for Long Beach, California

"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene B Duerk, Long Beach, California.

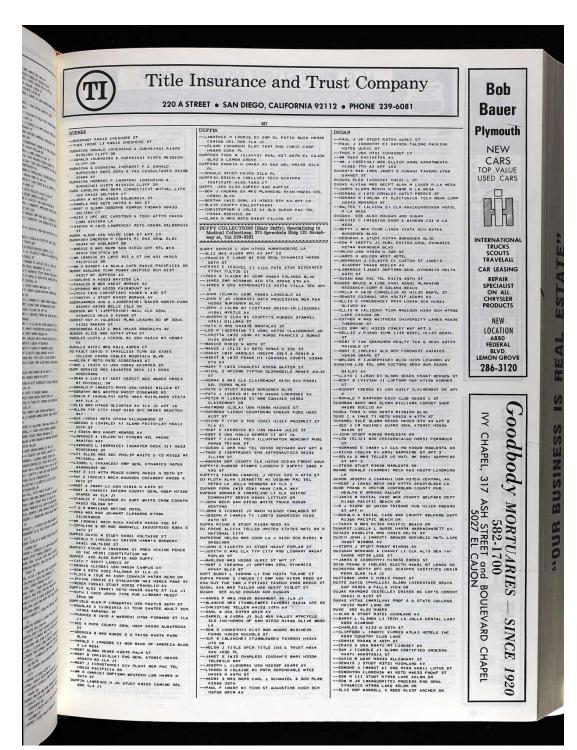
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1409709703:2469



1965 City Directory for Long Beach, California

"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene B Duerk, Long Beach, California.

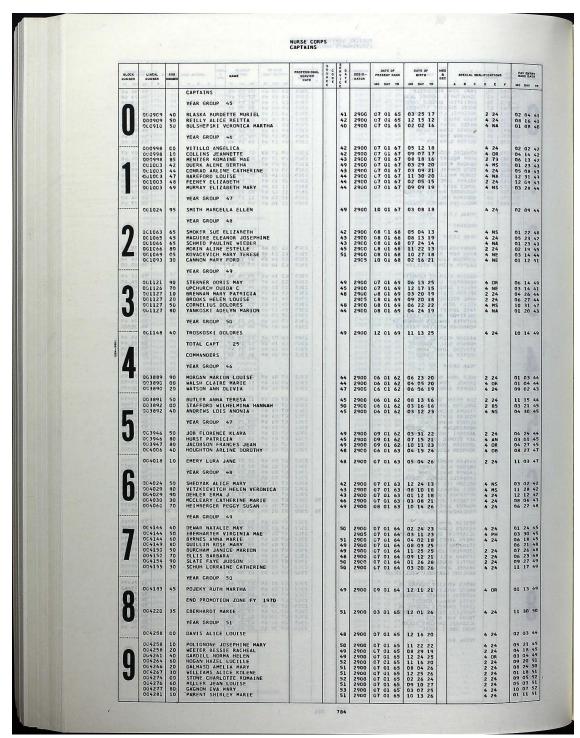
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1447688498:2469



#### 1966 City Directory for San Diego, California

"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Duerk, San Diego, California.

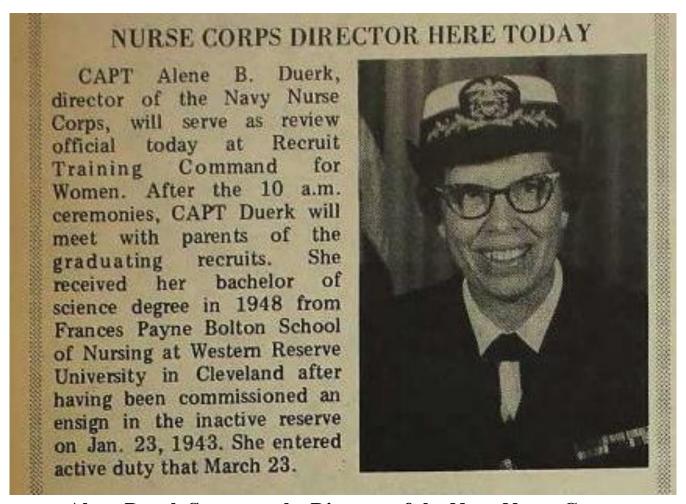
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1421406237:2469



Alene Duerk Serves as a Captain in the Navy Nurse Corps

"U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk, July 1, 1967.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1255383:2345



Alene Duerk Serves as the Director of the Navy Nurse Corps

"US, Navy Support Books, 1901-2010," database, *Fold3* (fold3.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene B Duerk, US Naval Training Center: Bainbridge, Maryland.

https://www.fold3.com/image/582427337

DUERK, Alene Bertha Age 52 named first woman admiral in navy (WX) 27/4/72 83.3 34 Rcvs new of her nomination by to be first lady admiral (Holgate, 0) 28/4/72 83.3 34

#### **Alene Duerk Named First Woman Admiral in the Navy**

"Associated Press, Name Card Index to AP Stories, 1905-1990," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/169137:50018

#### **Alene Duerk Becomes the First Woman Admiral**

"Navy Names First Woman As Admiral," Cumberland News, April 28, 1972, 2.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/18362448/

#### Article Transcription:

"Breaking with two centuries of tradition, the Navy named its first woman admiral Thursday; Alene Bertha Duerk a Defiance, Ohio, native who joined the service 29 years ago.

Miss Duerk, the 52-year-old director of the Navy Nurse Corps, was nominated along with 49 male captains for promotion to rear admiral. The nominations were approved by President Nixon and are subject to Senate confirmation.

Her selection leaves only one male bastion remaining in the armed forces—the Marine Corps, which has yet to promote a woman to star rank.

Since taking office, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird has been pressuring the services to promote women to star and flag rank. Within the past two years, the Air Force has named two women generals and the Army four.

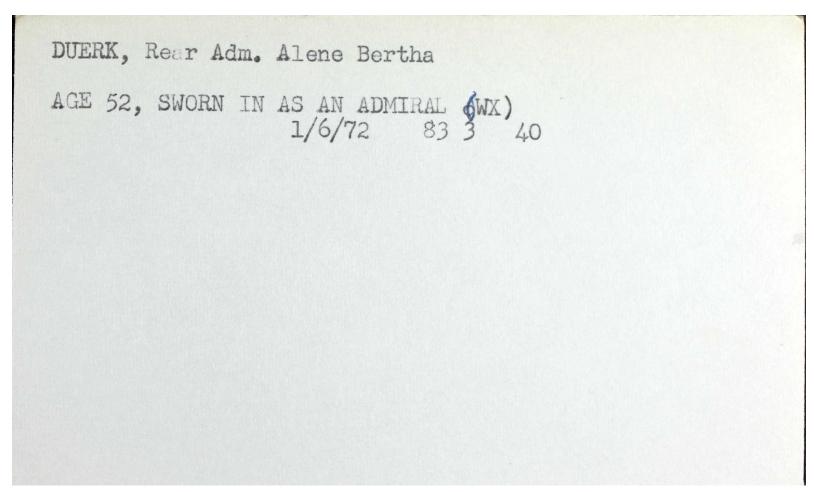
Capt. Duerk, who received her medical training from the Toledo, Ohio, Hospital School of Nursing, joined the Navy Nurse Corps as an ensign in January 1943.

At the time her promotion was announced, she was on leave and en route to her mother's home in Holgate, Ohio.

Reached by telephone, her mother said she never thought her daughter would ever become an admiral, but added, "We're very happy for her."

During World War II Capt. Duerk served in naval hospitals in Portsmouth, Va., and Bethesda, Md. In the closing days of the war she was assigned to the hospital ship Benevolence in the Pacific where she cared for the sick and wounded from the final assaults against Japan.

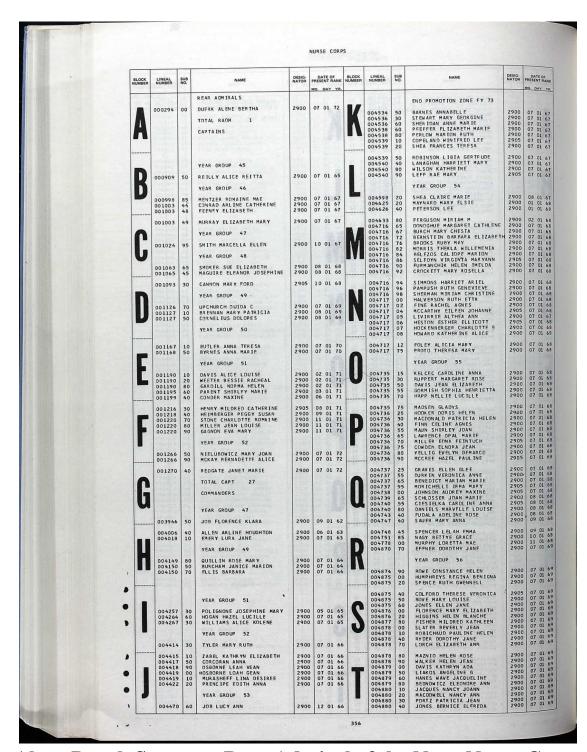
After the war, she was released from the service but remained in the Naval Reserve only to be called to active duty in June, 1951. She served in various nursing and hospital administrative posts in the 1960s and was named director of the Nurse Corps in May 1970."



# Alene Duerk Sworn in as Admiral

"Associated Press, Name Card Index to AP Stories, 1905-1990," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Rear Admiral Alene Bertha Duerk.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/169160:50018



Alene Duerk Serves as Rear Admiral of the Navy Nurse Corps

"U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Bertha Duerk, July 1, 1972.

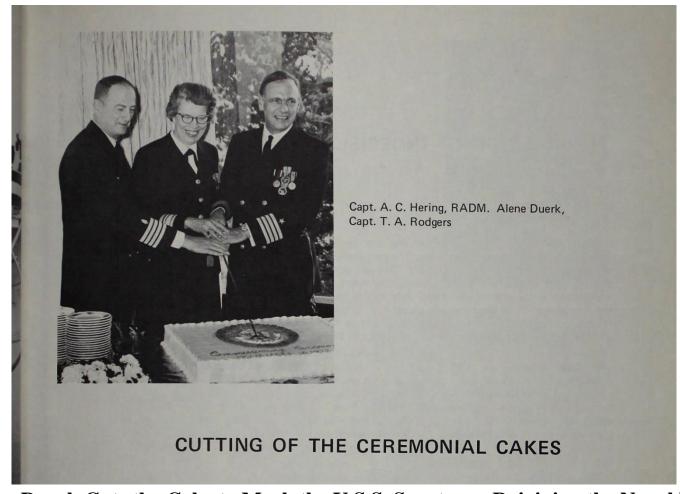
https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/3778789:2345

### **Alene Duerk Fights for Equality in Nursing**

Marlene Cimons, "Men Benefit, in Her Fight for Equality," Los Angeles Times, August 8, 1972, 43.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/386326843/

This article discusses Alene Duerk's attempts to allow male nurses in more medical specialties within military nursing as well as her success at ending the "automatic dismissal for women in the service who become pregnant." The article also goes into her childhood a little bit discussing her father's illness when she was very young contributing to her desire to become a nurse.



Alene Duerk Cuts the Cake to Mark the U.S.S. Sanctuary Rejoining the Naval Fleet

"US, Navy Cruise Books, 1918-2009," database, Fold3 (fold3.com: accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Duerk, U.S.S. Sanctuary.

https://www.fold3.com/image/302499690

# **Detail** Source

Name: Alene B Duerk

Award Date: 18 Jun 1975

Type of Medal: Legion of Merit

Military Unit: 04031

Military Regiment: SECNAV

Military Service Branch: Navy

Action: Meritorious

Office: Officer

Awarded By: SECNAV

#### **Alene Duerk Awarded the Legion of Merit**

"U.S., Navy and Marines Awards and Decorations, 1942-1994," database, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene B Duerk.

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/358813:61823

#### New Women's Military Memorial to Honor Women Veterans

Margaret M. Sloane, "Honoring women who served," Orlando Sentinel, November 10, 1994, 117.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/233628051/

This article details the construction of a new memorial at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. The new memorial, the "Women in Military Service for America Memorial Center, authorized by Congress in 1986, has been designed to create a powerful visual record of the service, sacrifices and achievements of U.S. military women."

Along with the article is a photograph of Rear Admiral Alene Duerk with fellow Veterans Commander Barbara Bole, Lieutenant Colonel Christine Berry, and Commander Joan McIntyre with a combined 105.5 years of active military duty.

#### **Alene Duerk Dies at 98**

Ryan Gillespie, "Rear Adm. Alene Duerk, 98, was a Navy first," Orlando Sentinel, July 26, 2018, A1.

https://www.newspapers.com/image/478408235/

The article is a short summary of Alene Duerk's life with emphasis on her retirement in Central FL. In 2006, the Admiral Alene Duerk Endowed Scholarship Fund was established at the University of Central Florida's College of Nursing. In 2013, Alene attended the unveiling of a bronze statue honoring her at UCF.

A photograph of Alene Duerk with the bronze statue appears in this article.

# Navy's first female admiral blazed trail for women

Rear Admiral Alene Duerk expanded multiple areas of Navy's Nurse Corps.

**Associated Press** 

ORLANDO, Fla. - Rear Admiral Alene Duerk, the Navy's first female admiral, who became a trailblazer as the Navy opened up more opportunities for women, has died. She was 98 years old.

Duerk died on July 21, according to a news release last week from the Naval History and Heritage Command. No cause of death was given. She had been living in a suburb of Orlando, Florida.

"Alene Duerk was a strong and dedicated trail blazer who embodled the very principles that continue to guide Navy Medicine today," said Vice Adm. Forrest Faison, Navy surgeon general, in a statement. "She will forever be remembered as a servant leader who provided the best care to those who defended our nation, honoring the uniform we wear and the privilege of leadership."

Duerk was born in Defiance, Ohio, in 1920. After graduating from nursing school at Toledo Hospital in 1941, she entered the U.S. Naval Reserve and was appointed an ensign in the Nurse Corps. During World War II, she worked on a hospital ship off the Marshall Islands in the Pacific and later treated Allied troops who had been prisoners of war.

"The time I was aboard the hospital ship and we took the prisoners of war, that was something I will never forget," Duerk told the Library of Congress' Veteran's History Project. "That was the most exciting experience of my whole career."

With the war ended, Duerk was released from active service in 1946 while she was stationed at Naval Hospital Great Lakes. She earned a bachelor's degree at Western



After graduating from nursing school in 1941, Duerk entered the U.S. Naval Reserve and was appointed an ensign in the Nurse Corps. During World War II, she worked on a hospital ship off the Marshall Islands in the Pacific.

Reserve University in Cleveland and and anesthesia. then returned to active duty in 1951 as a nursing instructor at Naval Hospital Corps School in Portsmouth, Va. Over the decades, she would serve in hospitals in Chicago, San Diego, Washington, and Yokosuka, Japan.

She was appointed director of the Navy Nurse Corps in 1970. In her role, she expanded the Navy's areas of nursing into pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, ambulatory care,

President Nixon approved her selection as the first female rear admiral in 1972. She retired three years later but remained an advocate for Navy nursing for decades more.

Duerk never married and had no children, but she was close to her nephews and niece, according to the Orlando Sentinel.

"She was a born leader," said her nephew, Stephen Granzow.

#### **Obituary for Alene Duerk**

"Navy's first female admiral blazed trail for women," Roanoke Times, August 1, 2018, 18.

# Duerk, Alene

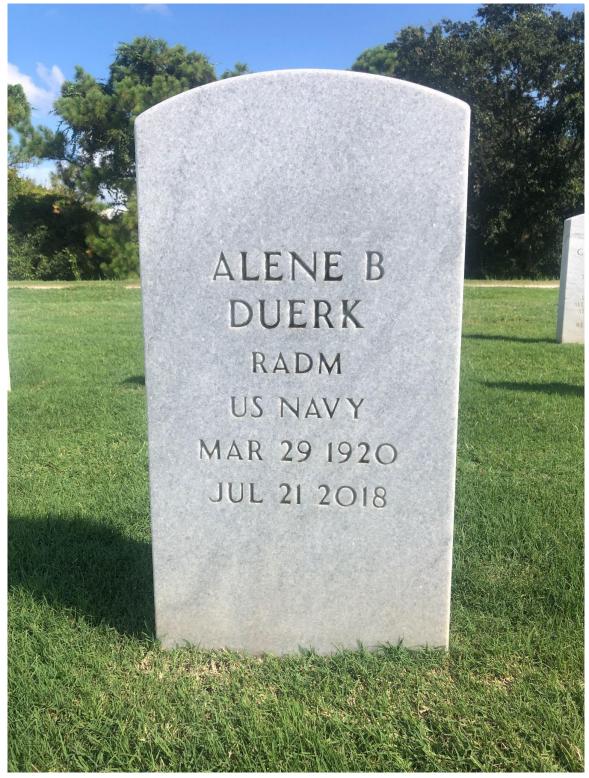
U.S. Veterans' Gravesites, ca.1775-2019

Info	Memorials	Comments	Browse	
T. II Alexandre	D l. Al.			
Full Name	Duerk, Alene			
Birth Date	29 Mar 1920			
Death Date	21 Jul 2018			
Cemetery	Cape Canave	ral National Ce	metery	
Cemetery Address	5525 Highway	y 1		
Cemetery City	Mims			
Cemetery State	Florida			
Cemetery Section	10			
Cemetery Plot	777			
Branch	US Navy US N	lavy		
Rank	ENS RADM			
Conflict	World War II,	Korea, Vietnan	า	
Served for	United States	of America		

### Alene Duerk Veterans' Gravesite

"U.S. Veterans' Gravesites, ca. 1775-2019," database, *Fold3* (fold3.com, accessed September 12, 2023), entry for Alene Duerk, Cape Canaveral National Cemetery, Florida.

https://www.fold3.com/record/725407296/duerk-alene-us-veterans-gravesites-ca1775-2019



Alene Duerk's Headstone in Cape Canaveral National Cemetery

UCF Veterans Legacy Program, *Headstone for Alene Duerk*, photograph, 2023, Cape Canaveral National Cemetery, Mims, FL.

\*The following are additional links with information on Alene Duerk.

Alene Duerk, "Alene B. Duerk Collection," interview by Tommy Larsen and Sean Passaro, *Library of Congress Veterans History Project*, November 14, 2004, personal narrative.

https://www.loc.gov/item/afc2001001.28852/

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