

Gold Star Families

St. Augustine National Cemetery

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration



UCF

**Department
of History**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA



Tour Stops

1- Mollie Daniels
Family [Flagstaff]

2- Luther Wade
Pilcher [Flagstaff]

3- John D.
Watkins
[Flagstaff]

4- Walter R.
Battenberg [D142]

5- William R.
Cooper [E5]

6- Randolph
Wright Ford [E31A]

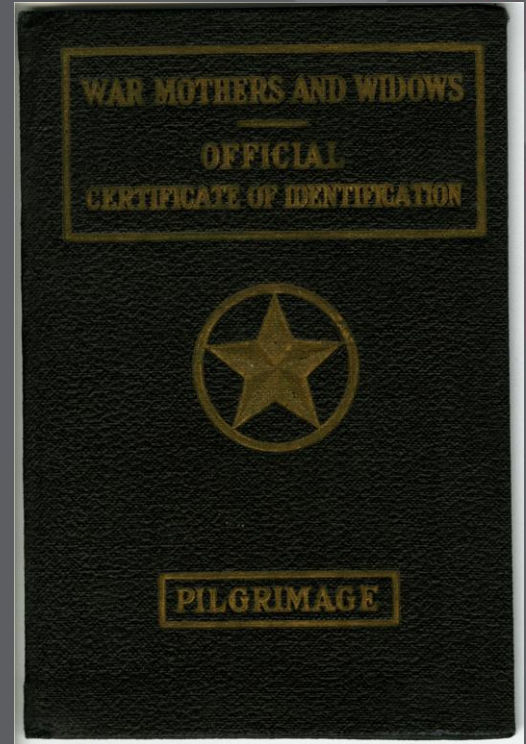
7- Tom Davis Jr.
[B567]

8- Christian
Williams
[Flagstaff]



The Gold Star Program

- Formed post-WWI
 - Response to thousands of American war dead interred overseas
- War Mothers and Widows Pilgrimages
 - Fully funded travel to visit gravesite
 - Majority were mothers
 - ~6,700 Mothers and widows traveled
 - Segregated pilgrimages
 - Issued Special Pilgrimage Passport
 - 1930-33



The Cover of Mollie's
Pilgrimage Passport

Stop 1,
Flagstaff

Pilgrimage Letter DBQ

Read this letter to Gold Star Mothers
and answer the following questions

- What details in this letter help you to know more about the Gold Star pilgrimages?
- What do we learn about the women who made the pilgrimages?
- What do we learn about what they packed?
- What do we learn about cultural sensitivity with the French?

Pilgrimage Letter with
Packing Information

AMERICAN WAR MOTHERS

Dear Gold Star Mother:

When you go on your Pilgrimage, please take with you only the few clothes you actually need, for you will not care to appear so much better dressed than the large majority of our Mothers who cannot afford an expensive outfit.

The United States is uniformly warmer in temperature than France and England, so it will be well to be provided with a heavy cloth coat and a dress of tweed or light weight wool. Not more than two additional dresses will be needed and these should not be of too thin material or light in color. Many French Mothers still wear mourning for their sons after all these years and they would not understand our women if their clothes were too gay in appearance. This does not mean that you should wear black altogether but dark clothes will not only stand travel better but will have a much more attractive appearance at all times.

Warm stockings and underclothes should be taken and each Mother will want sensible walking shoes, an umbrella and overshoes. A small felt hat will be all the head gear needed. Gloves, handkerchiefs, a few simple toilet articles and a small sewing kit for mending will complete the list of necessities.

The American War Mothers will aid you in every way possible.

Be of good courage; you are the Mother of a hero, going to pay homage at his cross, where you will find peace. You will return with a feeling of grateful loyalty to your country that will forever remain in your heart.

Loyally yours,
Ethel Stanton Nook

ESN:MG

Stop 1,
Flagstaff

Gold Star Mother Mollie Daniels

Bernard Daniels

US Army

Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery

- Mollie's son Bernard was born on September 18, 1890 in Erwin, TN
 - He enlisted in the Army in 1908
 - Served in WWI, died in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign in 1918
- Mollie notified of his death
 - Received a letter inviting her on a pilgrimage
 - Traveled to Meuse-Argonne Cemetery in France to visit his grave
 - Plot F, Row 21, Grave 40



Mollie Daniels at her son's graveside

Floridian WWI War Dead Interred Overseas

- 192 Floridians who died during their WWI service were interred overseas
- We do not know how many of their mothers or wives visited them on a Gold Star Pilgrimage
- Let's discuss two Florida Veterans whose mothers were eligible to travel
 - Luther Wade Pilcher
 - John D. Watkins
- While discussing these two Veterans, we will remain here at the flagstaff

Stop 2,
Flagstaff

Luther Wade Pilcher

1898- 1918

US Marine Corps

Aisne Marne American Cemetery, France

- Born January 1, 1898 in Dothan AL
 - Family moved to Florida in 1910
- Enlisted in the USMC on April 27, 1915
 - Deployed to Haiti and Cuba
- WWI Service
 - Deployed to France aboard the *USS Henderson*
 - Fought in the Allied Counter Offensive in the spring of 1918
 - Died on June 6, 1918 during assault on Belleau Wood
- Interred in Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in Belleau, France
 - Plot B , Row 10, Site 68



Luther Wade Pilcher, ca 1915

Stop 3,
Flagstaff

John D. Watkins

1889-1918

US Army

Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, France

- Born February 22, 1889 in Ocala, FL
 - Lived in Jim Crow South
- Inducted into Army in June 1918 out of Tampa, FL
 - Joined the segregated 807th Pioneer Infantry
- Fought in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, fall 1918
 - Rebuilt transportation infrastructure, leveled ground for weapons, & buried the dead
- 1918 Influenza pandemic
 - John fell ill after November 11, 1918 cease-fire
 - Died of pneumonia on December 8, 1918
- Interred in Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France
 - Plot H Row 6 Grave 23

Form 1000 FMGO. ORIGINAL. Class One. COLORED. Page 12. Date: _____

The selected men herein described, having been inducted into military service on _____ (Date) have this data been extracted for _____ sheets. (Camp or Station)

1	2	3	4	5	6					7
					Classification					
Order No.	Serial No.	Name	Call No.	Primary Industry	I	II	III	IV	V	Pulled to Report to Military Authorities
2158	2163	Joe Berry-DELINQUENT Plant City								
2159	2142	William Morrison-DELINQUENT Lute								
2161	2445	Anthony Meyers Fort Tampa City		Laborer						
2163	3069	William Jackson-DELINQUENT Plant City								
2169	1330	Frank Mack 117 Oak, Tampa		Laborer						
2176	2594	Frank Kirkland-DELINQUENT Thonotosassa								
2188	219	William Harden 907 Whiting St. Tampa		Farmer		X				X
2193	1368	Harold Sawyer <i>Sawyer</i> 1206 Spring, Tampa		<i>Lab</i> Carpenter						
2195	3052	Will Frazier-DELINQUENT Plant City								
2197	2201	Richard W. Stratton Plant City		Laborer						
2201	3074	Ed Brown-DELINQUENT 716 Chestnut, W. Tampa								
2202	1000	Carry Bush-DELINQUENT / S. Plant City		Laborer						
2232	2953	John Watkins <i>Watkins</i> Dunedin		<i>Lab</i> AutoDriver						X

Induction List with
John D. Watkins listed

African American Gold Star Mothers

If John D. Watkins' mother made a pilgrimage, she would have had a segregated pilgrimage unequal to the experience of white mothers and widows.

- Segregated voyages
 - Luxury ocean liners for whites
 - Commercial steamers for African Americans
- While in Europe
 - African American officers escorted African American mothers throughout the pilgrimage
 - Not lodged in the same luxury hotels as whites
 - Stereotypical food served
- 23 African American mothers refused to go due to the implementation of Jim Crow during the trips
 - Some scrutinized by others for “caving in” to the segregated standards

Stop 3,
Flagstaff

African American Gold Star Mothers DBQ

Read this article about segregated Gold Star Mothers Pilgrimages in France and answer the following questions

- What do we learn about the different Pilgrimage experiences of African American and white Gold Star Mothers?
- What do we learn about racial discrimination as an accepted practice/reality?
- What do we learn about contrasting opinions within the African American community regarding the Pilgrimages?
- What do we learn about the similarities and differences in the racial standards in the US and France in the early-twentieth century?

Article about
segregation of
African American
mothers

GOLD STAR MOTHERS GROUP ARRIVES HERE AFTER DELAY BY FOG

Delegation Will Lay Wreath
at Arc de Triomphe This
Afternoon.

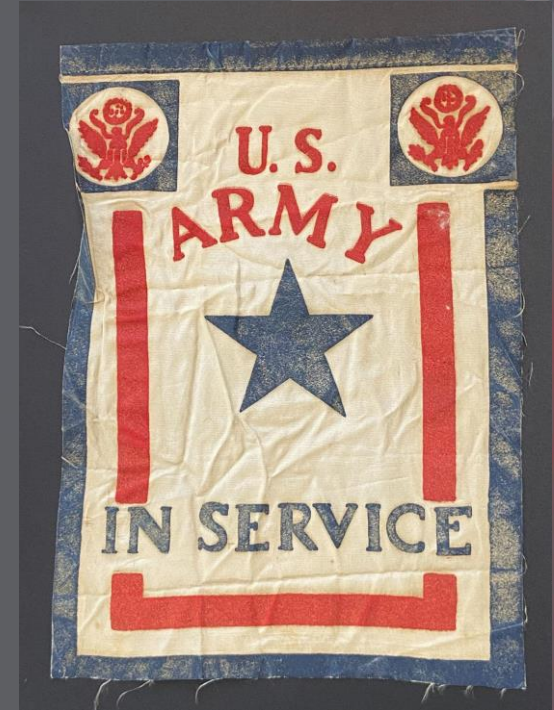
Party R, the last-but-one of the groups of gold star mothers, reached the Gare des Invalides at 8 p.m. last night and were immediately shown to their hotels, preparatory to a program of sightseeing today. Their arrival at Cherbourg yesterday on the George Washington had been delayed by fog. Headed by Mrs. Bird W. Seymour, of Rantoul, Kansas, the group will lay a wreath at the Arc de Triomphe at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon. Mrs. Seymour lost two sons in the historic battles in the Meuse-Argonne sectors. A series of entertainments will be held for the members of the party during their stay in Paris.

In the meantime, party Q, the second and last group of colored war matrons, comprising 40 in all, will visit Fontainebleau today, with the exception of four of their number, who will leave for Brookwood cemetery in England. This group spent yesterday in a shopping tour of the city.

The Q division will leave for the Oise-Aisne cemetery tomorrow. An extensive sightseeing tour occupied the time of the colored mothers yesterday and the day previous, when they were officially welcomed by representatives of the French and American governments.

Service Banners and WWII War Dead

- Use began during WWI
 - Popular for WWII and Korea
 - Fell out of favor during Vietnam
- Families hung banners in the windows of their homes
 - One or more blue stars signified family members in service
 - Families replaced blue stars with a gold star to signify their loss
- As with WWI, American cemeteries created overseas for WWII war dead
 - The Return of the World War II Dead Program gave family the option
 - Bring remains home or inter overseas
 - No pilgrimages



A WWII Blue Star Service Banner

Stop 5,
Section E,
Site 5

William R. Cooper

1926-1951
US Army-US Air Force

- Born June 21, 1926 in Thomasville, GA
 - Family moved Florida in 1935
- Registered for draft in 1942 with a fake age
- Enlisted in Army in 1945
- Married Elinor McFarlin in 1946
- Moved to new independent Air Force in 1947
 - 314th Air Police Squadron
- Korean War Service
 - Deployed in May 1951
 - KIA in June
- Survived by his wife and two sons
 - Elinor had him interred in SANC

should be on both Registration card

SERIAL NUMBER W 484	1. NAME (Print) William Richard Cooper			ORDER NUMBER V 12170A
2. ADDRESS (Print) 1228 N. W. 4th Street Miami Dade Florida <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>				
3. TELEPHONE 2-9531	4. AGE IN YEARS 18	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Thomasville <small>(Town or county)</small>	6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP USA	
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS W.D. Miller - Bill Millers Bar, Jacksonville, Fla. <small>(Mr., Mrs., Miss) (First) (Middle) (Last)</small>			8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON	
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON Bill Millers Bar - Jacksonville Duval Florida <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>				
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME				
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS				
<small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>				
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.				
REGISTRATION CARD D. B. S. FORM 1 <small>(over)</small>		16-17105 <i>Wm R. Cooper</i> <small>(Registrant's Signature)</small>		

William R. Copper's Draft Registration Card

Stop 6,
Section E,
Site 31-A

Randolph Wright Ford

1935-1968
US Military Navy

- Born July 13, 1935 in Gainesville, FL
- Enlisted in the US Navy in 1952
 - Naval Aviator
- Married to Frankie Ford
- Served for 16 years in the military
- Service in the Vietnam War
 - Aircraft lost at sea
- Died June 20, 1968 at age 32 while a POW
- US Vietnam Wall Tribute
 - Panel 55W, Line 5
- 3 children: Leslie, Daniel, and Curtis Ford

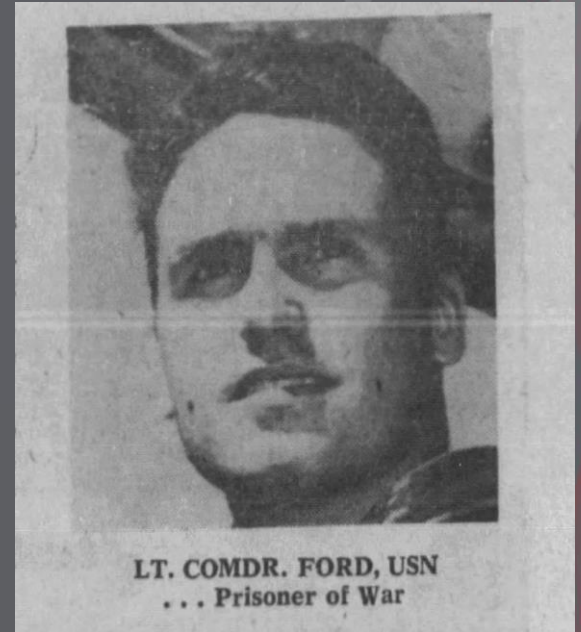


Photo of Randolph Wright Ford
noting him as a POW

Stop 7,
Section B,
Site 567

Tom Davis Jr.

1936-1968
US Army

- Born November 6, 1936 in Florida
 - Mom, Annie, was a widow
- Enlisted in the Army on April 24, 1967 at the age of 31
 - A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry Division
 - Staff Sergeant
 - Armor Crewman
- Service in Vietnam War
 - Thua Thien Province
- He died by hostile action through small arms fire.
- Honored on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.
 - Panel 46E, line 16



Tom Davis Jr., ca 1965

Stop 8,
Flagstaff

Christian Williams

1978-2006
US Marine Corps

- Born on November 30, 1978 in the Philippines
 - Jack (retired Navy) and Maria Bautista Williams, moved Florida in 1994
- Lake Region High School
 - Marine Corps JROTC
- Joined the US Marine Corps in June of 1997
 - Multiple deployments for the GWOT
- Delta Co, 3rd LAR Bn, 1st MarDiv
 - Deployed to Al Anbar, Iraq in 2006
- July 29 VBIED attacked checkpoint
 - Christian and three of his fellow Marines died from explosion
- Interred in Florida National Cemetery
 - Section 402, Site 53



Christian Williams' parents being presented with a copy of their son's UCF VLP biography, May 18.024

Gold Star Families Today

- Blue Star, Silver Star, & Gold Star
 - Active military, wounded military, fallen military
- Expanded to encompass whole family—not just mothers
 - Gold Star Wives, specific branch programs
- Doesn't sponsor trips overseas or to gravesites anymore
- Invites families to visit memorials of fallen servicemembers
- Provides assistance & support to families
 - Scholarship programs, hometown memorials, mental health, counseling, and birthday cards to family
- While only 8 Gold Star Veterans were discussed, it's important to recognize and remember all the Gold Star Families who have Veterans interred in our National cemeteries.
 - Including, Jere Palmes whose Gold Star Mother lit the SANC Flagstaff in 1975 to stay lit forever.