

UCF's Veterans Legacy Program



VA



**U.S. Department
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National Cemetery
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UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**Department
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NB: Before you begin preparations for your tour or classroom lesson, please note we have created a short orientation presentation. If you plan to go to the cemetery, you may want your students to do the [UCF VLP Mini Tour Cemetery Tour Intro](#). It provides helpful information for any tour. If you plan to do your lesson in your classroom, please use the [UCF VLP Mini Tour Classroom Intro](#). If you would like an editable PowerPoint version of this presentation, please reach out to Dr. Amelia Lyons at UCF ucf.vlp@ucf.edu.

Courageous Women of War: St. Augustine National Cemetery Mini Tour

Slide 1: Courageous Women of War: A Mini Tour of St. Augustine National Cemetery

We are here today to learn about Women's service in our armed services. We will talk about specific women today, learn how women have served and sacrificed, learn how women have contributed to our country and our communities during and after their service.

Slide 2: Map of St. Augustine National Cemetery (SANC) with labeled tour stops

The cemetery is divided into five sections: A, B, C, D, and E. This tour has seven stops. The women featured in this tour include spouses of Veterans and Veterans of both World War I and World War II. We will learn about the different roles women played in the war effort.

Slide 3: Women during the American Revolutionary War

While women have, historically, been barred from direct service in the US Armed Forces, they contributed in many different ways during times of war and peace even in the colonial era. During the American Revolutionary War, women-the wives, daughters, and other family members of soldiers traveled with George Washington's Continental Army. Camp followers, as they are often called, fed, clothed, and tended to the injured. Without all the services that women provided, the Army would not have been able to fight. Not all families joined their husbands during the Revolutionary war. Many remained at home to take care of the home, farm, or small artisanal shop like a blacksmith's or cobbler's shop. Women worked hard to keep their families together.

The image on this slide depicts Margaret Corbin loading a cannon at Fort Washington after her husband was shot and killed in action.

Source: Library of Congress

Slide 4: Women and Combat

Women have also, historically, disguised themselves as men to participate in combat. During the American Revolution, Margaret Corbin traveled as a camp follower with her husband. Then, one day, she disguised herself as a man and helped her husband load his cannon during the Battle of Fort Mifflin and even continued fighting after he died in action. She became the first woman to receive a military pension, even if the Army gave her only the equivalent to half of a serviceman's pension.

Another woman who fought in the American Revolutionary War after disguising herself as a man, Deborah Sampson, joined the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment as Robert Shurtleff. Her true identity went undiscovered for a year and a half while she continued her service. For her participation in the Revolutionary army, she became the only woman to earn a full military pension.

Slide 5: Women during the Civil War

During the Civil War, historians believe as many as 1,000 women may have disguised themselves as men and served in the Confederate and Union armies.

Tens of thousands of women contributed to the Civil War by growing food and cooking meals for the Union soldiers. Women also organized donations and raised funds to support the US Army. It was during the Civil War that women first began serving in official nursing positions with the Army. Women could join the nursing corps or serve as contract nurses hired based on locational need.

The image on this slide is a 19th century engraving of the different duties women performed to aid in the Civil War.

Source: Digital Public Library of America

Slide 6: Women's Roles in World War I

The Army established its Nurse Corps (Female) on February 2, 1901. The Navy followed suit on May 13, 1908, with the Navy Nurse Corps (Female). Nurses worked during peacetime, on base hospitals. During times of war, nurses served behind the lines and at front line hospitals. They often found themselves in dangerous conditions as the front shifted, or as a result of long-range artillery or naval warfare techniques. Some women volunteered to drive ambulances to bring medical supplies to the front and to transport the wounded back to field hospitals. Most women who served in the armed forces in the early twentieth century did so as nurses. For most branches, women could only serve as nurses, unless they served in a military auxiliary organization. The Navy is the only exception in the early twentieth century. Just before WWI, the Naval Act of 1916 had a loophole that allowed women to enlist in the US Navy as Yeomen (F), non-commissioned officers. They could not serve in combat roles. Most of them did clerical and secretarial work on bases within the US to free up men for combat service overseas. The military recruited women that knew both English and French to work as telephone switchboard

operators to improve communications on the Western front. After the war, the Navy asked Congress to change the loophole; it did so. Women could no longer serve as Yeomen (F) by 1920.

The image on this slide is a photograph of Lieutenant Edith Smith, the first woman ever given a commission in the US Army as a surgeon.

Source: National Archives

Slide 7: Women on the Homefront during World War I

Women at home participated in food conservation by canning food to preserve, growing vegetables, and limiting meat consumption so more food could be sent to the soldiers overseas. The government encouraged ordinary citizens to grow food in their backyards, community parks, and playing fields to provide extra food during the war. These came to be known as Victory gardens. With the US Army growing from under 150,000 men in April 1917 to over four million men by November 1918, women had to fill positions on the homefront. This included taking over a family-run small business, and running family farms. Women had always worked in family businesses and on family farms, but they took over, doing work formerly seen as skilled, male labor. Women also took other roles, including in war-related manufacturing, including munitions and heavy equipment. Again, women had worked in factory labor prior to WWI, but they had worked sectors like the garment industry in larger numbers. The shortages meant a great deal to African American women who left domestic work in larger numbers for jobs in offices and factories. The shift in women from less well-paid and under-regulated industries, including domestic service, and into skilled, higher paid employment contributed to the growth in support for the women's suffrage movement. No one could deny women's contributions as vital to the country's success. In 1920, shortly after the war's end the US passed the 19th amendment which extended the right to vote to women twenty-one and older.

The image on this slide is a photograph of women working in an airplane factory.

Source: National Archives

Slide 8: Women's Roles in World War II

Women played a pivotal role in supporting the Second World War. During WWII the US Army created auxiliary services for women. It formed the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs) and the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs). The Navy enrolled women into the Naval Reserve and formed the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES). Likewise, the Marines enrolled women into the Marine Corps Women's Reserve. Women still did not serve directly in combat roles, rather they served as radio operators, worked as laboratory technicians, repaired airplanes, flew as test pilots, and trained artillery gunners. Nurses continued to perform their duties in the US and on the frontlines. Some nurses earned combat decorations after they came under direct enemy fire.

Some women who served in the early twentieth century earned full Veterans status, including Yeomen (F) who served during WWI. In the case of Army WAACs during WWII, the Army considered them part of an auxiliary and they did not earn full Veteran status and benefits until decades later.

The image on this slide is a photograph of a group of WAACs wearing gas masks during training in Daytona Beach, FL, just prior to sailing for Europe in November 1942.

Source: National Archives

Slide 9: Women on the Homefront during World War II

Women on the homefront worked a range of jobs, as they always had, and they worked as homemakers maintaining the balance of their families while their husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers served overseas. As in WWI, women shifted from certain kinds of labor, including factory work, secretarial work, and domestic labor, into defense plants. Women worked building the bombs, tanks, and airplanes that the Allies and the US military dropped, drove, and flew during the war. The idea of Rosie the Riveter developed out of women who worked in larger numbers building ships during WWII. Here too, larger numbers of African American women also worked as unsung Rosie's during WWII. Millions of women volunteered for war-related organizations. As in WWI, women participated in food rationing, donation drives, and farmwork. Citizens continued to be encouraged by the government to participate in the cultivation of Victory gardens. The National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), which became the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958, employed women who were among the engineers and mathematicians that developed the atomic bombs the US dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1944.

The image on this slide is a photograph of women riveting a ship.

Source: National Archives

St. Augustine has just over 200 women buried in it. Today we are going to learn about seven of them. The women on our tour either served in uniform or were related to men who served. While not technically Veterans, we know the families of our nation's Veterans also serve; they often lived on military bases, and made major sacrifices for their families and for our country. Rather than visiting these women in chronological order, we are going to visit women based on their location in the cemetery, so we can maintain a linear flow to our tour.

Slide 10: Mary Sprague

Mary Sprague, born in 1822 in West Point, NY married Colonel John T. Sprague. They married on June 15, 1843 in St. Johns County, FL. During their marriage they had four children-Mary (1847), Sarah (1854), Josephine (1863), and John Jr. (1865). Colonel Sprague served in the Marine Corps during the FL Seminole Wars. He also wrote the book *Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* published in 1848, one of the most important chronicles of the Seminole wars, which includes a list of the Veterans memorialized by the pyramids in St. Augustine National Cemetery. Unfortunately, Mary passed away in 1876, and two years later her husband also died. She is buried in St. Augustine National Cemetery near her mother Margaret Worth, whose grave is the next stop on our tour. Her husband Colonel John T. Sprague is closely associated with St. Augustine National Cemetery, though is buried in a cemetery in NY. Their son Dr. John T. Sprague served in World War I as a medical officer and all of their daughters married Veterans. All of Mary and John's children are buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Slide 11: Margaret Worth

Born in 1799 to parents Margaret and John Stafford, Margaret Stafford Worth was the wife of a prominent Veteran of the US. Her husband, Major General William Jenkins Worth began his military career in the War of 1812. He then served as a commander at the US Military Academy at West Point from 1820 to 1828. Starting in 1822 Margaret and her husband had four children-Mary, Margaret, Josephine, and William, born in 1840. Major General Worth also played a pivotal role in the Seminole Wars and the Mexican War where he became the first to plant the American flag at the Rio Grande. Named after Major General William Worth, Fort Worth began as a military post and is now a city in TX. Several years after his death on May 7, 1849, a tomb was erected in New York City at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway under which Major General Worth is buried. Twenty years later, in 1869, Margaret Worth also passed. She is buried in St. Augustine National Cemetery. Their son, William Scott Worth, served in the Civil War, rising to the rank of colonel. He fought with President Teddy Roosevelt during the Spanish-American War. Lake Worth Florida is also named for her husband.

Slide 12: Catherine Hayes

A WWII Veteran, Catherine Hayes was born on May 28, 1922 in PA to parents Elton and Anne. Her mother immigrated from Germany to the US. Her father served as a Sergeant First Class in WWI. Shortly after Catherine's birth, the family moved to St. Augustine, FL where her father worked for the company contracted to construct St. Augustine's famous Bridge of Lions. In 1940, Catherine graduated from Ketterlinus High School (now Ketterlinus Elementary School) in St. Augustine, FL. She enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) in 1944 where she trained as a flight logistics specialist. She participated in flights from CA to HI to move military personnel and supplies headed toward the Pacific Theater. Her brother, Elton Jr., served in the Army Air Corps during WWII. Catherine was honorably discharged from the Army in 1945.

The image on this slide is of Catherine Hayes in April 1944 courtesy of Katrina Graham.

Slide 13: Catherine Hayes

In 1957, Catherine joined the Foreign Service of the US Department of State as an executive secretary. She served in several embassies around the world including in Ecuador, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Luxembourg. She retired from her years of government service in 1975 and passed away peacefully at home on September 8, 2008. Catherine Hayes is buried at St. Augustine National Cemetery with her parents, Elton and Anne Hayes, all buried under the same headstone.

Their headstone claims that her father Elton Hayes served in WWII, however, he served in WWI. There was probably a mistake made since he and his son had the same name and both served.

Slide 14: Beatrice Gaster

Another Veteran of WWII, Beatrice Gaster was born on December 31, 1919 in GA to Lota and C.J. Muse. In 1941, she entered the Grady School of Nursing in Atlanta, GA. After she graduated, Beatrice enlisted in the Women's Army Corps from Jacksonville, FL in the fall of 1944. Her service in WWII lasted two years when she was discharged on October 8, 1946.

The image on this slide includes information about Beatrice's enlistment into the Women's Army Corps. Her full name is Harriett Beatrice Muse Gaster.

Source: Ancestry

Slide 15: Beatrice Gaster

Three years after being discharged from the Women's Army Corps, Beatrice married fellow WWII Veteran John Sanchez Gaster. Together they raised his daughter from his first marriage. John died in 1971 while Beatrice lived on until November 20, 2001. They are both buried in the St. Augustine National Cemetery under the same headstone, with John appearing on the front and Beatrice on the back. Buried next to them is John's first wife Ruth Gaster and an infant daughter from John and Ruth's union.

Slide 16: Amelia Hardin

A spouse of a Civil War Veteran, Amelia Hardin was born on July 6, 1863 in Chicago, IL. Her father was the founder of W. F. McLaughlin and Co., a coffee company established in Chicago from 1852 to 1967. Amelia married Union Brigadier General Martin D. Hardin on October 24, 1892. Her husband was mentored by Abraham Lincoln and served as colonel of the 12th Pennsylvania Reserves during the Civil War. The couple mainly lived in IL but had a winter home in St. Augustine. In 1923, Amelia suffered a loss with the death of her husband on December 12. After her husband's death she spent most of her time in St. Augustine until her passing on November 29, 1929. She is buried in St. Augustine National Cemetery with her husband.

Slide 17: Elizabeth Smith

Elizabeth Smith, a WWI Veteran, was born on July 11, 1871 in VA. In January of 1891, she married Henry Smith. They had two children—a daughter, Lizzie (1893), and a son, William (1896). Elizabeth enlisted into the US Navy Reserve Force (USNRF) as a Yeoman (F) on May 6, 1918 at the age of forty seven, three years after her husband had passed away in 1915. She served until her discharge from the US Navy on January 24, 1919. After her discharge she lived with her son in St. Johns County, FL. Then, in 1922, she married Robert McKnight; the couple divorced in 1928. After her divorce, she worked as a housekeeper for a family in Duval, FL. She then lived next to her widowed son-in-law and her grandson while she worked as a maid at a hotel. Elizabeth lived until June 15, 1947. She is buried in the St. Augustine National Cemetery. Her headstone lists her rank as Landsman, an outdated term referencing those of the lowest rank in the Navy. She was a Yeoman (F).

Slide 18: Emily Kennedy

Another WWI Veteran, Emily Kennedy was born on June 11, 1879 in NY to Irish immigrant parents. In 1899, around the age of twenty, she enrolled in a three-year nursing course at the Hospital of the Good Shepherd in Syracuse, NY. She became quite accomplished during her time there. Emily served as the head nurse for several months and even helped put the study of dietetics (effects of diet and nutrition on health) into practice at the Hospital of the Good Shepherd. After graduating in 1902, she went into private nursing in NY. On January 7,

1905, Emily began her military career when she accepted an appointment to the Army Nurse Corps. She worked in hospitals in San Francisco, CA then Fort Bayard, NM before taking leave in 1907 to aid her mother in her declining health. On April 28, 1907, Emily was discharged from the Army and returned to private nursing for the time being.

The image on this slide is of Emily Kennedy and her graduating class at the Hospital of the Good Shepherd. She is seated in the front row, second from right.

Source: Greg Moore's *Sacred Ground: The Military Cemetery at St. Augustine*

Slide 19: Emily Kennedy

In March of 1909, Emily re-entered military service, this time in the Navy Nurse Corps. She was one of the first forty-four female nurses in the Navy. She served for three years in a US Naval Hospital in Washington, D.C. before again returning to private nursing in NY. When WWI began, Emily enrolled in the US Navy Reserve Fleet. Assigned to a Naval Hospital in Newport, RI in 1917, she then worked in a Naval Hospital in Philadelphia, PA where she helped train male corpsmen to serve as nurses on ships. She received her final discharge in May of 1918. She returned to NY and continued her career as a nurse, working for the NY city public schools. Then, from 1924 to 1926 Emily lived in a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers who suffered from neurological/psychiatric conditions. She died at a nursing home in 1950 in St. Augustine, FL. She is buried in the St. Augustine National Cemetery.

Slide 20: Reflection on Women's Contributions during Wartime

What are your thoughts about the different roles women played in the military?

Do you think the contributions made on the homefront were important to the Allied troops winning the war? Why or why not?

Why do you think women were not allowed to fully participate in combat?

How did the role of women evolve from World War I to World War II?

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