Yokosuka Sailors reflect on legacy of Loretta Perfectus Walsh

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At the tender age of 18, Loretta Perfectus Walsh became the first woman to enlist in the U.S. Navy and the first woman to assume the rank and responsibilities of a chief petty officer (CPO) on March 21, 1917.

News of the Philadelphia native's enlistment as a chief Yeomen (F) during the days of World War I attracted national media attention. In the headline of the New York Times article written about her enlistment, it was said that Walsh had set a "precedent for the world."

Before Walsh, women had served in the U.S. military as nurses, but not entitled to rank, retirement benefits or the equal pay of their male counterparts.

What began with one woman's four-year military commitment to service has grown to more than 53,000 women serving in various fields of today's Navy, ranging from ship's company deck seaman to commander of a carrier strike group.

Following in the legacy of Walsh today are approximately 2,550 CPO females serving throughout the Navy. While their pay is substantially higher than Walsh's $28.75 monthly earnings during the days of World War I, the mission remains the same, leading and mentoring Sailors and junior officers.

"Walsh is a great representative of the Navy by displaying what can be done with hard work, courage and commitment to service. It is because of her determination and the many brave women of the U.S. Navy who followed her, that I am able to pursue my goals in the Navy today," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuel) (AW/SW) Rodeliza Declaro Santiago, from Alameda, Calif. "Since the day Walsh enlisted, a lot of advancements and opportunities have opened up for females in the Navy. The future looks very bright, not only for women of the Navy, but for the Navy as a whole."

Walsh's call to duty came during the World War I era in an effort to meet the needs of military clerical shortages. The Yeomen (F), or "Yeomanettes" as they were commonly known, exceeded more than 11,000 active duty members during the war. They primarily served in secretarial and clerical positions, though some were translators, draftsmen, fingerprint experts, ship camouflage designers and recruiting agents.

Following the post war military scale down, women serving in the Yeomen (F) community were all eventually relieved of active duty. Walsh officially finished her enlistment on March 17, 1921.

The last known veteran of the Yoemanettes was Charlotte Louise Berry Winters, who was also the last surviving female American veteran of World War I. She was laid to rest with full military honors in March of 2007 at the age of 109.

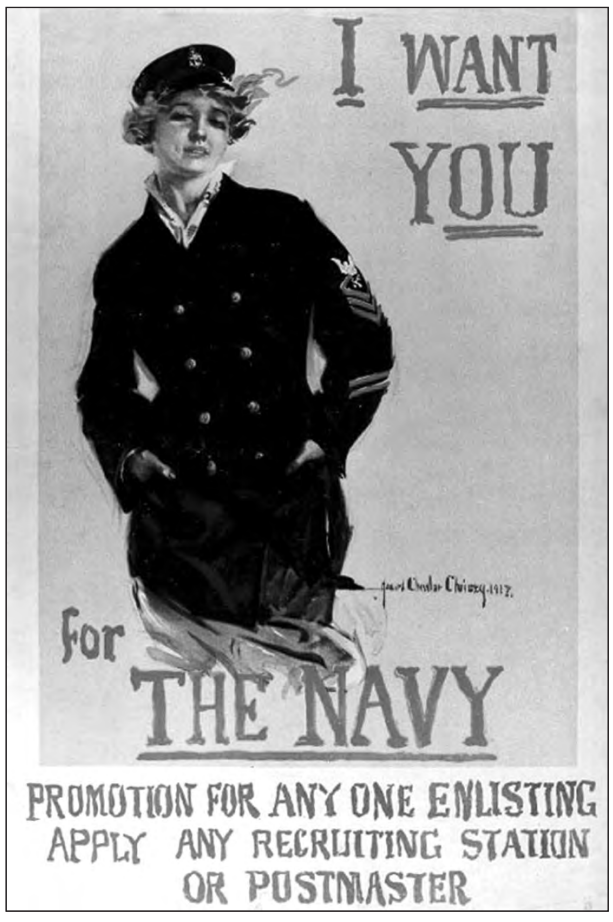
Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Petty Officers, Sally Robels, a native of Phoenix and Tiffany Burckhardt, from Ocala, Fla., both are enlisted surface warfare qualified, and assigned to *USS George Washington* (CVN 73). They agree that the sacrifices made by the women before them in the U.S. Navy helped pave the way for future generations and strengthen the Navy.

"Coming into the Navy, I had the ability to choose from so many rates. I liked the freedom of being able to do that," Burckhardt said. "I do not think that any of it would be possible if it were not for the dedication and hard work of women before us who proved to the Navy that they had what it took."

"In the Navy today, I believe women have more options and benefits than ever before," Robels said. "As long as we try, the Navy allows us to succeed. It is good to know that the Navy knew they could count on women during World War I, and that the women rose to the occasion giving Sailors like me a chance to serve in the Navy."

The legacy of Walsh is one of great importance and a hallmark in U.S. Naval history. The day she enlisted is recognized by the Historical Naval Center. She has also been memorialized in poetry and served as an inspiration for the book, "Crossed Currents: Navy Women from WWI to Tailhook."

"The Navy has changed dramatically for women since Walsh first enlisted, I am sure she would be pleased and impressed if she saw everything women can do in the Navy today," said Interior Communications Electrician (SW/AW) 2nd Class Casandra Richardson of Hampton Va. "There have been many improvements made in the Navy for women to work on various platforms and many of those improvements come from women like Walsh who made strides for the future of women in the Navy."



"*I Want You for the Navy*" World War I Navy recruiting poster by artist Howard Chandler Christy, 1917.
Image courtesy of U.S. Naval Historical Center

Following her death at the age of 29 on Aug. 5, 1929, Walsh was laid to rest in Olyphant, Pa. A passage from the inscription on her monument reads these lasting words, "Her comrades dedicate this monument to keep alive forever memories of the sacrifice and devotion of womanhood."

Anti-smoking law in public places protects nonsmokers

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Expanding on the 2002 Kenkouzoushinhou, or Health Promotion Law, which banned smoking in central government and other public buildings, Kanagawa prefecture enacted the Kanagawa Prefectural Government Ordinance on Prevention of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke in Public Facilities.

The ordinance sets concrete rules and regulations for facility managers to follow in regards to smoking in public spaces and will also set fines for individuals smoking in nonsmoking areas and for facility managers who do not comply with the new ordinance.

According to the ordinance, public areas are divided into class 1 and class 2 facilities. Class 1 facilities, which include, schools, hospitals, theaters, movie theaters, sports facilities, retail shops, financial institutions and et cetera, will not allow smoking anywhere on the premises and will be required to post no smoking signs at the entrances of the facilities. Additionally, any facilities that allow smoking in designated smoking areas will be required to ensure that smoke in the smoking area is properly ventilated out of the building and does not enter into designated nonsmoking areas.

The ordinance is intended to protect nonsmokers and especially minors under the age of 20 from the harmful chemicals that are present in secondhand smoke. According to the website www.tobaccoatlas.org, secondhand smoke remains one of the world's most critical environmental health hazards, leading all other lethal indoor air contaminants - including wood fires, asbestos particles and radon. Smoke-free policies are necessary to protect children from a serious health hazard - environmental tobacco smoke. In order to protect every child's right to a healthy future, adult smoking needs to be highly regulated or eliminated, especially among parents and expectant parents.

The National Cancer Institute lists the harmful consequences of exposure to secondhand smoke on their Web site, www.cancer.gov. According to the site, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. National Toxicology Program, the U.S. Surgeon General and the International Agency for Research on Cancer have classified secondhand smoke as a known human carcinogen (cancer-causing agent). Inhaling secondhand smoke causes lung cancer in nonsmoking adults.

Approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths occur each year among adult nonsmokers in the United States as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke. The surgeon general estimates that living with a smoker increases a nonsmoker's chances of developing lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent. Secondhand smoke may increase the risk of heart disease by an estimated 25 to 30 percent. In the United States, secondhand smoke is thought to cause about 46,000 heart disease deaths each year. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their heart disease risk by 25 to 30 percent and lung cancer risk by at least 20 to 30 percent.

University of Maryland receives 2011 Institution Award

From University of Maryland University College Public Affairs

University of Maryland University College (UMUC) announced that it has received the 2011 Institution Award from the Council of College and Military Educators (CCME), a not-for-profit organization founded to promote, encourage, and deliver quality education to service members and their families in all branches of the U.S. armed services. UMUC received the award at the CCME annual symposium in Tampa, Fla.

The Institution Award is given to a college or university that supplies quality education programs to the armed services. This year, CCME selected UMUC due to its dedication, leadership, and numerous accomplishments in providing quality, voluntary off-duty education programs. Belinda Jones, president of CCME, presented the award at a special banquet on Feb. 17.

"UMUC is deeply honored to receive such a prestigious award recognizing our contributions to providing educational programs and support to service members and their families," said UMUC President Susan C. Aldridge, PhD. "UMUC has a rich history in providing education to service members at home and abroad, and we are proud to be recognized for our dedication in enriching the lives of those who protect our country every day."

For more than 60 years, UMUC has provided educational services to the United States military, both at home and abroad. Founded in 1947, UMUC was able - through a contract with the Department of Defense - to provide GI Bill-guaranteed education to soldiers in Europe. Today, the university has operations across the United States, Europe, and Asia, and offers educational services and instruction online and on-site to service members at dozens of locations around the world, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It is so important in Maryland that we make quality college education accessible to anyone who works hard for a better future," said Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley. "I am so proud that UMUC has received this prestigious award for its outstanding commitment to providing educational services to the brave men and women who serve our nation and their families."

UMUC, headquartered in Adelphi, Maryland, is the largest public university in the United States, serving 90,000 students and offering 130 undergraduate and graduate programs online and on-site. In addition, UMUC is one of the largest public providers of online higher education in the nation. UMUC boasts a 60-year history of service to the military and currently enrolls an estimated 50,000 military service members, veterans, and their family members each year.