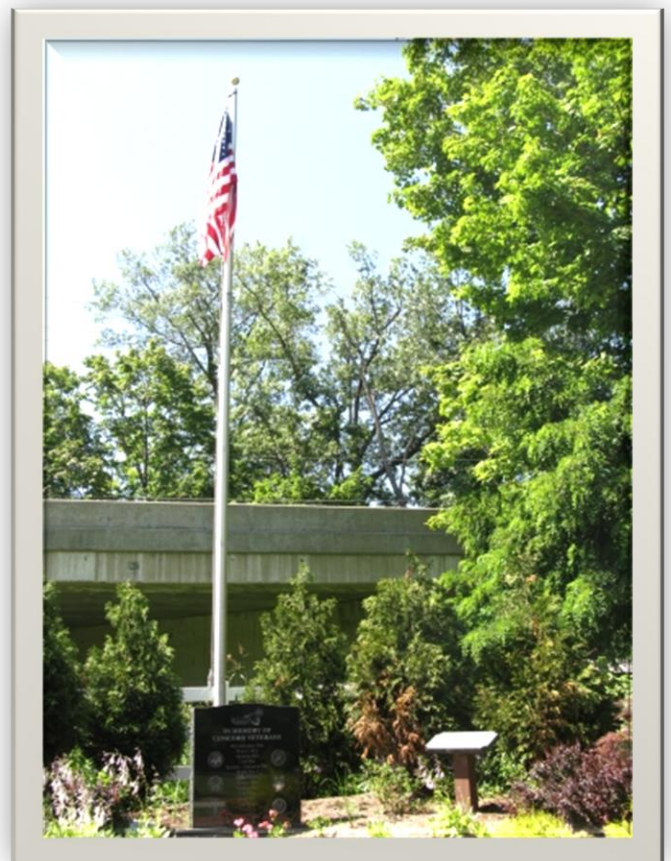


## **Concord Township Legacies - Five Female Veterans**

Those familiar with my monthly installments will recall my oft-repeated foray into - *Every Artifact Tells a Story*. This month melds women's history, the lives of five female veterans and a local cemetery legacies walk. It begins at **Concord Township Cemetery** (**Pine Hill Cemetery** for the old name of the road). It is located on the north side of Concord-Hambden Rd. and is the destination for this month's artifacts-tombstones. The township cemetery origins begin with the March 14, 1820, death of **Lucinda Merrill**. Her passing posed a problem. With no formal cemetery at the time, land needed to be secured and cleared for her interment. A second death a few weeks later, of **Martin Adams**, only compounded the need. Let our story begin...





## Part I - Pine Hill Cemetery Timeline

The Concord Township trustees purchased the land from **Mr. Zenas Wilson** and **Mr. Simeon Winchell** for the sum of \$1.00. The deed was dated February 1, 1833, and the newly enclosed burying ground was now open with a single provision. The one deed stipulation granted both Wilson and Winchell pasturing premises for sheep, if they should do no damage. Thus, the township's first service department was formed. An original map indicates the location of six burial plots. The old numbering system put plots east, west of the road, although some headstones





had a north to south read. Early headstones from 1820 to 1832 were a mix of brownstone, limestone and granite. At least three additions have been made to the original site. Section 3 (1932), Section 4 (1965), Section 5 & 6 (1979) were a bit more randomly and creatively placed.

## **Part II - Women in the Military – A Retrospective**

Did You know on December 19, 2019, Senate Bill 77 was

the second bill signed by Governor Mike DeWine to acknowledge the more than 67,000 women veterans who live in Ohio? It designated June 12th as Women's Veterans' Day in Ohio.

### **Women in the U.S. Military Facts, WWII to the Present**

- May 15, 1942, Congress instituted **WACS** to full military status. Decades would pass before roadblocks such as segregation, equal benefit programs, full recognition or **G.I. Bill** access would be removed.
- Approximately 350,000 women of all races served in



uniform, **WAVES, SPARS, WASPS**, Nurses as well as office, clerical, transportation and gunnery positions.

- Women in the **Women's Army Corps** numbered 150,000. The Women's Army Corps (WAC), initially known as the **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)**, was created during World War II to allow women to serve in non-combat roles in the US Army, freeing up men for combat duties.
- Women in Navy's **WAVES** section totaled 100,000. The WAVES program was established in 1942 to allow women to serve in non-combat roles in the Navy, freeing up more men for sea duty. The WAVES was created by the Navy Women's Reserve Act, signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on July 30, 1942. By the end of 1942, 3,190 enlistees and 770 officers joined the U.S. Navy as **Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service**, also known as the WAVES
- Army nurses numbered 60,000, while Navy Nurses peaked at 14,000.
- **SPARS** stands for "**Semper Paratus—Always Ready**," the motto of the United States Coast Guard, and was the authorized nickname for the **U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve** during World War II.
- During World War II, **WASP** stood for **Women Airforce Service Pilots**, a civilian program that trained and employed women to fly military aircraft in non-combat roles, freeing up male pilots for combat duties. **WASPS** served and accumulated more than 60 million miles of flight distances, 38 making the ultimate sacrifice. March 10, 2010, the WASPS were finally awarded **Congressional Gold Medals**.

### **Part III - Concord Township's Artifacts – Legacies of Five Women**

Each of the women mentioned below is buried in the Concord Cemetery. Their story is told and can be experienced on the 2024 Concord Cemetery Legacies site found at [www.concordtownship.com](http://www.concordtownship.com)-click on the QR code to download the cemetery map and information sheet on the cemetery link. Each of the five



female veteran's tombstone and personal history is shared there.

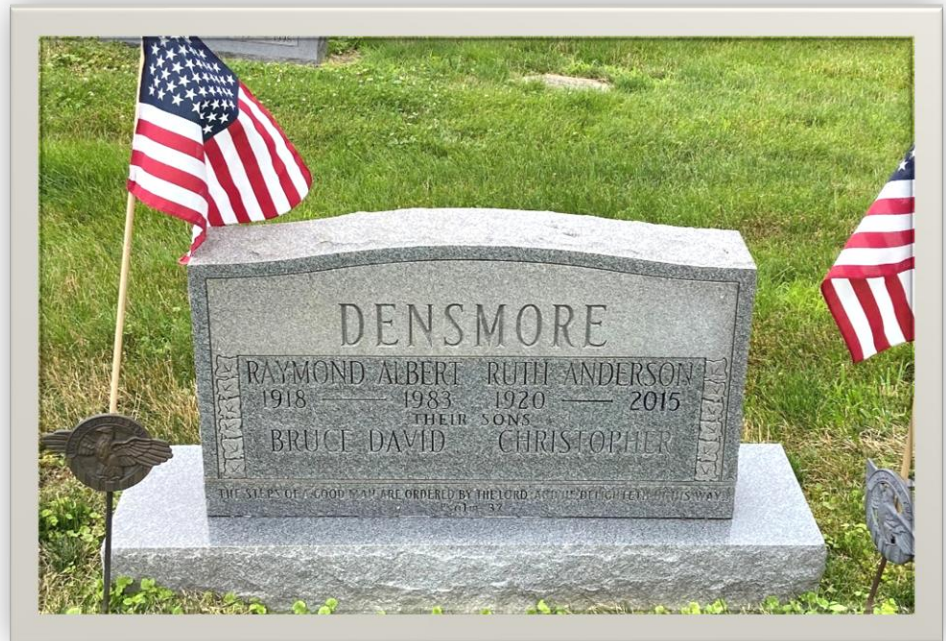


**Ruth Ekstrom** - One of five buried in the 1833 part of the township cemetery. Ruth served in the Army Nurse Corps in Iceland and England during WWII. Ruth and her husband Karl are one of two local couples that both husband and wife served in the War to End All Wars. After the war Ruth returned to the township where she was a charter member of the Hope Ridge United Methodist Church. She

passed on January 27, 1982, at the age of 61. *Section 1979 Row BA Lots 5&6*

### **Ruth Densmore-**

Another township veteran, she served as a Lieutenant in the WAVES during WWII. Her husband Raymond also served in the Army having been a part of the infamous Bataan Death March story and a surviving POW. Ruth returned home to Concord where she was a member of the Painesville League of Women Voters, founding member of



Lakeland Community College and teacher at KSU, LCC and Tri-C. She passed at age 94 in January 2015. *Sec. 1965 Row AG Lot 143*

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/141696362/ruth-goff-densmore>

**Genevieve (Gean) Short-** The third of the Concord five buried in the township cemetery, Gean served during WWII as a Seaman-1st Class in the Coast Guard. After the war she spent three decades as an executive secretary for Chase Brass and Copper Inc. Gean passed in 1978 at the age of 69. *Sec. 1965 Row AD Lot 55*

**Marilyn (Mackey) Talbert** - This veteran served in the Korean Conflict in the U.S. Air Force. Her years of service were 1954-1957 with additional paperwork showing she re-enlisted a short time later. A member of the Zion Lutheran Church in Fairport, she lived in Maryland and in Painesville (2003) till her death on July 30, 2010. *Sect. 1979 Row BI Lot 13*

**Coni S. Riel** - The last of the five interred at Concord Cemetery, she served in the U.S. Navy from 1987-1991. After the Gulf War, this Madison native moved to Louisiana for a brief time. She passed on November 29, 2022, at the age of 59. She is buried in the cemetery with her father Perry Riel and uncles William and Louis. All three also served their country as well. *Sec. 1965 Row AK Lot 378*

**\*\*Kathleen Williard McGuire** was a child of a multigenerational Army family. Born in San Francisco, California, she moved to New Jersey, graduated and joined the U.S. Air Force as a bit of rebellion against her Army family. Discharged with the rank of sergeant, she married an Air Force man Chuck Anderson in 1969. Stops in Idaho, Corvallis and Westfield, New Jersey, marked these years. A second marriage to Bob Freeborn followed in 1977 and stops in Charlottesville, Binghamton, New York, and Shaker Heights followed. Kate's career as a mother, employment counselor, home economics teacher and vintage early E-Bay store owner depicts a life well-lived. She passed in July 2024 and was buried in Concord.

*More to follow in time...*

Submitted by. Dan Maxson

Local Lore by Max, 2010-2016 - The News-Herald, Community Media Lab

Volunteer Docent, Curator - FHHS / Fairport Harbor Lighthouse & Marine Museum

Volunteer Curator / Docent - Old Stone School, Concord Township

