

WWI Fort Caswell Nurse Profile: Faye E. White, 1894-1994

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WWI Fort Caswell Nurse Profile Faye Elmo White Henry

New Bethlehem, Pa., Commander

Served:

WWI (Army Nurse Corps): Sept. 25, 1918 – June 21, 1919
WWII (U.S. Navy): Sept. 17, 1921 – Dec. 31, 1947

Fort Caswell, U.S. Army Post Hospital: Sept. 25, 1918 – Feb. 12, 1919

Faye Elmo White was the most decorated and longest serving nurse among the WWI Fort Caswell nurses. She was born in New Bethlehem, Pa., a small town about 60 miles NE of Pittsburgh. A family tree is located in Family Search.

In 1900, Faye, age 5, had one older brother and two younger siblings. Her father was a farmer. In 1910, there was an additional daughter, totaling five children in all. Faye and her younger siblings were attending school, while her older brother and father were farming. An additional son, Frank, was born within a year after the 1910 Census.

Faye attended the Allegheny General Hospital School of Nursing in Pittsburgh, Pa., along with Anna M. Setley, another Fort Caswell nurse. The two women served together and remained friends for many years, as evidenced by Faye's attendance at Anna's funeral, shown in Anna's WWI Profile post.

Faye's Pennsylvania WWI Service Card shows she enlisted from Pittsburgh, serving at the Post Hospital at Fort Caswell, followed by the Base Hospital at Camp Lee in Virginia.

She was discharged on June 21, 1919. In 1920, she had returned home to New Bethlehem, Clarion County, Pa. Her father was farming, and she was working as a nurse in general practice.

Faye joined the U.S. Navy the following year, serving through World War II until 1947, when she retired at age 53.

Service Record (additional information can be found on Nurse White's career on www.caswellriflerange.com):

U.S. Army Service, WWI, Age: 23-24; U.S. Navy Service, Age: 25-41; U.S. Navy Service, WWII, Age: 47 until Age 53; 1944 was awarded the Bronze Star.

In 1934, her brother, WWI veteran Forest White, was struck by a car in Detroit and killed. He was laid to rest in New Bethlehem.

Forest C. White of Detroit, Mich., was killed by an automobile while crossing the street in front of his boarding house in Detroit. He was taken to the Receiving hospital where he died Thursday, July 5, 1934. Deceased was a son of John C. and Cora E. (Buzzard) White of Porter township. He was unmarried and was employed in Detroit. He was aged 36 years, 2 months and 22 days. Mr. White is survived by his parents, two brothers and three sisters, William White of Oak Ridge, Frank White of Porter township, Miss Faye White a nurse in the Philippine Islands, Mrs. Floyd Young of Cottage Hill and Mrs. Harold McNutt of Clarion. His body was shipped here and was taken to the home of his parents.

Funeral services were held at the home Sunday, July 8, 1934, and were conducted by Rev. J.W. Fraser, D.D., pastor of the Presbyterian church. Interment was made in the New Bethlehem cemetery. He was a World War Veteran and was given a military funeral.

The Clarion Democrat (Clarion, Pa.), 19 July 1934, p. 2.

During WWII, she served in the U.S. Fleet Hospital 105 in the South Pacific.

A story that appeared in The Pittsburgh Press on Oct. 3, 1943, page 12, "Many Lives are Saved by a Pittsburgh MOB" (Navy Mobile Hospital Unit), described a unit of mostly Pittsburgh doctors serving in the South Pacific MOB.

"Working with the doctors for many months now has

been a corps of Army nurses under Lt. Faye E. White of New Bethlehem, a veteran of 21 years in the Navy Nurse Corps."

According to this 1949 military register, she was promoted to Commander on March 1, 1944. It is unclear why she is referred to as "Lt. Commander" in newspaper articles after that time.

Photos were published in newspapers across the nation in 1944 when Commander Faye E White became the first Navy Nurse to receive the Bronze Star.

In 1945, newspapers across the nation used her image, age (51), and service to promote Liberty Loans.

From December 1944 until her retirement in 1947, she served stateside. She returned to New Bethlehem for the rest of her life, which as it turns out, was nearly 50 more years!

In 1954, she married Carl E. Henry, who had lost his wife a year earlier. They had 22 years together before his death in 1976.

In 1966, her mother passed away:

Mrs. Cora White, 95, Of New Bethlehem, Dies

New Bethlehem – Mrs. Cora Ellen White, 95, of New Bethlehem RD 3, died at 6:30 p.m. Monday after a three-month illness. She was the widow of John W. White.

She was born at Climax, Armstrong County, September 7, 1870, a daughter of Thomas and Margaret Delp Buzzard.

Her husband, John W. White, died in August 1939.

Mrs. White was a member of the First Baptist Church in New Bethlehem. She also was a member of the Sewing Club of Cottage Hill.

She is survived by three daughters, Mrs. Carl (Faye) Henry and Mrs. Pearl Young of New Bethlehem RD 3 and Mrs. Verlie McNutt of Clairton; a son, Frank A. White of New Bethlehem RD 3; 23 grandchildren, 55 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great-grandchildren, and a sister, Mrs. Pearl Sherrieb of Natrona Heights.

Two sons are deceased.

Friends will be received in the John E. Reiss Funeral Home in New Bethlehem after 7 p.m. today. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday in the funeral home with Rev. Rudolf Unger, pastor of the First Baptist Church in New Bethlehem, officiating.

Interment will be in the New Bethlehem Cemetery. Oil City Derrick (Oil City, Pa.), 14 March 1966, p. 16.

Husband's death

Carl Henry Dies At Age 84
New Bethlehem – Carl E. Henry, 84, of New Bethlehem RD 3, died Saturday in his home.

Born in Porter Township, Clarion County, February 1, 1892, he was the son of Elmer E. and Jane Smith Henry.

He was married November 3, 1954, to the former Faye White who survives.

Mr. Henry was a member of the First Baptist Church in New Bethlehem and the Murphy Grange.

Surviving along with his wife are two sons, Roland Henry of New Castle and Robert E. Henry of Clarion; a daughter, Mrs. John (Betty) Mooney of Clarion; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

One grandchild is deceased. Also surviving are a brother, George E. Henry of New Bethlehem, and a sister, Mrs. Arthur (Ruth) Brown of Midway.

Funeral services will be held at 1 pm today in John R. Mateer Funeral Home in New Bethlehem, with Rev. David Skinner, pastor of the First Baptist Church, officiating. Interment will be in the New Bethlehem Cemetery.

Oil City Derrick (Oil City, Pa.), 31 May 1976, p. 24.

On Memorial Day 1993, Faye was honored, as detailed in a newspaper clipping saved by her family.

Local Veteran, 98, To Ride At Front Of Memorial Day Parade

Memorial Day is a day to remember loved ones who have

served in the many wars our country has fought in. We have seen the desolation war can bring, we have known the heroes and heroines who defeated the enemy, and we have seen the trials and tribulations our ancestors have gone through to maintain world peace.

A woman of 98 sits in her Cottage Hill home to tell her story about her life in the military and to tell of all the transformations she has seen in past generations.

Faye Henry has been invited to be this year's grand marshal for the annual Memorial Day Parade in New Bethlehem on Saturday, May 29.

"She has been chosen because she has served God and her country," said Leroy Tabler, Henry's longtime neighbor. "She is a unique individual. She is very kind, generous and cares about other people."

"I'm surprised we haven't had her sooner for our Memorial Day Parade," said Jack Milliren, an organizer of the event.

Henry was active in the U.S. Army and Navy for 30 years and will be recognized at the parade for her talents as a nurse, war heroine and friend to her community.

Henry started her military nursing career in the Army after graduating from the nursing school at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. She entered the Army on Nov. 2, 1918, only a few days before the armistice of World War I was signed.

Her first service was at a hospital post in Fort Caswell, N.C., and at the base hospital for Camp Lee, Va. She was in the Army only for a brief period, but she earned a World War I Victory Medal. She ended her service on June 21, 1919.

At the time, she didn't think about getting back into the military because she didn't like the way the army treated her. Her military career would have ended if a friend didn't talk her into rejoining the military, a branch other than the Army.

[Based on previous research which showed a close relationship beginning with her nursing training in Pittsburgh, it is possible that former Fort Caswell nurse Anna Setley is the friend who encouraged Faye to try the US Navy.]

"I had a hard time adjusting to the Army, so I got out," she said. "I never thought I would get back in until a close friend who was in the Navy told me what a wonderful service the Navy was, so I decided to try it out." On Sept. 16, 1921, she was appointed as a nurse in the U.S. Navy and by April 1, 1936, she was promoted to chief nurse. As the United States became embroiled in World War II, Henry's abilities were recognized when she was commissioned lieutenant in the Nurse Corps.

"I remember them bringing back casualties and spending several months in the wards taking care of wounded men," she said. As she became more dedicated to nursing, she moved up in rank.

By Oct. 1, 1944, she again was promoted to lieutenant commander. Before she retired, she became full commander in charge of nurses at her station. During her career, she directed the establishment of several hospitals while in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

For serving in World War I and World War II, she received Medals of Honor for her active nursing career. In November 1944, at New Caledonia, Faye Henry became the first woman officer to receive a Bronze Star. She was awarded this honor as a result of all her accomplishments in World War II. The medal was awarded to her in the South Pacific by Vice-Admiral John Henry Newton.

The citation read: "For the meritorious service in the government of the United States while serving as chief nurse of a fleet hospital in the South Pacific area from June 29, 1943 to August 30, 1944. During this period, Lieutenant White displayed exceptional ability and worked tirelessly in the indoctrination and train-

ing of nurses and hospital corpsmen under supervision. Through her professional skill and through knowledge of the personnel problems involved in hospital administration, she rendered invaluable assistance to the Force Medical Officer in assignment of nurses to other hospitals in the South Pacific. Her initiative and skillful leadership were an inspiration to the officers and men with whom she came in contact and were keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

Some of her other accomplishments were American Defense, Asiatic-Pacific Theater and World War II Victory awards.

She served a total of 30 years and two months in the service. "It was worth being in the military all those years. I always liked to help people," she said.

After her service to her country, she returned to her native land of New Bethlehem, where she met her husband, Carl Henry. Faye never had any children of her own, but she's become a stepmother to Carl's three children.

Henry was in her early 60s when she was married for the first time. "In the Navy, you couldn't marry or you were automatically out of the service," she said. Of course this rule has now changed.

She said there have been other changes since she has served in the Navy. "Nursing has changed; there is so much paperwork and not as much nursing nowadays. The old Navy discipline changed after Pearl Harbor. The discipline went down because of the draft. We had people who didn't want to be there, so they didn't want to be disciplined."

She also thinks there have been changes with the role of the working woman. "I worked but didn't have a family to take care of. I don't know how women can keep a family and job. I believe they shouldn't work if they have families," Henry said.

Not only has there been a change in the U.S. Navy, but she also believes there has been a change in society.

"There have been changes in morals and living. There is too much violence and crime and robbery. There are also wars all over the world that have been caused by violence," said Henry.

She has seen the world change and New Bethlehem change. She has been an influence in our town and to the people who lived here.

Tabler said, "A minister once said, 'God won't have to do much with her to make her an angel.' This is the way I feel about Faye."

Henry has honored her country, and now we are honoring her as she becomes a living memory of the past for our celebration of the Memorial Day Parade.

Huffman, Debbie. "Local Veteran, 98, To Ride At Front of Memorial Day Parade." Leader-vindicator (New Bethlehem, Pa.), 26 May 1993, p. 1

In November 1993, she and two other WWI veterans from Clarion County were honored on the 75th anniversary of WWI.

Frank Whitlinger and Faye passed away in 1994, while Charles Whited lived to age 101, passing away in 1998. (His mother lived to age 109!)

Veterans

A ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of World War I was held in November. Honored were Clarion County's three surviving veterans of the war: Faye White Henry of New Bethlehem, who served in the Army during World War I and later enlisted in the Navy; Charles Whited, a Clarview resident who served in France with the Marine Corps; and Frank Whitlinger, also of Clarview, who served with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Representatives of area American Legion posts and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, joined Paul Lieberum, director of Clarion County Veterans Affairs, in conducting



Photos contributed

Fort Caswell WWI photo of Nurse Faye E. White.



Photo of White in her 90s.

the ceremony. The veterans received commemorative medals, replicas of the Victory Medal which was presented to those who served in World War I.

Family members brought uniforms, medals, bayonets and pictures for display at the program. The original Victory Medal and 75th anniversary medal owned by Mr. Whitlinger are displayed in the lobby at the nursing home. Clarview presented each veteran with a video and portfolio of photos of the program.

Franklin News Herald (Franklin, PA), 18 Feb 1994, p. E-10.

Faye Elmo White Henry passed away on July 25, 1994. A newspaper clipping of her obituary was saved by her family.

Decorated Navy Nurse, 99, Dies At Her Cottage Hill Home

A local woman who was the recipient of the first Bronze Star ever awarded to a U.S. Navy nurse died Monday afternoon, July 25, 1994, at her home in Cottage Hill at the age of 99.

Faye E. Henry of New Bethlehem RD 3 received the medal in 1944 for meritorious service to the U.S. Government during World War II. She had been appointed to the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps in September 1921, where she served until December 31, 1947. She was also awarded the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, and a commendation from President Harry Truman for Outstanding Service.

A 1916 graduate of Allegheny General Hospital School of Nursing in Pittsburgh, she also served in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps from September 1918 to June 1919 and was awarded the World War I Victory Medal and American Defense Medal.

She resigned on March 20, 1950, with the rank of commander in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps.

Born December 6, 1894, in Porter Township, she was the daughter of John and Cora (Buzzard) White.

She married Carl E. Henry on November 3, 1954, in New Bethlehem. He preceded her in death on May 29, 1976.

Mrs. Henry was a longtime and devoted member of First Baptist Church in New Bethlehem and was active in various organizations.

She was a member of Walter W. Craig Post 354, American Legion.

She is survived by three stepchildren, Roland C. Henry of New Castle, Elizabeth A. Mooney of Clarion and Robert E. Henry of Clarion; six step-grandchildren, six step-great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was preceded in death by three brothers, William, Forest and Frank White; two sisters, Verlie E. McNutt and Elsie Pearl Young; a step-grandson, Terry Henry; and two step-great-grandchildren. Friends and relatives will be received from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. today (Wednesday) at the Charles D. Alcorn Funeral Home in Hawthorn.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday) at First Baptist Church in New Bethlehem. Additional viewing will be held from 10 a.m. to the time of the 11 a.m. funeral home. The Rev. Terry Tareila, pastor, will officiate. Entombment will follow in the mausoleum in New Bethlehem Cemetery.

She was laid to rest with her husband and several family members in New Bethlehem.

If you would like to help us honor Nurse Faye E. White or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range at ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com or go to caswellriflerange.com.

Donations continue to be sent supporting the historical preservation of the 1918 World War I Fort Caswell Rifle Range Memorial and the book featuring all the men and women that served in the Great War from Brunswick County. Send donations to Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range, 5 Foxfire Trace, Caswell Beach, NC 28465.

On Saturday, April 4, at 11 a.m., another roll call will be held beside the 1918 rifle range in Caswell Beach. The public is welcome. Bring a folding chair. Park in condo parking lots.