

Pauline Tetrick Yoursco

U.S. Army, Sergeant First Class

1917 - 2012

Written by Hannah Hobbs and Jordan Niggemyer

Instructed by Richard Zukowski



Pauline Tetrick's work as a recruiter often focused on young women graduating from college. *Women Veterans Historical Project at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries*

Pauline Tetrick was born July 2, 1917, in Bridgeport, Harrison County, West Virginia. She was the second youngest of three sisters, Ethel, Edith, and Alice, and one brother, Walter. Her parents were Hugh and Lillian Anderson Tetrick, both of northcentral West Virginia. She grew up on a farm on the outskirts of Bridgeport and Clarksburg that was her family's primary source of income. Due to the Great Depression, and having a large family, the Tetricks likely struggled a bit financially.

Farm life was hardly isolated for Pauline, who developed connections across the region. She graduated from high school in nearby Shinnston and then obtained a degree from West Virginia Business College in Clarksburg, while the Episcopal church she attended was located in Fairmont, Marion County. Young Pauline's social life was vibrant: she was a part of Ivy Rebekah Lodge 112, the YWCA Business Girls Club, Tau Phi Lambda Sorority, and the women's branch of the Supreme Forest Woodmen Circle—a not-for-profit fraternal benefit society.

Though most military recruits enlist shortly after high school or college, Pauline joined the U.S. Army when she was 36—twice the minimum recruitment age. Her reasons for joining in 1953, in the final year of the Korean War, are unclear. Perhaps military service had not appealed to her during World War II when women could not yet serve as full-fledged military members. That changed in 1948 with the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which granted permanent rank status to women in the military.

Pauline Tetrick Yoursco

Female enlistment saw a resurgence with the Korean War during which 25,000 served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC) alone. It was to the primary WAC Training Center at Camp Lee (now Fort Lee), Virginia, that Pauline was sent for her basic training. She does appear to have initially enlisted only for the duration of the Korean War, since she was discharged after a brief stint at the Army Medical Field School Headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Military life must have appealed to her, however, since she reenlisted with the WACs in 1955.

Pauline spent the next phase of her career traveling through Europe, and was stationed for a time at the Frankfurt Medical Service Area in Frankfurt, Germany, as a career counselor prior to 1970. Army career counselors are tasked with providing military personnel with consultation and guidance for future careers. They do so by gauging interests, education, strengths, and abilities. This job is important to ensure that all military members are able to maximize their career potential.

While serving overseas, Tetrick was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. Army Commendation Medals are awarded to military personnel that display consistent acts of heroism or "meritorious service." An Oak Leaf Cluster may be added if an individual receives that same award a second time or more, meaning Pauline was recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty on more than one occasion.

Once Pauline returned to the United States, she was put on the road as a WAC recruiter. Across West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Alabama, and elsewhere she organized informational sessions with women's groups; spoke on local radio stations; visited college campuses; and found ways to engage with young women looking for the next steps in their lives and careers. She eventually received two Army Certificates of Achievement for her outstanding record as a WAC recruiter.

Pauline Tetrick married Michael John Yoursco on December 3, 1971. Michael also had an extensive military record, serving with both the Navy and Air Force during the Korean and Vietnam wars.



Portrait of Sgt. Tetrick advertising an upcoming recruitment information session. *The Daily Item* (Sunbury, PA), 19 August 1959

Pauline Tetrick Yoursco

According to her obituary, the new Mrs. Yoursco retired with 20 years of military service in 1973. Her last recruiting post may have been the city of Indiana, Pennsylvania, where she was assigned just a few months before marriage.

The couple moved to a small farm outside Francis Mine, an unincorporated community in Harrison County, West Virginia, near where Pauline had grown up. She was soon involved in civic life in Fairmont and Shinnston again. Pauline took on membership in American Legion Post #31, Disabled American Veterans #24, Daughters of the American Revolution of Fairmont, Shinnston Women's Club, and the Victor Chapel United Methodist Church. The postmaster in nearby Enterprise recalled, "I could tell that [Pauline] had been in the military just by the way she carried herself."

Pauline died July 6, 2022, just four days after her 95th birthday. Still steeped in military matters to the very end, she passed away at Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center in Clarksburg. Her husband Michael followed two years later, and the two are interred together at the West Virginia National Cemetery in Pruntytown.



Recruiting methods evolved to fit the times. This 1962 WAC pamphlet has a very different look from its 1955 predecessor. *Women Veterans Historical Project at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries*



WACs on the march at Fort McClellan, which became the branch's primary training center in 1954. Pauline later taught clerical courses at the base. *Alabama State Archives*

Sources

Admin. "View SFC Pauline T. Yoursco, USA, Ret.'s Obituary and Express Your Condolences." Legacy.com, December 12, 2012. <https://www.legacy.com/funeral-homes/obituaries/name/sfc-pauline-t-yoursco-usa-ret-obituary?pid=158469209&v=batesville&view=guestbook>.

"Michael J. Yoursco." WV News, December 5, 2017. https://www.wvnews.com/theet/obituaries/michael-j-yoursco/article_2abf2bfc-5a62-11e4-9e8c-5baa0b71d014.html.

"Arcom - Army Commendation Medal: USA Military Medals." USAMM. Accessed April 5, 2023. <https://www.usamm.com/products/army-commendation-medal>.

"Career Counseling/Retention Specialists." Career Counseling/Retention Specialists - Today's Military. Accessed April 5, 2023. <https://www.todaysmilitary.com/careers-benefits/careers/career-counselingretention-specialists#:~:text=Career%20counseling%20retention%20specialists%20provide,education%2C%20strengths%2C%20and%20abilities>.

Maxine Weser. Email message on Shinnston Veteran Inquiries to Debra Herndon and Kyle Warmack. March 9, 2023.

"Michael J. Yoursco." WV News, December 5, 2017. https://www.wvnews.com/theet/obituaries/michael-j-yoursco/article_2abf2bfc-5a62-11e4-9e8c-5baa0b71d014.html.

"Obituary Information for SFC Ret." Obituary information for. Accessed April 5, 2023. <https://www.perinefunerals.com/obituaries/SFC-ret?obId=11525273>.

FamilySearch. Accessed April 5, 2023. <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89M1-Y356?i=4>.

"Women in the Army History." U.S. Army. Accessed April 18, 2023. <https://www.army.mil/women/history/>.

Resting Place

West Virginia National Cemetery
42 Veterans Memorial Lane, Grafton, WV 26354
(304) 265-2044

Section 5
Site 381

Date of interment: July 10, 2012

About the West Virginia National Cemeteries Project

The West Virginia National Cemeteries Project is a program of the West Virginia Humanities Council, funded in part by the Veterans Legacy Program of the Department of Veteran Affairs and initiated in 2021. All biographies produced as part of this program are composed by West Virginia high school students, who conduct original research on veterans interred at the Grafton National Cemetery or the West Virginia National Cemetery, both of which are located in or near Grafton, Taylor County, West Virginia.

As home to one of the nation's earliest National Cemeteries, the community of Grafton has longstanding traditions of honoring America's veterans, including the longest continuously celebrated Memorial Day parade in the United States. The Grafton National Cemetery, located in the heart of the city and founded in 1867, is typically the endpoint of each year's parade. When the Grafton National Cemetery began to run short of space during the 1960s, the West Virginia National Cemetery was dedicated in 1987, just a few miles outside of Grafton in the community of Pruntytown. The same National Cemetery Administration staff cares for both facilities.

The West Virginia Humanities Council is proud to thank the following organizations for their participation in the West Virginia National Cemeteries Project: West Virginia Archives and History, the West Virginia University history department, Taylor County Historical and Genealogical Society, Taylor County Public Library, and Grafton High School.

Please refer comments or questions to the West Virginia Humanities Council
1310 Kanawha Blvd E, Charleston, WV 25301
programs@wvhumanities.org
www.wvhumanities.org
304.346.8500