

First Woman Soldier In America Died In 1800

**Margaret Corbin Fought In Battle
Of Revolution Until Husband
Died At Her Feet.**

Between West Point and Swinton, overlooking the Hudson, is the grave of Capt. Margaret Corbin, of the field artillery of the Continental Army, who is said to have been the first woman to fight in battle in the Revolution. For a long time, due to her nickname of "Molly," Mrs. Corbin's identity was confused with that of Molly Pitcher, who served a gun in the Battle of Monmouth, 1778, when her husband, John Hayes, fell, using her apron and skirts for wadding. For a long time the grave in the Hudson Valley was believed to be that of Molly Pitcher.

In a defense of the fortification known as Washington Heights, Mrs. Corbin and her husband John worked a gun together, the wife swabbing and ramming, the husband aiming and handling the breech vent and firing fuses. Corbin fell dead at his wife's feet. She called a soldier to do the work she had herself been doing and stepped behind the gun and poured an avenging, continuous, almost point blank fire into the advancing Hessians until she fell with a grapeshot wound which was believed to be mortal.

When the Invalid Regiment was mustered out, Margaret Corbin, who had been restored to health at a Philadelphia hospital, was commissioned as a captain of artillery. The United States had granted her a half-pay pension and the State of Pennsylvania had presented her with a gold-hilted sword. Her only friends were the soldiers with whom she and her husband had served. The regiment had been disbanded on the Hudson River and she went to the neighborhood of West Point, where she died about 1800.

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