

Lt. Elenora Jones, World War II Nurse, Honored at Virginia War Memorial

(Article by Francine Aytes Hunter and Karen Hart, Lancaster Virginia Historical Society. Photo by Francine Aytes Hunter.)

On March 18, 2024, the Department of Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary hosted a public ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond to commemorate the twelve courageous women from Virginia who died while in service to their country during wartime.

The program, “Honor Their Valor - A Tribute to 12 Fallen Women War Heroes,” included recognition of Elenora Payne Jones of Lancaster County, who served as a First Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II.

Jones, whose first name is variously recorded as Elnora, was the daughter of Luther Jones and Fannie Payne Jones of Ottoman. She spent six years as a trained nurse, including three years in the Army. Shortly after returning from two years of overseas duty, Jones died of sickness in the military hospital in Brigham City, Utah, on November 6, 1945, at age 40. Funeral services were held at Hartswell Baptist Church in Lancaster County, followed by interment at the Jones home property.

Jones began her overseas service in Australia, then was transferred to New Guinea and the Philippines with the 268th Station Hospital, a segregated black medical unit. According to the U.S. Army Center of Military History, “The Army Nurse Corps accepted only a small number of black nurses during World War II. When the war ended in September 1945, just 479 black nurses were serving in a corps of 50,000.”

**FUNERAL SERVICES FOR
LIEUT. ELENORA JONES**

Funeral services for Elenora Jones (colored), First Lieutenant, Army Nurse Corps, who died last week in Birmingham Hospital, Utah, were held Monday afternoon at Heartswell Baptist Church followed by interment at the Jones home at Ottoman. The American Legion assisted in the services.

Lieut. Jones, 40, the daughter of Luther and Fannie Jones, had been a trained nurse for the past six years, after receiving her training in New York, Baltimore and Staten Island.

She had been in the Army for three years, two years of which time she served overseas in New Guinea, Australia and the Philippines. She had returned to the States only a short time before her death.

Lieut. Jones had been making her home out the county for the past 18 or 20 years.

Francine Aytes Hunter attended the, commemoration at the Virginia War Memorial as a member of the Lancaster Virginia Historical Society and on behalf of Hartswell Baptist Church representing Pastor Tammy Veney-Scott. Hunter reported that poignant moments were shared in the open pavilion of the Shrine of Memory, where a 22-foot-tall statue of a woman in grief stands with an eternal flame that flickers at her feet.

Of the 12,000 names of service members engraved onto the Virginia War Memorial walls, there are only twelve women, nine who died during World War II and three who died in Iraq or Afghanistan in the Global War on Terrorism. Cara Buckley, Department Guard Officer for the Department of Virginia VFW Auxiliary stated, “Today we remember and honor these women for their sacrifice, bravery, and unwavering dedication to the principles of liberty and justice...they stood shoulder to shoulder with their brothers in arms, facing the same dangers and challenges, yet not recognized for their valor. Today we rectify that oversight by remembering them, honoring them, and ensuring that their legacy endures.” Auxiliary members continued the ceremony with a “reflective moment of silence and a presentation of the evergreen tribute, representing the undying love for these women so [they] will not be forgotten, and the white flower, symbolizing purity and unselfish devotion to our God, country, profession and families.”

The Lancaster Virginia Historical Society assisted the VFW with research about Lt. Jones, but was unable to connect with any living relatives. The Historical Society welcomes additional veteran information for their genealogical library files and can be contacted at lancastervahistory.org or 804-462-7280. To learn more about the Virginia War Memorial, visit vawarmemorial.org.

