

PFC Carmen Garcia Rosado

By: Tony (The Marine) Santiago



PFC Carmen García Rosado

Among the first 200 Puerto Rican women to serve in the U.S. Women's Army Corps

PFC Carmen Garcia Rosado (born October 29, 1926) is an educator, author and activist for the rights of women veterans who was among the first 200 Puerto Rican women to be recruited into the WAC's during World War II. Her book "LAS WACS-Participacion de la Mujer Boricua en la Segunda Guerra Mundial" (The WACs-The participation of the Puerto Rican women in the Second World War), is the first book to document the experiences of the first 200 Puerto Rican women who participated in said conflict as members of the armed forces of the United States

Early years

Garcia Rosado was the seventh of nine siblings born in Humacao, Puerto Rico to Jesus Garcia Doble and Maria Rosado Arce de Garcia. Her father was the foreman of a sugar plantation who would often be assigned to work in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, thus inspiring the desire within Garcia Rosado to travel and see the world beyond Puerto Rico. She received her primary and secondary education in the towns of Las Piedras and Caguas. She continued her education in Santurce and graduated from Santurce Central High School. In 1944, at the age of 18, she earned her teachers diploma from the University of Puerto Rico and worked in her profession in the mountainous areas between the towns of Las Piedras and Humacao. On September 17, 1944, "El Mundo", a local newspaper, announced that the United States were seeking women volunteers for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAC's).

World War II

By this time the United States had entered World War II and therefore needed to boost its military capabilities; as a result, the Army ordered Puerto Rico's 65th Infantry|65th Infantry Regiment to full war strength and drafted many Puerto Ricans — even those whose knowledge of English was minimal. As a result the Army recognized the need for bilingual personnel to fill in the clerical positions left empty by the male soldiers who were sent to the front lines. In 1944, the Army sent three WAC (Women's Army Corps) recruiters to the island to organize a unit of 200 WACs. Over 1,500 women responded to the call and applied, however only 200 were selected, among them, against her parents wishes, was Garcia Rosado.

After being sworn in during the ceremonies held in San Juan, Garcia Rosado and the other 199 women were sent to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia for their basic training. The women were tested for

their abilities and were given further training. Their duties varied, some were assigned as dental assistants, others as clerks and so on. Garcia Rosado was assigned to the position of dental assistant. The women were assigned to Company 6, 2nd Battalion, 21st Regiment of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, a segregated Hispanic unit, and upon the completion of their training were sent to the Port of Embarkation of New York City.

Post World War II

The American participation in the Second World War came to an end in Europe on May 8, 1945 when the western Allies celebrated "V-E Day" (Victory in Europe Day) upon Germany's surrender, and in the Asian theater on August 14, 1945 "V-J Day" (Victory over Japan Day) when the Japanese surrendered by signing the Japanese Instrument of Surrender. The women of Company 6, 2nd Battalion, 21st Regiment of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps returned to Puerto Rico on January 6, 1946, where Garcia Rosado and the others were Honorably Discharged from the military. After the war, Garcia Rosado, like so many other women in the military, returned to civilian life.

From 1946 to 1948, Garcia Rosado continued in her profession as a teacher, during which time she earned her Bachelors of Arts degree from the Interamerican University, then known as the Polytechnic Institute at San German, Puerto Rico. She traveled through various states of the United States to work on her tesis "Career Education" and worked on her post graduate Doctorate in supervision and administration in education.

Later years

Garcia Rosado retired in 1979, but continued to work at Ana G. Mendez's Puerto Rico Institute Jr. College and later as the Resident Director of the "Señoritas de la Universidad del Sagrado Corazon" (University of the Sacred Heart). In 1989, she was named consultant to the Director of Veterans Affairs in Puerto Rico. In her position she became an activist and worked for the rights of the Puerto Rican women veterans. Among the things that she sought and her accomplishments, while in her position, were the following:

1. That the rights earned and back up by law number 13,1980, also known as the Letter of rights of the Puerto Rican Veteran, be respected.
2. That a register of all the Puerto Rican women veterans be made and that an Association of United Puerto Rican Female Veterans be organized.
3. That the veterans receive a funeral with full military honors and that they be permitted to be interned in whichever cemetery their families choose.
4. That a monument dedicated to the Puerto Rican women veterans be erected.
5. Garcia Rosado was named president of the Association of United Puerto Rican Female Veterans.

Written works

In 2006, Garcia Rosado published her book titled "LAS WACS-Participacion de la Mujer Boricua en la Segunda Guerra Mundial" (The WACs-The participation of the Puerto Rican women in the Second World War), the first book to document the experiences of the first 200 Puerto Rican women who participated in said conflict as members of the armed forces of the United States.

Honors and recognitions

Tribute from the "Female Mentorship Training"

Named "Distinguished Veteran of the Year" (2006)

Resolution from the Puerto Rican Senate, in name of all the female veterans of Puerto Rico.

Named "Grand Marshall" in the Veterans Day parade of Puerto Rico.

Awards and decorations

Among Garcia Rosado's awards and decorations are:

|Army Good Conduct Medal

Women's Army Corps Service Medal

American Campaign Medal

World War II Victory Medal

Further reading

*"LAS WACS"-Participacion de la Mujer Boricua en la Segunda Guerra Mundial; by: Carmen Garcia Rosado; page 60; 1ra. Edicion publicada en Octubre de 2006; 2da Edicion revisada 2007; Registro Propiedad Intelectual ELA (Government of Puerto Rico) #06-13P-)1A-399; Library of Congress TXY 1-312-685;