

**VOLUME 1**

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**Margaret Cochran Corbin:**  
**Revolutionary Soldier**

**Lead: During the Battle of Fort Washington in November, 1776 Molly Corbin fought the British as hard as any man.**

**Intro.: "A Moment in Time" with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Margaret Corbin was a camp follower. At that time women were not allowed to join military units as combatants but most armies allowed a large number of women to accompany units on military campaigns. They performed tasks such as cleaning and cooking and due to**

**their proximity to battle often got caught up in actual fighting. Mrs. Washington was a highly ranked camp follower. She often accompanied the General on his campaigns and was at his side during the dark winter of 1777 at Valley Forge. Many of these women were married, some were not and occasionally performing those rather dubious social duties associated with a large number of men alone far from home.**

**Margaret Corbin was born on the far western frontier of Pennsylvania. Her parents were killed in an Indian raid and she was raised in the home of her uncle. In 1772 she married John Corbin who, at the outbreak of hostilities in 1776, enlisted in the First**

**Pennsylvania Artillery. He was a matross (as in mattress), an assistant to a gunner. Margaret accompanied her husband having learned his duties when his unit was posted to Fort Washington on Manhattan Island near present day 183rd Street in New York City. They were assigned to a small gun battery at an outpost on Laurel Hill, northeast of the Fort on an outcropping above the Harlem River.**

**On November 16, 1776 the British moved on Fort Washington and brought intense fire on the small isolated battery in which the Corbins served. Hessian troops assaulted the position and John was killed. Margaret took over the duties of her husband and was seriously wounded.**

**Her arm was nearly shot off and her breasts were severely lacerated. The British eventually overran the position but Margaret was allowed to go American-held Philadelphia for medical care.**

**For most of the rest of her life Margaret was an invalid drawing a small Congressional pension given in honor of her faithful service at Fort Washington. She was a heavy drinker with a nasty temper and a sharp tongue and so uncouth that the post commissary officer at West Point wrote the Secretary of War, " I am at a loss what to do with Captain Molly. She is such an offensive person that people are unwilling to take her in charge. Death in 1800 helped**

**rehabilitate her reputation and because of her war record, Margaret Corbin, Captain Molly of Fort Washington, is buried in the post cemetery at West Point.**

**From the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

### **Resources**

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**Ward, Harry M. "Margaret Cochran Corbin and Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley," *Women in World History*. Waterford, CT: Yorkin Publications, publication date uncertain.**