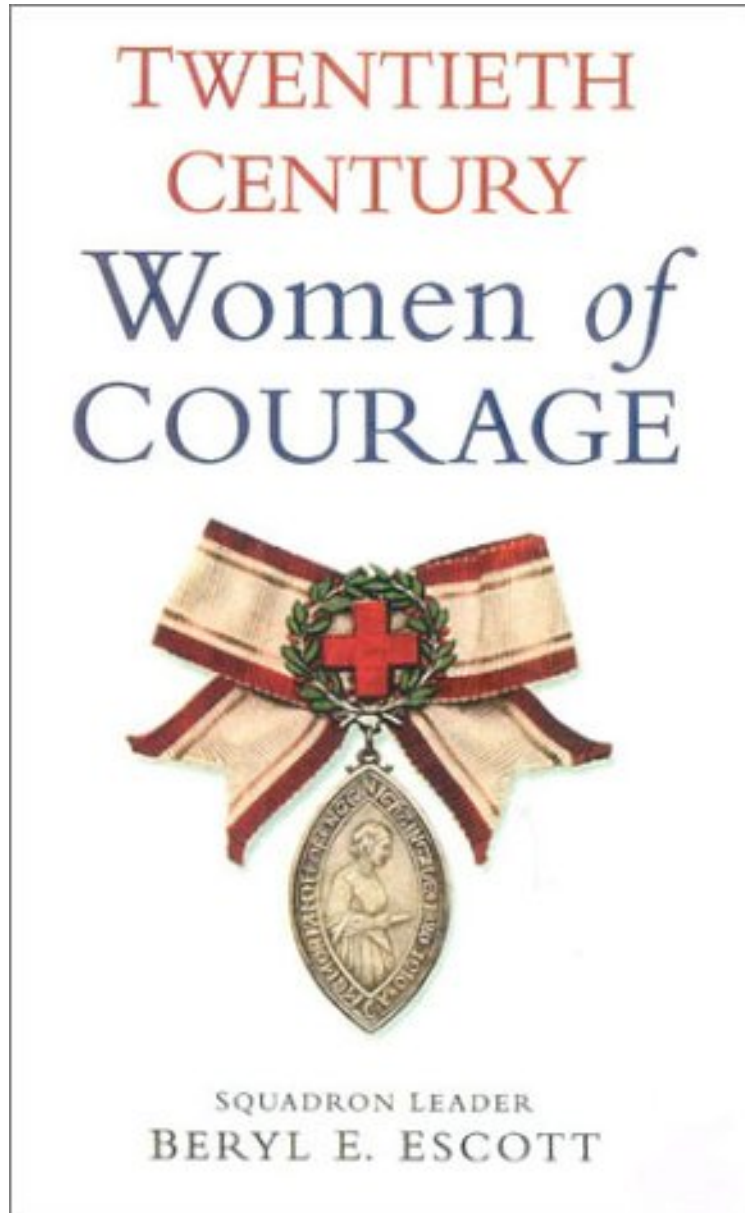


(Pdf free) Twentieth Century Women of Courage

Twentieth Century Women of Courage

Beryl E. Escott

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Beryl E. Escott : Twentieth Century Women of Courage before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Twentieth Century Women of Courage:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good Read - Questionable Story False DataBy SoarsEscott tells the stories of British, American and Commonwealth women who have received medals for courageous acts in the 20th

century. The book is interesting and readable. The number and variety of the stories about actions in both peace and war are truly impressive. Included are nurses and ambulance drivers (WW I) who served under appalling conditions, young English girls who worked under extreme danger in munitions factories, World War II women who worked in the midst of the Blitz and much more. The compelling story of the youngest "Woman of Courage" is about a 14 year old girl who saves a friend from drowning. Having said all of the above, there is also a story about one Karen Mast, supposedly a WW-2 combat pilot, that is quite simply false. Mast is introduced as "the only woman aviation cadet in the US Army Air Corps [sic]...[who] choose...Mosquito Mark XVI, modified to her...specifications to take her on highly dangerous photographic and confidential reconnaissance missions over Japanese-held territory..." Facts are lacking, the description and crew unbelievable, and the results unlikely. She claims to have flown her last mission with a single crewman, an RAAF Air Marshal, who operated the camera while she piloted the aircraft. The aircraft was seriously damaged by Japanese Zeros and both Mast and the Air Marshal seriously wounded. The Air Marshal was retired to a sheep farm and Mast was given her 4th Purple Heart and later, the Silver Star from Harry Truman. Women's history in World War II is well covered in Mattie Treadwell's excellent book *The Women's Army Corps*. WASP history is well covered in many books (eg: Boyd et al, *On Final Approach*). Mast was not in the WASP (who are well known and documented by name). The WASP, disbanded in late 44, did not fly outside the US, and hence did not fly in combat. Non-medical women in the Army were in the WAAC, later the WAC. No WAAC or WAC served as pilots; none were combatants. Sixteen WACs received the Purple Heart, most (if not all) for wounds received in London during the Blitz. None received the award twice, much less four times. No WACs received the Silver Star. Several Army nurses received the Silver Star for their courageous actions at Anzio. Hundreds of WACs received the Bronze Star for service in Europe or the Pacific. Mast's story is completely untrue. In correspondence with the author, she stated that she had received the information from a source she thought reliable. Her efforts to verify the story were unproductive so she accepted it. Readily available information on the Mosquito aircraft would have shown the impossibility of Mast's story. Her description of the Mosquito has no similarity with the real aircraft which has a cockpit so cramped that pilot and navigator/bombardier sit shoulder to shoulder. While some models of the Mosquito saw limited service with the RAAF in the South Pacific late in the war, the Model Mark XVI was not one of them. Nor were the RAAF Mosquitos involved in the kind of combat operations claimed by Mast. The RAAF had relatively few senior officers, and no officer of the rank of Air Marshal would have been involved in the mission described! Inquiries to the National Personnel Records Center where the records of US military personnel are kept revealed that there is absolutely no record of anyone one named "Karen Mast." It is unfortunate in a book with many good stories that one that is completely false stands out. In extensive tables at the end of the book, Escott attempts to identify women award recipients by country, award given and name. This is a daunting task, certainly for American women, because no centralized records exist. It is no surprise to find the list of Americans appears to be both incomplete and inaccurate. A few examples: Four WW-1 Navy nurses received the Navy Cross (Sterner, *In and Out of Harm's Way*), including Lena Higbee, listed by Escott as receiving the DSC. Ruth Streeter, listed as "Col WAVES," was the WW-2 leader of the Women Marines; she is listed under "Commendations for Heroism." Although her service was exceptional and, some might agree under trying circumstances, "heroism" does not seem a likely description. CAPT Leaverton, and LT COLs Holleran and Reinhold are listed as recipients of the "Marine Corps Medal (with V for Combat);" each woman received the Bronze Star Medal for service in Vietnam (Stremlow, *A History of the Women Marines 1946-77*). About 600 WAC received the Bronze Star Medal for service during WW-2 (Treadwell). Several hundred Army nurses were also probably recipients. Escott lists a total of 26. A final puzzle: the book contains no footnotes. An extensive bibliography (including Treadwell, Stremlow and Morden [post WW-2 WAC]) is provided, but the books do not appear to have been consulted. Recommended reading, but be aware of the discrepancies.

This book is highly illustrated and features women from Great Britain, the USA, and from the old commonwealth countries of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.