

## Hello Girls Summary and Program Materials

### Veterans Clinic Symposium

April 28, 2023

The Signal Corps operators, affectionately called “Hello Girls” were America’s first women soldiers. During their time in service their skills were integral in winning World War I. General John Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, called for expert female switch board operators who were fluent in French as well as English, when inexperienced doughboys proved to be unfit for the job. Pershing recognized that without communication for even an hour, the military effort would collapse. While the Signal Corps women operators faced many challenges in a war zone, their swift skills and positive attitudes earned them the respect of their male colleagues in the military. The Hello Girls underwent baptism by fire when German troops pounded Paris with heavy artillery. Sadly, following their honorable military service, these women did not receive either military recognition or veterans benefits. Thanks to Mark Hough and the National Organization of Women’s dedicated crusade on their behalf, President Jimmy Carter signed into law a statute recognizing the Hello Girls’ meritorious service. Claudia Friddell will interview Mark Hough to discuss his success in helping the Hello Girls receive their historic recognition as the first women soldiers. To learn more about the Hello Girls, we suggest visiting these links:

<https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2021/3/hello-girls-kept-world-war-i-communications-humming>

<https://www.amazon.com/Hello-Girls-Cokie-Roberts/dp/B07V4TP7G2>