“The Hello Girls”
America’s First Women Soldiers

2020 Webinar Series
Welcome

“The Hello Girls”
America’s First Women Soldiers

2020 Webinar Series
Control Panel

2020 Webinar Series
Theo Mayer
Chief Technologist &
Program Manager

World War One
Centennial Commission

Control Panel

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“The Hello Girls”  
America’s First Women Soldiers

Dr. Elizabeth Cobbs  
Historian & Author  
“The Hello Girls” - Harvard Univ. Press

2020 Webinar Series
“Utterly delightful... This terrific book pays them a long-awaited tribute.”
—Christian Science Monitor

The Hello Girls
America's First Women Soldiers

Elizabeth Cobbs
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE HAMILTON AFFAIR
Any descendants of the seven units of Signal Corps women (I have a complete list), please contact me below. I would like to include any stories, letters, photos of your ancestresses in my definitive history of their role in the unexpected, rapid conclusion of WWI.

"I was a member of the first women's combatant unit in the US Army."

Oleda Joure Christides, Signal Corps, AEF Chaumont, France 1918–1919.
The SIGNAL CORPS
TRAIMS MEN FOR
TELEGRAPH  TELEPHONE
RADIO

There is in Your Locality a
U. S. ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE
Joan of Arc Saved France

WOMEN OF AMERICA
SAVE YOUR COUNTRY
Buy WAR SAVINGS STAMPS

UNITED STATES TREASURY DEPARTMENT
IF YOU WANT
To
FIGHT!
JOIN THE MARINES
QUEEN MARY'S 
ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS.

WE'RE LOOKING TO YOU TO JOIN OUR CIRCLE!

ENROL TO-DAY
FULL PARTICULARS AND FORMS OF APPLICATION FROM THE NEAREST EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE. ASK AT POST OFFICE FOR ADDRESS.
Back our girls over there
United War Work Campaign
President Wilson is deceiving the world when he appears as the prophet of democracy. President Wilson has opposed those who demand democracy for this country. He is responsible for the disfranchisement of millions of Americans. We in America know this; the world will find him out.
Secret Orders
to
Miss Banker
Miss Fresnel
Miss Price

1. With luck, I shall want you by the 26th or 27th. In the meantime, get helmets and gas masks. Better ask Capt. Gibb to get you the new American style masks. You can talk while wearing them. When you get the masks, learn how to put them on and wear them.

2. Bring all your worldly goods. The Buckingham can handle what you cannot carry. I will send a truck to Chauvot for your things and a car for you.

3. I will arrange for quarters and a mess for you at the new place but it would be well to bring your regular soldier mess kit if you can get them. They should be in handy later.

4. This new job is probably for the duration of the war so kiss your happy home goodbye and get ready for a roving life.

Hett
Signalo
VICTORY
hath crowned the
valor of thy sons.
O America, who
now lay by thy
sword unsheathed
and turn again
to paths of peace
beneath thy glo-
rious citizenship.
TESTER, HELLER INTRODUCE BILL TO HONOR THE 'HELLO GIRLS'

Senators Recognize Military Service and Fight for Veteran Status of the Women Telephone Operators of WWI

(Big Sandy, Mont.) - U.S. Senators Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.) are honoring the groundbreaking service of the women who connected American and French forces on the front lines during World War I.

The Senators' bipartisan Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act will award the women of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, dubbed the Hello Girls, with the Congressional Gold Medal for their service and subsequent 60 year fight to be recognized as veterans.

S.206 –

Hello Girls' Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019

Senators Tester and Blackburn

H.R.1953

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver
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Q&A

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THE HELLO GIRLS

A New Musical: In Concert

Prospect Theater Company

THE IGNITE SERIES
“The Hello Girls”
America’s First Women Soldiers

Cara Reichel
Co-Creator & Director
The Hello Girls - Off-Broadway Musical

Peter Mills
Co-Creator, Music & Lyrics
The Hello Girls - Off-Broadway Musical

2020 Webinar Series
THE HELLO GIRLS
A NEW AMERICAN MUSICAL
BACKGROUND

Prospect
Theater Company

established 1998
in our 22nd year
of supporting, developing and producing
new musical theater

CARA REICHEL
Producing Artistic Director

PETER MILLS
Resident Writer
RESEARCH

In Uncle Sam’s Service
Women Workers with the American Expeditionary Force, 1917–1919
Susan Zeiger

Getting the Message Through
A Graphic History of the U.S. Army Signal Corps

The Hello Girls
America’s First Women Soldiers
Elizabeth Cohen

HELLO GIRLS HERE IN REAL ARMY DUDS
Signal Corps Colors Adorn Hats of New Bilingual Wire Experts
THEY HAVE SERGEANTS, TOO
Company of 33 Regulars Represents Half of States of Union

AMERICAN WOMEN IN WORLD WAR I
They Also Served
LETtie GAVIN

UNCLE SAM PRESENTS "HELLO, GIRLS!"

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RESEARCH

THE DIARY OF BERTIE M. HUNT, a woman who served in the U.S. Army in France during WWI as a telephone operator with the Signal Corps. The diary covers the year, 1918.
DEVELOPMENT

CAST SIZE: How many performers do we need to tell this story...?
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DEVELOPMENT

ACTOR/MUSICIANS
Disciplined Body of Hundred Being Recruited by Army Signal Corps

MUST SPEAK FRENCH

Will Replace Men in Bureau to Join Allen American Force

A disciplined army of "board soldiers" to take men in the gigantic telegraph network being built in France, together all the units of the expeditionary force, is being organized by the Army Signal Corps. Women have volunteered, and the female branch of the service is expected to be a success. The enlistment is being conducted under the slogan "Do as much to help Win."
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL

Grace & Suzanne
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL

The process of selection began. Miss de Blank, say, of Minnesota, is one of those that has applied, along with thousands of others. Her turn for examination finally comes. She presents herself at the offices of the Northwestern Bell Group.

With beating heart, she is led to an inner sanctum, containing a single table, with a telephone on it and a chair.

"Be seated, please." The attendant disappears, and she is alone.

The bell tinkles. Somewhat uncertainly, without having been instructed to do so, she answers the telephone.

“We Aren’t In The Army Yet”
The infamous “Hoboken incident” involving the second unit highlighted the problem, when spontaneous mixing between men and women challenged military procedure and gender-based social codes. Just before sailing in March 1918, a group of bored operators under Inez Crittenden organized a dance for themselves in an empty room at the port of embarkation, partnering with one another. Their laughter and music wafted into the hall, and intrigued men gravitated toward the attractive sound. A government document describes what happened next: “A number of officers, without any introduction, who were looking in at the doorway, came in and suggested that they would join them in the next dance.” The men helped the women push tables aside.

After some consideration, Miss Campbell accepted the offer, “partly out of patriotism, partly curiosity, and mostly because my sister was already in France as an Army nurse,” she said. Buying the uniform, however, was a problem for Miss Campbell. The price—$300 to $500—was a considerable sum for the average young woman in 1918. But help came from the Commercial Club of Emmet, who stepped in and held a community benefit picnic one hot afternoon in August. At the end of the day, the club president handed her enough money to purchase her Army wardrobe.

“Je M’En Fiche”
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL

HELLO GIRLS HERE
IN REAL ARMY DUDS

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Hats of New Bilingual
Wire Experts

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“Hello Girls”
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL
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“Lives On The Line”
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL

“The Duration”
FROM HISTORY TO MUSICAL

“Making History”
TheHelloGirlsMusical.com
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Q&A

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Wrap Up & Coming up

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Bonus Documentary: 6 minutes