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Waffen SS in Arlington?

It is impossible to fully describe the incredible exploits of this amazing naturalized American in a short paragraph, so we urge you to look up Larry Thorne in our database to learn more. Born as Lauri Allen Thörni in Finland in 1919, he fought successively for the flags of Finland, Germany, and the US as pictured here. He entered the Finnish service in 1938 and fought in the Winter War against the Russians. His outstanding performance there led to his commissioning, a training program with the German Waffen SS, service as a Waffen SS Captain in the Finnish Waffen SS Volunteer Battalion, and his command of a special Infantry detachment during the Continuation War against the Russians. Here he



became one of only 191 soldiers in all of history to be awarded the Mannerheim Cross, Finland's most distinguished military award. Fighting for a German unit against the Russians in 1945, he was taken prisoner by the British but returned to Finland after escaping from their POW camp. He was imprisoned after the war for fighting with the Germans. He immigrated to America by swimming from a Swedish cargo ship in the Gulf of Mexico to Mobile, Alabama. He enlisted in the US Army in 1954 and became a US citizen in 1957. He served two tours in Vietnam in the Special Forces and was killed there in 1965. He was posthumously promoted to Major and awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Today he is honored in Mannerheim Cross exhibit at the Finnish Infantry Museum as well as in his own exhibit at the Finnish Military Museum. He is buried in the Arlington National Cemetery, thought to be the only former Waffen SS soldier buried there.

An Adventurous Date Ends Badly....

The US Army only had 403 nurses when WWI broke out. Nurses were heavily recruited and trained nurses already serving in hospitals could enter the war effort directly either through the Army or through the Red Cross. By the end of the war over 22,400 nurses were serving in the Army Nurse Corps and over 10,000 had deployed overseas. One of them was Marion Overend, the youngest of ten children in a large family in Ontario, Canada. Marion had moved to New York to train in nursing at the Mount Sinai Hospital, receiving her diploma in March 1916. The Army's Base Hospital # 3 was organized in September 1916 at the Mount Sinai Hospital, and was called to active service fourteen months later in November 1917, mobilizing and training at the armory of the First Field Hospital, National Guard, New York City. The nurses were mobilized on January 15, 1918, and Marion was among the 65 called. She was eventually assigned to Camp Hospital # 14, located at Mars-sur-Allier, in the Nievre department. Nearby was the Army's Aviation school in Issoudun, which was the world's largest airport at the time with its thirteen runways. On June 16, 1918, while visiting one of the surrounding flying fields, Marion persuaded Captain John Thorp, Jr. to take her up for a plane ride in a Nieuport Type 80 two-seat trainer with the number 951 on the side. Unfortunately, after takeoff, the plane crashed, killing Nurse Marion. Captain Thorp survived. Marion was originally buried in Issoudun with full military honors and now rests at the St Mihiel American Cemetery. Her name appears as the only woman of the 172 Americans honored on the memorial at Paudy, France, listing those who perished at the Aviation Training Center.

