

Medal of Honor #4 Mary Edwards Walker

By C.E. Warner 3-8-22

The only woman ever awarded the Medal of Honor, she was a surgeon during the Civil War. Refused enlistment as anything but a nurse, she entered battle hospitals as a civilian and worked as a surgeon on her own. She was finally hired by the Union because of her work as a surgeon. She worked in several battlefield hospitals, treating wounded civilians and soldiers alike. She was captured by the Confederacy in 1864 when she crossed the lines to treat civilians and was traded for a southern surgeon 4 months later. Her medal was for this action. After the war, she continued as a doctor and campaigned for women's rights until her death in 1917. Her medal was revoked in 1917 because she was a woman but restored in 1977.

She was the only woman in surgeon class.

Finished with honors, but only offered nurse jobs.

Started own practice with husband impasse.

Divorced but alone treats the common mobs.

War starts. Enlistment denied, so travels

to battle hospitals as civilian.

Treats anyone as the scene unravels

regardless political opinion.

Crosses battle lines innocents to treat.

Captured, sent to a hospital prison.

Traded for southern doctor in defeat.

Finally recognized midst division.

Balance of life she does suffrage promote,

but dies two years before allowed to vote.