

Every sibling in this family served in World War II, including Don, Georgene, Richard, Mildred, and Gilbert Beckrich. More information at the Scott County Historical Society at https://www.scottcountyhistory.org.





The Beckrich Military Family
Don, Georgene, Richard, Mildred, Gilbert Beckrich

The Greatest Generation is roughly defined as the generation of individuals who came of age during the Great Depression, many of whom fought in World War II. What many people might forget is that latter part also included women.

One of the greatest was Georgene Beckrich, the first member of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) from Shakopee.

According to Lindsay Marshall, executive director of the Scott County Historical Society, in 1941, Edith Nourse Regers introduced the first bill establishing a women's auxiliary unit. The unit would let women fill non-combat roles, in turn allowing more men to be available for combat responsibilities. On July 1, 1943, the women attained military status. The Women's Army Corps (WAC) replaced the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) ninety days later.

According to Marshall, Georgene (sometimes spelled Georgina) was born in 1917 to Mathias and Mary Marschall Beckrich. Mathias grew up on a farm in Eagle Creek Township, later worked as a plumber, a janitor at the church, and then the foreman engineer at the foundry. Mary was the fifth child born to Anthony and Catherine Marschall. The couple was married at St. Mark's Catholic Church in Shakopee in October 1914 and began their married life in Eden Prairie before returning to Shakopee. Richard was born in 1916, with Georgene following the next year. Gilbert was born in 1919, Mildred followed in 1922, and the youngest sibling, Donald, was born in 1927.

According to the 1930 Federal Census, the family had moved to Eagle Creek Township and had begun farming, but by 1935 they were back in Shakopee living on Sixth Avenue West. In 1940, Georgene worked 65 hours per week doing housework. At this point she was 23 and attended school in Shakopee – graduating from St. Mark's and attending Shakopee High School. According to Marshall, "her sister, Mildred (who we will talk about in a moment) was 18 and had gone through two years of high school. At this point, she had received the most education of all her siblings.

"Georgene enlisted in the Women's Army Corps on Dec. 2, 1942 as an Aviation Cadet. The *Shakopee Argus-Tribune* noted that when Georgene was 25, she took her required entrance and medical exams at Fort Snelling the month prior. She would be sent to basic training at either Daytona Beach or Des Moines. She's listed as standing 62 inches and weighing 157 pounds." No more information was available about what she did during her time as a WAAC, but her service ended July 7, 1943, when she was a First-Class Specialist. The WAAC had a variety of fields including administration-related jobs, cooking, motor transportation, and communications.

"Georgene married Verner Nelson in 1947.The couple soon moved to Belle Plaine where Verner was working as a gas service man for a natural gas company. The couple had a son, Gary and a daughter, Sandra. Verner died in

1963 and Georgene passed away in 1991," according to an article from *Scott County Historical Society Gazette*.

Each sibling served in World War II, including Georgene's sister, Mildred. Mildred finished two years of high school. According to her World War II Army Enlistment paperwork, she worked as a maid prior to entering her time in the service. She entered as a private and was part of the quartermaster corps. Mildred enlisted September 24, 1943, and was discharged February 18, 1946. Her headstone notes she was a TEC 5, World War II.

Mildred never married but did return to Shakopee. After the war, she lived with her parents at 726 Third Avenue East and worked as telephone operator and clerk at Northwestern Bell Telephone Company, according to the 1950 census. By the 1980s she was living in an apartment near downtown. Mildred passed away at St. Francis Regional Medical Center in 1997 at the age of 74.

Bibliography

Marshall, Lindsay. *Scott County Historical Society Gazette*. www.scottcountyhistory.org.





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