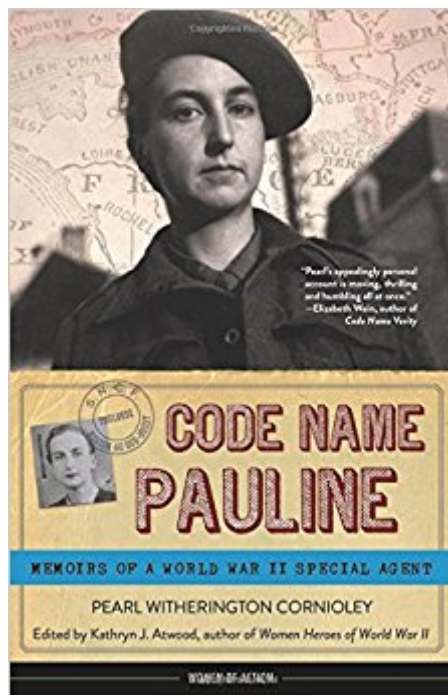


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Code Name Pauline: Memoirs Of A World War II Special Agent (Women Of Action)



Synopsis

An NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People There was a full moon on the evening of September 22, 1943, when Pearl Witherington, age 29, parachuted into France to aid the French Resistance as a special agent for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE). Out of the 400 agents sent to France during the German occupation, 39 were women. Pearl, whom the SOE called “cool and resourceful and extremely determined” and “the best shot, male or female, we have yet had,” became one of the most celebrated female World War II resistance fighters. In Code Name Pauline Pearl describes in a series of plainspoken reminiscences her difficult childhood and harrowing escape from France in 1940; her recruitment and training as a special agent; the logistics and dangers of posing as a cosmetics saleswoman to make her way around the country as an undercover courier; and both failed and successful attempts at sabotaging the Nazis. She tells how, when the leader of her network was caught by the Gestapo, she became “Pauline” and rose to command a 3,500-strong band of French Resistance fighters. With an annotated list of key figures, an appendix of original unedited interview extracts—including Pearl’s husband Henri’s story—and never-before-published photographs from Pearl’s personal collection, Code Name Pauline will captivate World War II buffs of any age and, just as Pearl wished, inspire young people.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

During WWII, Cornioley was one of 39 women who worked with the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) in France with the Resistance movement. Although she and the other members of the SOE were ordinary citizens, they played a crucial role in defeating the Germans. For seven months, Pearl worked as a courier under the assumed name Pauline. The editor of this English translation first learned about Cornioley while researching her book *Women Heroes of World War II* (2011). Until 1994, Cornioley had been reluctant to share her memoirs; however, she realized that young people needed to understand the dangerous situations people were willing to endure for freedom. She worked with a translator for the French edition, and she was later adamant that the English translation be accurate and not embellished. Thus, this work is straightforward and, at times, rather unimaginative in approach, but it could be a useful resource for a world-history library. Grades 9-12. --J. B. Petty --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Told in Pauline's own no-nonsense words, this is an eye-opening look at what life was really like for a secret agent fighting in occupied France." -- Steve Sheinkin, award-winning author of *Bomb: The Race to Build -- & Steal -- the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* "A wonderfully vivid and engaging account. [I] loved it." --Alex Kershaw, author of *The Longest Winter: The Battle of the Bulge*. "Pearl's appealingly personal account is moving, thrilling and humbling all at once... 'Never lose hope, never give in', is her fierce message to young readers. *Code Name Pauline* is both a shining tribute to the real and ordinary people whose relentless determination brought about an end to Nazi oppression in Europe, and an inspiration for future generations." -- Elizabeth Wein, author of the award-winning *Code Name Verity* "Code Name Pauline is the real deal -- a treasure trove of primary source material." -- Margi Preus, author of the Newbery Honour-winning *Heart of a Samurai & Shadow of the Mountain* "This honest and gripping memoir of the secret side of WWII behind enemy lines, elegantly edited by Kathryn Atwood, is a must-read, not only for anyone fascinated by the underground war in France, but also for anyone who admires bravery and ingenuity in the face of evil." -- Brendan Foley, co-author of *Under the Wire* "Young adults and adults will be fascinated to read this memoir detailing a piece of neglected World War II history." --Doreen Rappaport, author of the award-winning *Beyond Courage: The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust* "Pearl Witherington's fascinating memoir provides a concise yet illuminating account of some of SOE's audacious activities in occupied France during World War

II. Ideal for younger readers, or those new to the subject." -- Roger Moorhouse, author of *Berlin at War & Killing Hitler* "A gripping, true story of a courageous secret agent fighting behind enemy lines, as riveting as any work of historical fiction." -- Kirkus Reviews "This is an important first person account of the . . . little-known story of the women who daily lived under the threat of capture and execution." -- Library Media Connection --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Code Name Pauline is well laid out. Again being written long after the war, small inaccuracies slipped in (French school's day ended at 4:30 pm, not 3:30 pm). What I liked about the presentation is that the narrator (Kathryn J. Atwood) did a lot of research to put Pearl's story into context with insertions between the different sections. The reader cannot help but like, and wish to have met, the young woman Pearl Witherington Corniolly was. Her staunch refusal to let her story being taken over by the media, film makers, etc., immediately after the war, is remarkable in some ways - "I did what had to be done. I didn't question it". I'm glad she relented so young people could learn what it was really like and maybe let them find their own strength in our troubled time.

It's too bad that so much of the history of the Second World War is being lost as its participants die off. It is indeed good that Pearl's remarkable experiences have been recorded and published for future reference. She was indeed a courageous and intelligent woman who sacrificed her own safety in order to help people caught up in and damaged by the war. The writing style is spare and simple, easy to read, without losing the sense of understanding much more about parts of the war effort that can easily be overlooked.....as Pearl herself discovered when it was finally over and she frequently felt quite dismissed by civilians who had stayed home, or military people who had fought under more organized conditions. I would recommend this book to younger readers who need the opportunity to get more knowledge and understanding of what people have gone through to overcome a conquering dictator, especially when they have little help or chance of personal glory. It was recommended to me by a friend of my own age....we were children while this was going on and remember little of the news of that day. I had heard of the French Resistance but actually knew virtually nothing about their effort. I also understand little about the politics of the time, and now will do some studying to fill in some of those gaps. I hope teen-agers and young adults will be inspired by books like this to take a greater interest in history and thus have more understanding of what we must watch out for today.

Not as fancy a life as in the movies! Also a lot more believable. Great for students because you

have the direct memoirs AND the historical comments in a separate section. Contained a significant event I had never heard of before - the bombing of French ships in the Mediterranean by the British for fear the ships would be captured by the Germans. The British did first ask the French to surrender command to the British captain. Of course the French captain refused! This harmed the already strained relations between the British and French during the war.

Instead of a narrative memoir, this memoir reads more like excerpts from an interview, because that's how her story was compiled. And, there are many holes in the story that would have more meaning if one, for example, had read the writings of A.J. Liebling's from WWII, or had read Caroline Moorehead's *A TRAIN IN WINTER*, about the first group of women of the French Resistance to be deported to the death camps.

Absorbing reading. Another great true story of bravery in WW 2 of a driven woman who put her life on the line every day in a way different from the ordinary soldier.

A WW II true story of a woman who was determined to participate in the war efforts taking many risks. Not the best writing style since it is told by a woman nearing 100 years of age to the author...and she insisted her story be told in her words. Nevertheless, reading this short biography will inform and capture the imagination.

Very interesting reading for WW 2 history buffs. Real life tails as seen and lived by a person that survived a dangerous existence as a spy in German held France.

An excellent story about a hero almost more unbelievable than fictional hero material.

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