



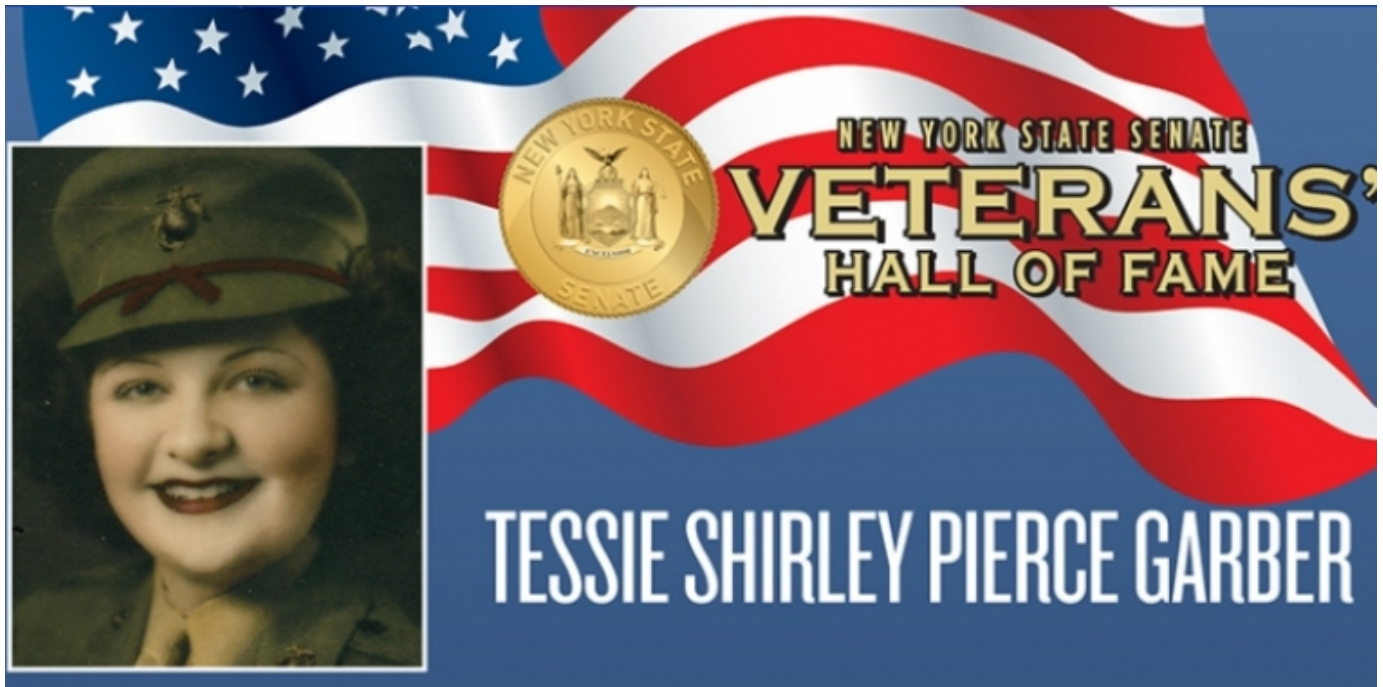
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Carl L. Marcellino

## Tessie Shirley Pierce Garber

CARL L. MARCELLINO May 15, 2018

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When the United States entered World War II, Tessie “Tess” Shirley Pierce Garber’s brothers entered the U.S. Army, and Garber felt strongly that women should be able to serve in the Armed Forces as well. She was unwilling to wait until she was 21 to join the Army WACs, so she decided to join the Navy WAVES or Coast Guard SPARS, which accepted 20-year-old women. As luck would have it, she met a woman Marine recruiter and ended up in the Marine Corps.

Ms. Garber's military adventure began on November 2, 1943 when she and seven women recruits met at a Cleveland, Ohio railroad station to proceed to Marine Boot Camp at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Her field training with the other women recruits was the same that the men received...cleaning rifles, manual of arms, target practice, obstacle course, guard duty, marching, running with pack and rifle, scaling cargo nets and calisthenics.

After training, Ms. Garber was assigned to a Signal Corps unit in Washington, D.C. that used Teletype machines and required secret clearance. She handled daily reports listing names of wounded, missing in action (MIA), and killed in action (KIA). On occasion, she and other women were taken to Walter Reed Army Hospital to help rehabilitate those who lost hands, arms, legs and eyesight. One day at a service club, she was hit by a ping-pong ball. That was how she met Morris Garber, and six months later, they were married.

Ms. Garber has been an active member of the Jewish War Veterans Post 655 for many years.