

Margie Stewart

Wabash, Wabash County

December 14, 1919 – April 26, 2012

Born Margery Stewart, she was born in Wabash, Indiana, where she was raised. She later attended Indiana University for a year, then moved to Chicago where she worked as a department store model. She then moved to Los Angeles in 1941 where she was signed by RKO pictures, making her silver screen debut in the 1942 *Here We Go Again*.

That same year she was asked to pose for three posters reminding GIs to keep secrets, write home, and buy War Bonds; her wholesome image quickly became popular with soldiers who wanted to meet the girl behind the photographs. She became the first and only official United States Army Poster girl during World War II. The Army eventually created 12 posters with Margie becoming a most welcome guest when she visited bases in America and England. However, Eleanor Roosevelt tried – but failed – to stop the posters because she thought they would make the soldiers too homesick.

Margie made 20 films in a very short period of time. But, after RKO declined to renew her contract, she undertook a 1945 USO tour that took her throughout Europe, which led her to relinquishing her film career. In 1945, she married Captain Jerry Johnson and settled in Southern California and in later years worked in the music business booking acts for the Hollywood Bowl, producing many great shows including The Beatles, Barbra Streisand, and The Beach Boys. She continued to support the military by donating the profits from sales of coffee cups and other items that carried reproductions of her posters to the USO.



Photo Courtesy: Pinterest



References will be published at the end of Women's History Month.