



Photos contributed

Susan Williams is among the first nurses to arrive at the Navy Base Hospital No. 1 in France.



An advertisement for 5,000 nurses needed in France

A World War I profile of Susan Adkins Williams

Editor's note: Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range is periodically offering short biographies of Brunswick County World War I veterans as part of its "Honor a Brunswick County World War I Veteran" project to raise funds for a World War I Memorial at the site of the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range.

Susie Williams (1879-1938) was born and raised in Southport. Her father, mother, stepmother and three siblings are buried in Old Smithville Cemetery in Southport. Only two sisters out of eight siblings married and had children, none of which remained in Southport. Their

gravesites are unknown.

Williams attended Long Island College Nursing Hospital sometime between 1905, when the Census listed her occupation as forewoman, and 1910, when the Census listed her as a private nurse.

This poster may have inspired Williams to offer her services to the Navy on June 27, 1917. The British and French governments requested that only graduate nurses be sent overseas. Nurses served without rank or commission and were not trained as soldiers, which was modified after the war, perhaps because of these women's extraordi-

nary service and bravery.

In September 1917, Williams boarded the USS Henderson to serve at the first base hospital the Red Cross organized for the Navy, Navy Base Hospital No. 1, in Brest, France. Chief nurse Francis Van Ingen was given the task of staffing.

To read more about Van Ingen's diary, additional stories of Nurse Susan Williams and the war, go to caswellriflerange.com. To help honor Susan Adkins Williams or another Brunswick County World War I veteran, follow the instructions on the website.