



## Mary Cummings

*Women Accepted for Volunteer  
Emergency Service (WAVES) Navy*

## Mary Cummings

Apr 16, 1921 - Apr 26, 2023

BIRTHPLACE: Dunkirk, NY

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### SOLDIER DETAILS

HIGHEST RANK: Lt.

DIVISION: Women Accepted for  
Volunteer Emergency Service  
(WAVES) Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION:  
American

HONORED BY: The Eisenhower  
Foundation

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### BIOGRAPHY

Mary was born on April 26, 1921, in Dunkirk, New York, the youngest of 4 children born to Helen and James Lynch. Mary spent her childhood and early adult years in Dunkirk and met her future husband, Bill Cummings, while in school. Mary received her teaching degree from Fredonia State Teachers college in 1942. In World War II, Mary enlisted in the Navy WAVES and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. She was one of the ranking officers over a unit of 100 young WAVES that were stationed at Vero Beach, Florida. The WAVES assisted the US Air Force with the development and training of young pilots in the use of a new technology at the time, called radar. Seventy years after the war in 2015, Mary, at the age of 94, was one of two women veterans from Kansas that were honored in Washington DC as part of the Honor Flight Network. After the war, Mary returned to Dunkirk and reunited with her high school sweetheart, Bill Cummings. Mary & Bill were married on September 21, 1946. The first of six children, Robert, was born 9 months later in July 1947. Five more children followed, and the family moved several times as Bill's career as a chemical engineer and plant manager evolved. In 1967, Bill took a job as Vice President of Koch Engineering and the Cummings family made one final relocation to Wichita, Kansas. Courtesy St. Thomas Church, Wichita, KS.