

Virginia Hall: The Remarkable Woman Who Turned the
Tides of WWII

Mavis Cropp, Eliza Smiley, and Maggie Webber
Group Documentary
Junior Division
Process Paper:
500 words

Process Paper

Our National History Day project highlights the life and accomplishments of the United States' most famous and influential female spy, Virginia Hall. Hall's story relates to the theme "Frontiers in History" by sharing the story of an incredibly prominent figure in the frontier of women's espionage and communications. Without her, the invasion of D-Day would not have succeeded due to the sheer influx of enemy forces. Hall's actions exhibited how minorities (Virginia was both a woman and a handicapped person) should not be underestimated, something that our group was encouraged and intrigued by.

When first introduced to National History Day, our group brainstormed many different topics, but we ended up settling on the broad topic of "Women in War." We knew that we had to narrow our topic down quite a bit, so we chose to focus on World War II, a war in that we knew women were involved on multiple fronts. We are all interested in espionage, having previously made a film about spies, so we decided to highlight a revolutionary female spy in WWII. When researching woman spies, we found the most, as well as some of the most impressive, information focusing on a particular person, Virginia Hall. We decided that she was the best person to focus on for our project, not only because she intrigued us the most, but also because she was the one that we felt fit the theme of "Frontiers" best.

Once focusing solely on Hall, we found many helpful sources and facts. We had been eyeing a book, *A Women of No Importance* by Sonia Purnell, as we thought it would help us in our research, but we did not know how to get our hands on it. Fortunately, we stumbled upon Purnell's adaptation for young readers, *Agent Most Wanted*, in our own school's library. We fully annotated this book, having access to Virginia's full life story, quotes, and pictures from actual interviews and documents. We organized all of our sources, as well as the dates we accessed

them and the information that we collected from them, in a Google Doc. Overall, we believe that our research went incredibly smoothly, which made it very easy to compile all our information to write our script and bibliography.

To create our final product, we first wrote a script to know exactly what we were going to say and included quotes based on what we prepared. We collected numerous images from websites, archives, and *Agent Most Wanted* to use. To create our actual documentary, we used the video editing app CapCut to compile our photos with audio recordings of us speaking.

Our historical argument is as follows: Virginia Hall, the first female spy of the Second World War, used her skills in espionage as well as her innocent appearance to help collect essential information that aided America and contributed to overthrowing the Axis Powers. Hall, the most famous female in federal communications during WWII, advanced the frontiers for woman espionage all over the world.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

“10 Amazing Female Spies Who Brought down the Nazis.” *Listverse*, 20 June 2014, listverse.com/2013/09/05/10-women-spies-who-brought-down-the-third-reich/. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source provided us with photos of female spies during the Second World War.

AJ Willingham, CNN. “Virginia Hall Being Awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1945.” *CNN*, 20 Apr. 2019, www.cnn.com/2019/04/20/us/virginia-hall-cia-spy-world-war-2-trnd/index.html. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source allowed us to find photos of Virginia Hall.

“Amazing Photos That Capture Everyday Life of France in the 1930s, Just before World War II.” *Vintag*, www.vintag.es/2018/07/1930s-france.html. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with photos of France during WW2, which are primary sources.

“American Flag Flying over Mount Suribachi.” *Pixels*, pixels.com/featured/american-flag-flying-over-mount-suribachi-wwii-war-is-hell-store.html. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found a photo of a WW2 battle, which is a primary source.

“An Army Reconsidered —Vichy France’s Stubborn Defense of the Levant in the Second World War.” *Military Strategy Magazine*,
www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/an-army-reconsidered-vichy-frances-stubborn-defense-of-the-levant-in-the-second-world-war/. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source helped us find images of troops and locations during the Second World War.

Baker, Mandy. “Sabotage and Subversion: How Secret Agents Helped Win WWII.” *We Are the Mighty*, 1 June 2022,
www.wearethemighty.com/mighty-history/special-operations-executive/. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source helped us find photos of troops in WW2.

Bufkin, Ellie. “Meet Virginia Hall, One of the Unsung Heroes of D-Day.” *The Federalist*, 9 June 2018,
thefederalist.com/2018/06/09/meet-virginia-hall-one-of-the-unsung-heroes-of-d-day/. Accessed 16 May 2023. This source helped us find photos of Virginia Hall.

Burges, Ginny. “Remarkable Women: The Life and Times of Virginia Hall (Part 1).” *Rhapsody in Words*, 5 Nov. 2019,
rhapsodyinwords.com/2019/11/05/remarkable-women-the-life-and-times-of-virginia-hall-part-1/. Accessed 9 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with photos of Virginia Hall, making it a primary source.

Daniel. "The Secrets of the Office of Strategic Services Personnel Records: Spotlight on Virginia Hall." *The Text Message*, 16 Apr. 2020, text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2020/04/16/the-secrets-of-the-office-of-strategic-service-s-personnel-records/. Accessed 13 Feb. 2023. This source gave us 10 photos of official documents written about Virginia Hall. It helped us understand the point and reasoning behind her actions.

Demetrios, Heather. "Virginia Hall Resources." *Heather Demetrios >> Author + Mentor*, heatherdemetrios.com/virginia-hall-resources. This source provided us with eleven images depicting newspaper articles and Virginia herself. These are primary sources as they come from Hall's lifetime.

"File Unit: Hall, Virginia." *National Archives Catalog*, catalog.archives.gov/id/2174818. Accessed 12 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with multiple documents and images written by and about Virginia Hall, which helped expand our thinking.

"France, Resistance during World War II, Women And." *What-When-How*, 2019, what-when-how.com/women-and-war/france-resistance-during-world-war-ii-women-and/. Accessed 10 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found a photo of women in the French Resistance, which is a primary source.

"German Universities under the Nazis." *The Historical Association*, 26 Apr. 2021, www.history.org.uk/publications/resource/10069/german-universities-under-the-nazis.

Accessed 16 May 2023. This source allowed us to find photos of the United Kingdom during the Second World War.

“Hall, Virginia “Cuthbert”.” *WW2 Gravestone*, ww2gravestone.com/people/hall-virginia/. This source provided us with photos of Virginia as well as other important people from WWII, which qualify as primary sources.

Hatala, Greg. “Those on the Front Lines through Garden State History.” *Nj*, www.nj.com/galleries/ADCSDSKPR5FXJPCRHQKF7JTVQ4/. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source helped us find photos of examples of medical care that would have been offered during this time period.

“Holocaust Encyclopedia.” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/en. Accessed 2 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with primary sources (photos) for our documentary, helping viewers visualize topics such as the locations mentioned.

Holt, Nathalia. “The Women Who Helped to Build the CIA.” *WSJ*, www.wsj.com/articles/the-women-who-helped-to-build-the-cia-11663992062. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source allowed us to find photos of other women who were in the CIA with Virginia.

“How a Ring Tells the Story of a Forgotten Secret Agent.” *BBC News*, 7 Mar. 2021, www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-56215177.amp. Accessed 14 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found a photo of Virginia Hall, as well as multiple photos of concentration camps during WW2.

“IBM Radiotype.” *Columbia University*, columbia.edu/cu/computinghistory/ibmradiotype.html. Accessed 18 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with multiple photos of radios used during WW2 helping us show how Hall would communicate with fellow spies.

Kean, Sam. “The Bizarre Ways America’s First Spy Agency Tried to Overthrow Hitler.” *The Atlantic*, 9 July 2019, www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/07/how-oss-tried-defeat-hitler-world-war-ii/593455/. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source provided us with photos of the OSS during the Second World War.

Keegan, John. “Normandy Invasion | Definition, Map, Photos, Casualties, & Facts.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 6 Sept. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Normandy-Invasion. Accessed 19 Feb. 2023. This source was used to collect photos of D-Day for visual use in our documentary. The photos are primary sources.

Kretaner. “Vichy France l’ Armee de l’ Armistice .” *WW2 Weapons*, 24 Jan. 2021, www.ww2-weapons.com/vichy-france-l-armee-de-l-armistice/. Accessed 26 Feb. 2023.

This source provided us with photos of Vichy, France during World War Two, making it a primary source.

Lewis, Danny. "France Is Making Thousands of Vichy-Era Documents Public." *Smithsonian Magazine*,

www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/france-making-thousands-vichy-era-documents-public-180957661/. This source was used to collect a photo of Vichy officials, therefore it qualifies as a primary source.

Lineberry, Cate. "WANTED: The Limping Lady." *Smithsonian*, Smithsonian.com, 1 Feb. 2007, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/wanted-the-limping-lady-146541513/. Accessed 3 Feb. 2023. From this source, we found five photos of Virginia Hall, her equipment, and her accomplishments as well as a background of her life growing up.

Malesevic, Sue. "Virginia Hall the One-Legged, Real-Life James Bond That Helped Build Resistance Network in France." *Mail Online*, Daily Mail, 8 Apr. 2019, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6899057/Virginia-Hall-one-legged-real-life-James-Bond-helped-build-Resistance-network-France.html. This source provided us with photos of Virginia Hall as well as her fellow agents.

Mattie Fitch. "Writers and the Vichy State." *Berfrois*, 13 Nov. 2017, www.berfrois.com/2017/11/many-interests-united-literary-supporters-vichy/. Accessed

26 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found images of Vichy, France during World War Two. These photos are primary sources.

“Meet Virginia Hall, Famous WWII Spy with a Prosthetic Leg.” *W*www.theepochtimes.com, 12 Jan. 2023, www.theepochtimes.com/meet-virginia-hall-famous-wwii-spy-with-a-prosthetic-leg_4974055.html. Accessed 10 May 2023. This source provided us with more photos of Virginia Hall.

Moorehead, Caroline. “Village of Secrets: Defying the Nazis in Vichy France.” *The Guardian*, amp.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/15/village-of-secrets-defying-nazis-vichy-france-caroline-moorehead-review. Accessed 19 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with a photo (primary source) of women from the French Resistance.

National Army Museum. “Special Operations Executive.” *National Army Museum*, 2019, www.nam.ac.uk/explore/SOE. We found a photo of SOE agents that we used in our documentary through this source. This photo is a primary source.

“Nicholas Bodington.” *Spartacus Educational*, spartacus-educational.com/SOEbodington.htm. Accessed 26 Feb. 2023. This source was used to collect a photo (primary source) of Nicholas Bodington for use in our documentary.

Ruiz, Gisely. “Why the Nazis Called Virginia Hall “the Most Dangerous of All Allied Spies.””

All That’s Interesting, All That’s Interesting, 27 June 2018,

allthatsinteresting.com/virginia-hall. This source helped us find more photos showing Virginia Hall.

“Secret Agents, Secret Armies: The Short Happy Life of the OSS.” *The National WWII Museum*,

14 May 2020, www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/wwii-secret-agents-the-oss.

Accessed 13 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with a photo of the OSS during WW2, making it a primary source.

Shapira, Ian. “The Nazis Were Closing in on a Spy Known as “the Limping Lady.” She Fleed

across Mountains on a Wooden Leg.” *Washington Post*,

www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/07/11/the-nazis-were-closing-in-on-a-spy-known-as-the-limping-lady-she-fled-across-mountains-on-a-wooden-leg/. Accessed

19 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with photos of Virginia Hall, which qualify as primary sources as they are unedited.

“Spy Museum Collection Highlights.” *International Spy Museum*,

www.spymuseum.org/exhibition-experiences/about-the-collection/collection-highlights/.

Through this source, we found three images of items used by Virginia Hall, which we used as visuals in our documentary.

Steinberg, Alfred. "Harry S. Truman | U.S. President & History." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11 Jan. 2019, www.britannica.com/biography/Harry-S-Truman. Accessed 17 Feb. 2023.

This source provided us with a photo of Harry Truman which was used as a visual in our documentary.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Gestapo." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 3 Mar. 2019, www.britannica.com/topic/Gestapo. Accessed 14 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found photos of the Gestapo members and symbols during WW2.

"The Female Spies Who Helped Win World War II." *Atlas Obscura*, www.atlasobscura.com/articles/female-spies-world-war-2.amp. Accessed 26 Feb. 2023.

This source provided us with a photo of the French Resistance (primary source) during WWII.

"The Nazis Hated Virginia Hall, a Smart and Daring Female Spy from Baltimore." *Dying to Tell Their Stories*,

www.dyingtotelltheirstories.com/home/2018/3/14/eazcfmtats2cn6v7f7jfvvpy4i2p8.

Accessed 14 May 2023. This source helped us find more photos of Virginia Hall.

"The Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency - CIA." *W*www.cia.gov,

www.cia.gov/legacy/museum/exhibit/the-office-of-strategic-services-n-americas-first-intelligence-agency/. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source provided us with more photos of the OSS during the Second World War.

“The OSS (Office of Strategic Services) Was Formed on This Day 1942.” *SOFREP*,
sofrep.com/specialoperations/the-oss-office-of-strategic-services-was-formed-on-this-day-1942/. Through this source, we found photos of the OSS during the second World War, which are primary sources.

“Today’s Document from the National Archives.” *Archives.gov*, 20 Mar. 2017,
www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=512. Accessed 14 May 2023. This source provided us with photos of documents written during the Second World War.

“U.S. Diplomatic Couriers: A Historic Timeline.” *Afsa.org*,
afsa.org/us-diplomatic-couriers-historic-timeline. Accessed 16 May 2023. This allowed us to find photos of diplomats during the Second World War.

“Virginia Hall - the Most Feared Allied Spy in World War 2 | Opposing Fronts.” *Opposing Fronts*, 23 Oct. 2022, opposingfronts.com/virginia-hall/#gsc.tab=0. Accessed 16 May 2023. This source helped us find a photo of Virginia with her walking stick.

“Virginia Hall Photo Gallery.” *Heather Demetrios >> Author + Mentor*,
heatherdemetrios.com/virginia-hall-photo-gallery. Accessed 15 May 2023. This source helped us find a large amount of photos of Virginia Hall throughout her lifetime.

“Virginia Hall, the “Limping Lady of the OSS,” Receives the Distinguished Service Cross, the Nation’s Second Highest Award for Valor in Combat. She Was the Only Civilian Woman to Receive the Award during World War II. Photo by Rudi Williams.” *Www.defense.gov*, www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Photos/igphoto/2001088184/. Accessed 12 May 2023.

This source allowed us to find even more photos of Virginia Hall.

“Virginia Hall the One-Legged Spy Tormented the Nazis & the Most Decorated Female Spy in US History.” *Warhistoryonline*, 4 Nov. 2018, www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/oss-and-cia-veteran.html?chrome=1.

Accessed 15 May 2023. This source helped us find photos of Virginia as well as other OSS members during World War II.

“Virginia Hall: The Courage and Daring of “the Limping Lady” - CIA.” *Www.cia.gov*, 30 June 2017, www.cia.gov/stories/story/virginia-hall-the-courage-and-daring-of-the-limping-lady/.

From this source we found four photos of Virginia Hall as well as a background of her life growing up.

“WWII OSS Headquarters Shoulder Patch of Charles Marsden.” *Flying Tiger Antiques Online Store*, www.flyingtigerantiques.com/wwii-oss-headquarters-shoulder-patch-of-charles-marsden.html.

Accessed 22 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found a picture of a WW2 OSS shoulder patch, which qualifies as a primary source.

Secondary Sources:

Baime, A.J. "The History of Female Spies in the CIA." *History.com*, 22 Feb. 2018, www.history.com/news/cia-women-spy-leaders. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023. This source gave us a painting of Virginia Hall, commissioned by a former president. It helped express her recognition after the war.

Gralley, Craig. "A Climb to Freedom: A Personal Journey in Virginia Hall's Steps." *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 61, no. 1, 2017, www.cia.gov/static/75b2f7bd6f095065492e6e97fc51a6bb/A-Climb-to-Freedom.pdf. Accessed 12 Feb. 2023. This source provided specific information about Virginia's hike through the Spanish Pyrenees. This information was incredibly useful when creating our documentary.

Myre, Greg. "A Woman of No Importance" Finally Gets Her Due." *National Public Radio*, 18 Apr. 2019,

[www.npr.org/2019/04/18/711356336/a-woman-of-no-importance-finally-gets-her-due#:~: text=%22I%20do%20think%20that%20she%20is%20mostly%20at%20headq](https://www.npr.org/2019/04/18/711356336/a-woman-of-no-importance-finally-gets-her-due#:~:text=%22I%20do%20think%20that%20she%20is%20mostly%20at%20headquarters) uarters. Accessed 13 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with multiple quotes from historians, Virginia's fellow spies, and current CIA members. The views of the author helped us support our argument.

Purnell, Sonia. *Agent Most Wanted*. Penguin, 9 Aug. 2022. This book was incredibly useful in our research, providing an overview of Virginia's achievements, as well as a large number of quotes and additional resources.

"USSOCOM." *W*www.socom.mil, www.socom.mil/virginia-hall-the-limping-lady. Accessed 3 Feb. 2023. This source helped explain Virginia Hall's legacy in the CIA, further explaining our argument.

Wikipedia. 2022, en.wikipedia.org. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023. This source was used to obtain links to other, more credible sources. We also found several basic images depicting maps and Nazi swastikas on this website, helping to visually explain Hall's movement across Europe.

Images and Audio Used:

“France Changes Flag Colour to Darker Navy Blue to Reflect a Heroic Past.” *NDTV*,

www.ndtv.com/world-news/france-changes-flag-colour-to-darker-navy-blue-to-reflect-a-heroic-past-2612053/amp/1. Accessed 18 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with a photo of the French flag for use in our documentary.

“Freepik | Graphic Resources for Everyone.” *Freepik*, www.freepik.com. Accessed 13 Feb. 2023.

Through this source, we found images for aesthetic use in our documentary.

Gestion, Lazard Freres. “United States: Money Creation at Its Highest since World War II.”

Tribune Lazard Frères Gestion, 4 May 2020,

latribune.lazardfreresgestion.fr/en/united-states-money-creation-at-its-highest-since-world-war-ii/. Accessed 27 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found an image for aesthetic use in our documentary.

Getty Images. [gettyimages.ie](https://www.gettyimages.ie). Accessed 25 Feb. 2023. Through this source, we found images for aesthetic uses in our documentary.

“Monistrol-d’Allier - Tourism, Holidays & Weekends.” *France-Voyage.com*, www.france-voyage.com/cities-towns/monistrol-d-allier-15375.htm. Accessed 17 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with recent photos of France where Hall was located.

Perry, BP. “The Polish Cryptographers Who Cracked the Enigma Code.” *Sky HISTORY TV Channel*, www.history.co.uk/articles/the-polish-cryptographers-who-cracked-the-enigma-code. This source was used to find photos of replicas of coding devices that are similar to those that Hall used.

Reuters. “CIA Future Will Be Defined by US Technology Race with China, Director Says.” *Reuters*, 8 Mar. 2023, www.reuters.com/world/us/cia-future-will-be-defined-by-us-technology-race-with-china-director-says-2023-03-08/. Accessed 11 May 2023. This source provided us with photos of the CIA currently.

Solomon, Christopher. “Skiing the Spanish Pyrenees (Published 2012).” *The New York Times*, 20 Jan. 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/travel/the-snow-in-spain.html. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with photos of the Spanish Pyrenees today that we used to show the sheer distance Hall traveled on foot.

Spanac. "Countryside Night Ambience Sounds | Ambient Sounds." *Free Sounds Library*, 30 Apr. 2019, www.freesoundslibrary.com/countryside-night-ambience-sounds/. Accessed 16 May 2023. We used this source to find photos used in our documentary plainly for aesthetic purposes.

"Stock Photos, Stock Photography & Royalty-Free Images." *Adobe Stock*, stock.adobe.com/photos. Accessed 11 Feb. 2023. This source provided us with images used for aesthetic purposes in our documentary.

"Taylor Swift: Instrumental Study Playlist-Nonstop." *Wwww.youtube.com*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz8shJYXUdU. Accessed 16 May 2023. This video provided us with the background music that we used in our documentary.

Unsplash. 2022, unsplash.com/. This source provided us with background photos for our documentary. Their use was plainly for aesthetic purposes.