

German Women Physicians in World War I

During World War I, three German women physicians worked as volunteers in military hospitals, two at the Russian section of the front. There is no information where the third (Gertrud Roegner) worked.

Female doctors were supposed to stay in the country and support the soldiers at the front i.e. by knitting warm socks for soldiers etc., and to work in hospitals in Germany ("Heimatfront"). Although the number of female doctors increased during this time they remained mostly in lower positions.

Hertha Wiegand, born in 1890, was a general practitioner in Offenburg in Southern Germany. She lost her license in 1938 because she was Jewish. She committed suicide in 1944 on the way to the concentration camp Theresienstadt.

Maria Margarete Wolf (1880-1944) was the director of a military hospital in an epidemic zone at the Russian section of the front. Thereafter she worked as a physician for children and women in Stuttgart in Southern Germany. During the time of the Nazi regime, she lost her license and was forced to take "Sara" as her first name because she was Jewish. She must have been a remarkable person, as many documents demonstrated. She was deported to the concentration camp Theresienstadt where she died in 1944 as a consequence of the conditions of imprisonment and malnutrition.

Gertrud Roegner (1873-1923) started to study medicine in Germany at the age of 28. She worked in a military hospital during the war, later she founded a clinic for well-educated, but poor women.

Submitted by Prof. Dr. med. Gabriele Kaczmarczyk, Vice President, German Medical Women Association