



**FLORENCE MARIE THIES (HOPFER)
(BOBIAK)
USNR, YEOMAN 2/c**

I was born May 16, 1924 in Clifton, NJ. My mother, Irene, and my father, Emil Thies, had two other children. As a middle child and the only girl, I know I was spoiled and cared for very well. We moved to Somerville, NJ just before my high school years. I graduated from Somerville High School in 1941.

After my graduation from high school, I worked during the day for the Johns Manville Corporation as a secretary. I attended Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ in the evenings and although I attended only two years of evening sessions, I gained my beginning college credits.

My older brother, Emil, was a Chief Warrant Officer with the army with Eisenhower in England. My youngest brother, Edward, was a sailor on a destroyer -- so I also felt the need to be in the service of my country.

I enlisted in New York City on May 20th, 1944 - 4 days after my 20th birthday. I booted at Hunter College where I was a member of the singing platoon. I was sent to Oklahoma A&M College for Yeoman School. My first duty assignment was a yeoman at the Educational Office (personnel) at the Norfolk Naval Air Station, VA. I worked for the Commander and met many interesting people who had fascinating backgrounds. I also was the Commander's baby sitter for his children when necessary.

After the war, my Commander opened an auto sales company in Virginia and asked me come and work for him, but I decided to go home to New Jersey and marry. The remainder of my service time was spent in Washington, D.C. (during cherry blossom time) Personnel Department. I was discharged in May of 1946.

I married a returning sailor who saw difficult days in the South Pacific theater of war. I had a 19-month old son and lost my husband in July 1949, three days later our daughter was born. I returned home to my family and went back to work. Two and a half years later I married Harry Bobiak. We had 3 boys together and enjoyed 42 years of married life before he passed on in 1995.

My service years were memorable as I met many good people, learned how to get along with the outside world as well as my small town folks.

I feel I added to the war effort by doing my job successfully while I was a WAVE.