



**CONSTANCE CAMPBELL CONAWAY**  
**USNR, PHM3/c**

My name is now Connie Conaway. I was born Constance Campbell in Ellwood City, PA. My dad managed a Kroger grocery store and it seemed that we moved a lot. I remember my parents saying that they rented places, painted and fixed them up - then it seemed that the landlord thought the rental was worth more, so they raised the rent! Anyway, we moved to Youngstown, Ohio and I entered Chaney Elementary School. This school housed students from first grade through high school, so this was the route I took.

We had a Braille class and it was my job to read to one of the students. For this I received about 30 cents a month. I really enjoyed having this "spending" money! I was active in the Glee Club, Girl Reserves, and was elected to the National Honor Society.

Right after graduation my family moved to Whittier, California - this was in 1943. The war was in full swing and my dad went into defense work. I worked for a tubing company and had the best job in the whole place. I was the "Mail Girl" and I delivered inside all the offices and the warehouse. I was able to see all the goings-on and to get to know many people

My ambition at that time was to become a registered nurse and I entered training at the Los Angeles County General Hospital - later it became USC Medical Center. I was capped after the six-month probation period and stayed on for just a short time. I decided that nursing really was not for me and received permission from my parents to join the WAVES. My dad had been in the Navy during WWI, so this was a natural choice.

I departed California for the Bronx, New York in May of 1945. It was an exciting time for me and I met many new friends - some of whom are still close. I was still in boot camp when the peace was signed with Japan. From boot camp I was assigned to Camp Moffett, Great Lakes Illinois. This was a hospital corps training school. The training there was very easy for me as it was practically a repeat of my first six months of hospital training in Los Angeles.

After Hospital Corps Training I was assigned to Long Beach Naval Hospital and worked in the operating room of the dependents' unit. I was assigned to the operating room - and nearly didn't make it - as my first operation was nearly a

disaster. I kept getting faint and had to leave the operating room and put my head down to keep from fainting. I was determined though, and spent the next few months as a scrub nurse there. I saw many caesarian births, tonsillectomies, gall bladder operations and so forth.

The Navy decided to send a draft of 10 women to Washington, D.C. (Who knows why? We didn't). The 10 women cried and were devastated - they didn't want to leave beautiful Southern California! So ten of us volunteered to go in their stead.

Of course, during the war, the trains were always late - put on sidings while troop trains were given the right-of-way so that we were 23 hours late getting into Washington, D.C. As soon as we were assigned to our building and to the cubicles, all ten of us walked over to the Lincoln Memorial. This is my most vivid and happy memory of Washington, D.C.

Our building at Arlington Farms was directly across from the National Cemetery and my friends and I usually spent our free weekends roaming the place looking at the graves and enjoying the beauty of the area. Looking out the window of my cubicle I could see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the 24-hour guards on duty.

My work assignment was in Building X on the other side of town. It took me three streetcars and buses to get to work each day. My job was in the Medical Records Division and I typed the reports for the files. This was an interesting job and I had wonderful officers to work with, My Big Boss was Captain Robert Alexander Bell - a direct descendent of Alexander Graham Bell. What a nice man he was.

The war was now over and we were given the choice of discharge or signing up for 3 years. I decided it was time to get on with my "real life," since I was looking forward to marriage and a family. At that time, of course, you got married - you were out of the service. So I took my discharge and instead of going back to California where my parents lived, decided to go to Youngstown, Ohio where I had spent most of my years. There, my sister and I rented a room together, I went to work for Ohio Bell Telephone, and got together with a friend from high school. Got together is right - we were married January 22, 1947 and now have spent 53 wonderful years together.

I will always treasure my time in the Navy. This was one of the "FUN" times of my years. Not only that, but as I mentioned, I still keep in touch with a least one person - I named my second child for her. The G.I. Bill gave me a good start on my education, which I finished on my own later on. I taught school for

18 years until my retirement and I feel it a privilege to belong to this WAVES organization.