



**LAURA ELLEN RAYMOND CRAWFORD**  
**USNR, S1/c**

On March 3, 1924, I was born to Walcott and Claudia Raymond. I joined three brothers and a sister. My folks had a ranch in Jeffers, Montana, but took my mother to Sheridan, Montana so she would be closer to a doctor and I was born in Sheridan. When taking me home three weeks later a bad snow storm caused deep drifts, at one time the driver was afraid the stagecoach would tip over so he threw me to my dad. Mother got out and the driver managed to get the coach out of the drift. We were again on our way home.

In 1929 my father lost the ranch in the crash and we moved to Sheridan. I spent my childhood on a 3,700 acre ranch and lived in a big house at the end of town. My grandfather built the 17-room home after having been chased by Indians 20 miles from Virginia City and homesteaded 5,000 acres. When he returned to Virginia City he heard of the famous 20 mile ride by General Sheridan and named the town after him. After moving back to Sheridan, my dad became Montana's Livestock Inspector. He inspected everything from buffalo to bees all over the state. Needless to say, he traveled a lot.

I attended Sheridan Public Schools through the 12th grade, graduated and attended Henagers Business College in Salt Lake City, Utah, taking bookkeeping and secretarial courses. I did not graduate, but instead went to San Diego and went to work as a clerk-typist in an aircraft factory. I then went home to Sheridan for Thanksgiving and Christmas. My father talked me into joining the Navy, he thought I should have discipline, so on March 8th, 1944, my mother and I went to Helena and I enlisted. I received my orders on April 9th to report to Hunter College in the Bronx. I boarded a troop train and was on my way.

After boot camp I worked in the OD Office and rang the Ship's Bell on the hour, every hour. Three weeks after boot camp my father died so they sent me home for the funeral and onto Bremerton for reassignment. I ended up in Farragut, Idaho, in the Security Department working at the Main Gate, taking pictures and fingerprints of ship personnel and German POWS, checking insurance forms for visitors going on board. I loved the job. My security officer was a fraternity brother of my brother and dated my sister in college in Bozeman. He knew about losing my father and let me go home on weekends to see my

mother. I took five different girls home with me from back east so they could visit the "Wild West." We had a great time. We road the Shore Patrol car for a free ride.

When the war was over, I received my discharge on March 8, 1946. From there I went back to San Diego and lived with an elderly lady who was the daughter of Captain Gridley of the Navy. At the Battle of Manila Bay it was Admiral Farragut who said, "Fire when you're ready Gridley." Mrs. Thomas was so excited to learn of my being from Camp Farragut that she called the 11th Naval District and requested to take us aboard the Nautalis. They came out in a limousine and we went down to the ship. The Captain gave us lunch and a complete tour. It was a memorable experience.

In 1949 I married Bob Smith and had a daughter. He passed away in 1961. In 1964 I married Bob Crawford who was retired from the Air Force. We moved back to Montana where he became a salesman for five years, then we moved to Spokane in 1969. He passed away in 1979 and I've lived her ever since. It's been a wonderful life.

*Ellen Crawford passed away in August, 1999*