

Henrietta C. Korte

I enlisted March 11, 1943, in Springfield, Ohio. I was sent to Indianapolis, IN, after I'd been in several cities in Ohio for all sorts of exams. From Indiana, I went to the Bronx, NY, to Hunter College, then to West Palm Beach, FL for more institute courses. I went to Storekeeper (SK) School and qualified for the duties for which I was trained; then to Philadelphia, PA, and started my job. The SPARS had the entire 8th floor of the Benjamin Franklin Hotel, a truly wonderful place to live! We worked in the building next to the home of Betsy Ross where the first American flag was made. I personally worked for the dental group. I'd receive a list of what was needed and would go get it. Then, I would take it to where it was to go. I never saw so many teeth in my entire life. Later, I would get a note of how much was owed and I'd write the check and give it to the same people to whom I'd given the teeth.

I became an SK1c (Storekeeper 1st class) and had the opportunity to go to Hawaii or Alaska. I chose the warm climate. All of the girls going to Hawaii went through San Francisco, and we all stayed at Sharp Park until our transportation (ship) to Hawaii arrived. I was in the second group of SPARS on their way to Hawaii. The ship was the largest one that Hawaii had. Our meals were served the same as a first class restaurant.

When we got to Hawaii, it was lovely. The flowers were everywhere. The place we lived was a good way from work and we were driven to work every day. Our bathroom and toilets were not in our house, but across a sidewalk. A sailor was on guard duty as these places were built for men, not women.

My job was to make out checks. When a sailor brought in his cards, I made out the check which my boss delivered the next morning. I also did a few other things, but I always had too much free time.

When the war was over, a ship from the U.S. came for us. It was a very small one. Some of us were seasick, so we stayed topside all day. The boys brought us apples and crackers every day. Every night they chased us to our beds.

When we got to San Francisco, the bosses began to make up papers so we could get our discharge when we arrived at the Personnel Separation Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

When we arrived at the center, I saw my destination listed as Springfield, MO. I told them that was wrong. They immediately began to fix it. In the U.S., many states have cities names Springfield, and I was from the one in Ohio, which is where they returned me.

I was given my Honorable Discharge on the 12th day of November, 1945. I am also a charter member of WAVES National Michigan Unit 32. I moved from Farmington to Novi in 1970 with my son.