



**ALTA JEANETTE (WALTER) ROBESON**  
**USNR, S1/c, Sp(Q) Striker**

My name is Alta Jeanette (Walter) Robeson. I was born in Priest River, Idaho, on October 8, 1923. My parents were Guy H. Walter and Olive K. (Treat) Walter. Because my father was in the Border Patrol and Immigration Service, we moved a lot. I started grade school in Scoby, Montana, but changed schools about every two years. I finished grade school in Eastport, Idaho. I attended high school in Bonners Ferry, Idaho. I also attended high school at North Central in Spokane, WA. I returned to Bonners Ferry and graduated in 1941.

After graduation I returned to Spokane and attended Telegraph School for 11 months to learn teletype operation. I went to work as a teletype operator at Spokane Army Depot for nearly two years before I enlisted in the Navy WAVES. I enlisted June 7, 1944, and went into active service July 10, 1944. I served 1 year, 4 months and 29 days. I was separated on November 5, 1945.

When I was growing up, my dad who was in the Navy during WWI, told me about the Yeomanettes. I always wanted to join the Navy. After the WAVES came into being, I haunted the recruiting station. But being a few pounds too heavy, I couldn't make the requirements. When I finally got within a pound or two they passed me.

I took my boot camp training at the U.S. Training School in Bronx, NY. After boot camp completion, I was sent to U.S. Naval Barracks WAVE Quarters "D" in Washington, D.C., as a teletype operator. I was later transferred to U.S. Naval Radio Activities at Port Blakely, WA, on Bainbridge Island. I was discharged at Sandpoint Naval Air Station.

I went to boot camp on one of the first ALL WAVES troop train. There were several women from the Spokane area that went to boot camp the same time I did. Remember those two day passes from boot camp? Going into the Big City was a real experience for us. I can't believe how green we all were. We stuck to each other like glue for fear one of us would get separated and lost. On the first day, and we were getting ready to head back to boot camp, one of the girls turned and got on the wrong subway train, so the rest of us had to board the same subway so

that we wouldn't get separated. We had no idea where we would end up. But some kind person got us on the right track and we got back to the training center safely and on time. The next day we again went sightseeing. This time we went into the Bowery and got ourselves pretty spooked. There was a soldier and his girlfriend there too. We stuck pretty close to them for about an hour. I doubt he could have helped us much if anything had gone wrong. We later went to St. Patrick's Cathedral and at one of the large hotels the doorman invited us to go up to the penthouse where we could see forever. They were also setting up for a huge fancy wedding. I still remember how humid it was in New York in July.

When I first arrived at U.S. Naval Barracks in Washington, D.C., they were still doing the security check on me. For two weeks I worked in a small room removing staples from files that were to be microfilmed. I remember thinking, "is this all I'm going to be doing in the Navy?" But an older regular Navy man assured me that it wasn't a permanent job and he was right.

Several months after I was transferred to Seattle, I met a sailor that I had known as a child in Montana and Idaho. We hadn't seen each other in years. We were married several months later. We were both discharged right after the war and moved to Nampa, Idaho and then to Spokane. He took a brick mason's apprenticeship and I went to Kinman Business School. He was later killed in a construction accident in early 1948.

In 1949 I met Pat Robeson and December of that year we were married. Pat worked for Kaiser Aluminum for 35 ½ years. Because of his shift work, I chose to stay home. We celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary on December 19, 1999.

Being in the WAVES was a great experience and I have never had any regrets. Great memories and great people.