

Mabel Crete 'Connie' Connelly Stamler
WAVES USN Radioman 3rd Class 1943-45; USNR 1947-53



I was born 16 March 1922 in Mercer County PA. I had always wanted to 'see the USA' but having my nose smashed as a child I knew I could not be accepted in the service. When the war began I had been working in a factory that made radio parts and I took a bus to Harper Hospital in Detroit from Defiance OH. I had surgery on my nose and later when I went back for a check up I enlisted in the WAVES January 1943. However, I did not get orders to report for Basic until March 1943, when I went to Hunter College NY and joined the third class of 'boots' to train there. Thirty of the 35 women in the platoon were from Arkansas. Special duty was two weeks in the spud locker, where we cleaned at least a carload of rotten cabbage and onions. The company had three 8-hour liberties in New York City. We saw St. Patrick's Cathedral, Grant's Tomb, climbed to the top of the Statue of Liberty and took in a show at Rockefeller Center to see the Rockettes.

Approximately 100 of our group were sent to Miami University in Oxford OH to a short wave radio school to learn Morse Code. In August 1943 about 20 WAVES were sent to Hutchinson naval Air Station, Kansas, where I remained for 27 months. I began working in maintenance, installing Direction Finders in N2S planes. Later when it became a PB4Y base, radio central opened and planes sent weather reports and their locations. We copied the UPI circuit that reported on the different war zones and always had a current picture of the war. Pilot Fighters also trained at this base.

After leaving the Navy I entered Ohio State in March 1946 and graduated with a degree in Home Economics in June 1949 under the G.I. Bill. The following year I completed a Dietetic Internship at Stanford University Hospital in San Francisco, where I married Loraine Stamler, QMC USN (retired) in May 1952. We moved 10 times and had three children, (Richard, Wendy and Cynthia) each born in different locations. The family moved to Lincoln NE in 1958 where Loraine taught the ROTC program. I divorced in 1970.

I retired from Bryan Memorial Hospital in 1987 having worked 25 years as a Dietician. I have been active in the WAVES National Flatwater Unit #98 NE, serving as President and later Vice President. I am also on the committee of Veteran's Memorial Gardens which was built in 1991 and the park continues to grow with the addition of Military memorials to this day in the city of Lincoln. Our Unit spent many years making Buddy Poppies in my home.

I enjoyed my time in the service where I made many friends and had the chance to live in many cities, as well as travel to Hawaii and Alaska and most of the other states. I was able to 'See the World' which was my dream when I was young. In my retirement I still try to work in my yard, enjoy sewing, embroidering, cooking and reading.