

WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA
MEMORIAL DEDICATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thursday; October 16 through Sunday, October 19, 1997

Before, including and after the above dates

As soon as information came concerning the WIMSA dedication, Mac and I definitely decided to attend. Reservation forms were mailed in during the summer months and hotel reservations were made through Bartelt Travel in Kalamazoo in July. At first we planned to go by bus, but changed to the Amtrak, and on October 13th, a good friend drove us, in the rain, to the Amtrak station in Dearborn. We "bussed" to the Toledo Amtrak station and connected with the Capitol Limited at 1 AM to Washington, via Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Our seats were in the coach; we sat, read, made our way to the dining car and lounged in the lounge car, viewing the pretty scenery in Pennsylvania. Around 2PM on Tuesday, Washington suburbs loomed into view and the train backed in to the beautiful Union Train Station. We paid the cab driver \$20.00 fare when we arrived at the Howard Johnson Hotel, Crystal City area in Arlington, VA; ~~our~~ our home for a week. The hotel was adequate, clean and their personnel helpful.

Mac immediately phoned her cousin, Jo Streit Stewart. She and her husband, Dana, came to the hotel in about 2 hours. That interval gave us ample time to unpack and shower. We had a nice visit and dinner at the hotel. It was fun to be with Jo again and to meet her husband. They left around 10:30 and as we walked into the crowded lobby, filled with a busload of nurses etc. veterans arriving from Kalamazoo, I saw someone I hadn't seen for some years--this kind and pleasant face belongs to Bob Hovis, my 2nd cousin (originally from California and now living with his wife Penny, in Centreville, VA, and working in Maryland (NIH). Bob had been patiently waiting in the hotel for 1½ hours. Bob, Mac and I crowded together on the end of a davenport and had a good hour visit--it was great! Bob presented me with a silver WIMSA medal, which I'll always treasure.

WEDNESDAY**

Mac and I hoped to tour the FBI Bldg on this free day and to get there, we had to go

via the Metro, a wonderful subway system. First, the courtesy hotel van drove us to the entrance, and underground we went. WITH HELP we learned how to ride the metro and to pay. --our fare. It took us 13 minutes to get to the exit nearest the FBI Building. We noticed one huge line and we were in another, only to be told there would be no more tours--"too early"--come back at 12:30, which we did--again they denied us admission--"too late"! We were disappointed. So--our next plan was to tour the Bureau of Engraving, so we walked and walked until we found the Bldg, where we joined the tour there----it was fascinating to go through "The Money Factory", noticing the processes of engraving, printing, plate making, examining the stacks of money, labeling and shrink wrapping. Security was tight and the glass walls were thick. One of the workers taunted us all by holding up a stack of money--so near, but not close enough! \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

The Smithsonian Institution was near so we viewed the Hope Diamond--beautiful--wish it could fit one or more of my fingers.. We then toured the Insect /Zoo--also viewed a huge whale--above eye level. We asked a volunteer for suggestions for lunch--she referred us to the Old Main Post office, an interesting building. We lunched and then found a metro entrance to flag the Metro and returned to our hotel--after we found a Beauty Salon (still underground) where we made an appointment for a shampoo on Thursday.

Wednesday night, Katie or Kate Hamann and husband, Brian Cohen, newly weds since August 31st, met us and drove us to another Marriott Hotel for dinner. We had a great visit and dinner (?) and then sat in the lobby to look at their albums of their wedding and honeymoon--great pictures of them and Fran, Bob and families. It was such fun to be with Kate again (she is the granddaughter of my friend, Mary Wertel and daughter of Fran Hamann LeVeque) and to meet her husband. Kate and Brian are a nice young couple--they each have much potential for their respective fields.

THURSDAY

We were bright and early on another dull day, weatherwise, and we were soon on our way to the beauty salon, where we were pampered with a shampoo and set and a manicure.

After leaving there, we found a food stand where we settled in for a bite to eat and to "people watch". We wandered underground back to the Marriott Hotel and they called the Howard Johnson Hotel van to pick us up and return us to our Hotel.

That night, we boarded a bus at 6PM and ended up at the National Guard Armory in Washington, D.C. for the WIMSA Dedication Gala. The Gala was a formal affair, with some personnel wearing their dress uniforms. The Armory and tables were beautifully decorated, each table set for 10 guests, each of us finding a WIMSA ribbon and a WIMSA key chain in boxes at our places at our table. I joined a congenial group of veterans at table 81 and Mac found her way to table 94. The armory was huge and at this point I wondered if I'd meet Mac at the program end or if I'd ever get to the right bus to get back to our hotel---luckily, it all worked out OK, even though Mac switched where we would meet so it was a game of chance! By the way, the steak fillets, plus salad etc. and dessert were very good and very excellent waitresses *SERVING US*.

The Gala Program included "Reflections" by several and more women, including Colonel Mary Hallaren, former Director of the WAC's, Nancy Giles, who played the character Frankie Bunsen in the TV series, China Beach, which dealt with the Vietnam War, and Connie Stevens, who, just recently, besides her film, TV recording and Broadway entertainment, finished production of "A Healing", a documentary feature film dedicated to women who served in the Vietnam war.. Loretta Switt or "HO" LIPS" was also present. Brigadier General Wilma Vaught welcomed the huge crowd. Remarks were made by General Joseph Ralston, USAF; Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sheila Widmalm; Secretary of the Air Force and John Hamre, Deputy of Defense. A tribute was made by Tipper Gore and Kathy Mattea was a guest performer.

It was a wonderful evening for the Women in Military Service, past and present, all thousands and thousands..

FRIDAY- Friday was another rainy and dull day. This was a day of 2 big events. The first one was an ARMY luncheon, held in Hangar #3 at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland; (Navy, AF, Coast Guard and other services held their luncheons at other buildings or hotels). When our busses arrived at the Hanger, each of us was met individually by an enlisted AF man, who offered us his arm and escorted us under an umbrella into

the hangar. Well, we felt "up in the air"classy! The air force enlisted men were specially flown in to escort around 5000 nurses and others of us---the men were so young, tall, courteous and handsome.

Again, the hangar was all decorated, streamers hanging down from the ceiling to designate our war service area--WWII, Vietnam, Korean, Bosnia or whichever. The tables were set for 10--at our table were several CBI nurses, who related some of their experiences to us. Following the luncheon, there was a program--"Colors Presented", National Anthem, the US Army Chorale and US Army Band. The guest speaker was General Dennis Reimer, Chief of Staff, US Army. Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy welcomed the huge group.

We could not locate 2 friends, one nurse and one PT--and we looked and looked, walked up and down in between tables--it was impossible and disappointing.

After the program, it was some sight to watch all 5000 women depart and wait in line for the right bus. However, the army was well organized and we escaped the rain drops and before too long, arrived back at the hotel to get ready for the 2nd big event of the day.

FRIDAY EVENING was the dedication reunion held at the District of Columbia National Guard Armory. The armory was decorated with streamers, balloons, etc. and had many food and drink stations scattered around in this, another huge area. There were many booths (American Legion, DAV, Am Vets, etc)--all reunion exhibitions--one could visit--it was all so overwhelming! The other end of the armory had a stage, band area, ^{huge} huge screen, balconies, etc. Honorary CO-Chairs were Vice President Al Gore and Tipper Gore. Brigadier General Wilma Vaught welcomed all at this reunion--she is revered by all the women veterans.

We found seats way up in the balcony to listen and watch; Remarks were made by retired General John Shalikashville, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and Mary Elcano, Sr. VP and General Counsel, US Postal Service. She displayed, for the first time, the first day of issue of the Commemorative Stamp, dedicated to the WIMSA, There was a roar of approval.

Mac and I worked our way down to the main floor and watched the all women,

alumni band --past and present members play some stirring music, They all looked so happy to be playing their instrument of choice--was fun to watch.

A high light of the evening was to see, at close range, the eight (?) Air Force pilots, all women, being introduced--they were so young and peppy. We were told they planned a "fly over" Saturday morning at the Dedication Ceremony at the Memorial. The pilots were greeted with many cheers.

The evening was quite an affair.

SATURDAY This was the Dedication Day, of the WIMSA memorial!

We were bussed to the Lincoln Memorial area and then walked and walked and walked to our seats--we carried a baggie filled with a light lunch--a thoughtful thing our group leader at our hotel did for us. It seems there must have been 25000 to 30000 veterans and guests present, filling all the chairs and bleachers. There was a long waiting time, of course--this gave one a chance to queue up for a pit stop at many "Port a John's"--4 can enter at once and each private room included a sink, soap and towels (slightly different from the latrines we frequented back when). While waiting in the audience, we viewed various goings on on the huge screen. Military bands played--many service academies, including VMI, marched down the center aisle. During the hours we waited, we visited with those near us--each had a story! A veteran next to me had been overseas 3 years, all over the world, and now is in the National Guard, working at a prison as a guard. Another conversation with someone near me went like this----

"Where are you from?"	I told her OHIO
Where?	Northwest Ohio
Where?	near Toledo
Where?	Gibsonburg

She was shocked and surprised as I was--she told me she had married a Dick Ottney (son of Jim Ottney ?) from Gibsonburg. We could hardly believe that 2 people, sitting next to each other in a crowd of 30000 ? had a common bond!

The dedication address was given by Vice President Gore and he, Tipper Gore, Brigadier Wilma Vaught, and 2 veterans performed the official ribbon cutting, followed by a

celebratory ringing of bells.

An announcement was made that because of the low ceiling, the women pilots would NOT make the "fly over" as planned. 2 helicopters, piloted by women, replaced them.

Closing remarks were made by ^{BRIG} ~~Brig.~~ General Wilma Vaught and the singing of "God Bless America".

Following the program, charter members were invited to a reception, hosted by Mrs. William Cohen, wife of William Cohen, Secretary ^{of Defense} ~~Cohen~~, in an area close by for soft drinks, cheese and crackers, chips, celery, dips etc. It was here I was approached and asked where I had served, etc--the young girl was looking for a clue to find someone who knew of the army unit her mother had been in --or at least lead her to a clue (I had no way of knowing). The girl's mother had died recently and so she came, with her aunt, for the dedication activities in honor of her mother. It was very difficult for the girl to speak as she was in tears during our conversation. Similar conversations were prevalent during the week--family members seeking someone who could possibly know their mother, aunt, sister, daughter or cousin. There were many somber moments!

SATURDAY EVENING At 5 PM we found the staging area near the Lincoln Memorial. Areas were roped off and all were seated with their branch of service veterans. The candlelight service march started around 6:30 or when it was dark--from the Lincoln Memorial across the bridge to our seats at the memorial site--probably 2 miles. Each veteran and or guest carried a battery operated flash light. This was an awesome sight as we looked forward and back to see thousands and thousands of flash lights waving in the dark and pointing them toward the many planes that flew overhead--a sight I never will forget. Along the sidewalks of the marchers there were many people standing, clapping and saying "thank you" as we walked in--goose pimples were present in us all.

The US Navy Band initiated the service of remembrance program followed by the Color Guard, the National Anthem, Battle Hymn of the Republic and a welcome by Brig. General Vaught. Remarks were made by Janet Reno, Attorney General and Lt. Col. Rhonda Cornum, USA MC. A rose petal ceremony followed: various veterans, 2 at

a tire, tossed rose petals in the reflecting pool in memory of a woman veteran. Kenny Rogers and friend flew in to sing "Let There Be Peace on Earth" for the program. Beautiful fireworks ended the service and then we all walked back to get in another line for our right bus back to our hotel. This was quite a day to remember!!

SUNDAY We were bussed to Arlington National Cemetery and were seated in the National Cemetery Amphitheater before 9AM for the "A Time to Give Thanks" program. The US Coast Guard Academy Glee Club sang "America the Beautiful" and "Sometime". Remarks were made by Lt. Governor Frances Ulmer of Alaska and the guest speaker was The Honorable Robert Dole--he first sent his special greetings to the American Red Cross--it was a good beginning for a great speech.

To sit, with thousands of guests, in the beautiful amphitheater and to see the many American flags flying around the amphitheater and to hear the speakers and music was really special.

After the service we were bussed to the memorial where we stood in lines and lines of people----3 hours was our time to reach into the memorial. Again, there were queue's to view various exhibitions, to sign one of the three huge welcoming books, to view the flags of each state who contributed money to the memorial, the Hall of Honor, the "computerized "Register" and the gift shop. I did not get into the gift shop but I did see my picture and information on the computer screen. The lines at the memorial were so great--it was very difficult to view anything and take time----this means another trip to the memorial in the future!

This was another wonderful day and the end of a great experience and with a certain indescribable feeling of a veteran bond to each other.

We thought all the people in the hotels, busses, restaurants, Metro, museums, etc. were very pleasant and helpful to us all.

MONDAY -- our last day in the Washington, D.C. area started off with a "wake up" telephone call or so I thought after I grasped the phone and said "thank you"! Well, as soon as I put down the receiver, the phone rang again and I heard this voice saying "this is Bob and I'm in the lobby--I have some paper clippings for you". We jumped out of bed and before I had my glasses on, there was a knock at the door and there stood Bob--he came in just long enough to give me the WIMSA articles and to say goodbye and off he went to his pharmaceutical job--he had all ready dropped his wife, (a nurse --Penny-) off at her work. Bob must have laughed all day at the sight he saw--Gretch and Mac, greeting him in our pajamas! Bob is such a caring, good guy.

After Breakfast, we took a cab, hoping to go to the WIMSA Gift shop. We didn't know the address but expected it to be a recognizable bldg and that the cab driver would certainly lead us directly there--well, he didn't and repeated and repeated to us that it would be easy to get to if we knew the number. Finally, we asked to stop at a Shell station where a kind man called information--made several calls for us, only to find out the gift shop was closed on Monday. The Shell proprietor would not take any reimbursement. We climbed back in our waiting cab and ^{the driver} took us back to our hotel--this was an \$18.50 mistake. The last thing the cab driver said to us was " you have to know the number--" We closed the door.

Soon we rolled our luggage to the front desk, signed out and they called another cab, which we took to the Union Station, checked our big luggage through to Dearborn and then found a locker for our carry on, as we expected to do some sightseeing. It wasn't that easy to open the locker--Mac stood in line to get change and to get some dollar bills--the machine wouldn't take her dollar bill, so a man in line traded her dollar for his and this dollar worked. Back to the locker and with more help, the locker opened and stored were our carry-ons--We wondered if we would ever get the locker open again'.!!!???.?????

We discovered the post office was down a level, so we rode the escalator down and bought some brand new WIMSA stamps--first day of issue--on Oct. 18, 1997. This was

an unexpected happening!

We went back up to the station, bought tickets for the Tourmobile and were off on a sightseeing tour, ending up at the Lincoln Memorial. We walked to the Vietnam memorial (had seen it before and it still has a lingering, gulping effect and a hushed silence prevails). We followed the crowds to the Korean Conflict Memorial--the soldiers, made of stainless steel, all standing in various lookout positions in rice paddies--the wall to the side was covered with face after face, soldiers in helmets--very touching memorial.

The nurses statue was nearby--another sad and meaningful memorial!

At all these memorials there were many visitors--it was all silence.

We then tourmobiled to the FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL--a very expansive but still a feeling of seclusion memorial. This memorial took its place in Washington D.C. in May 1997. The memorial is divided into 4 outdoor rooms, one for each of FDR'S terms in office; each room conveying in its own way the spirit of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. One of the walls in many Braille explanations, marked on the wall--a great thing. Also, it is the first presidential memorial to honor a First Lady--a bronze sculpture of Eleanor Roosevelt as her service as a delegate to the United Nations. It is quite a wonderful memorial! I remember when President Roosevelt died April 12, 1945--we were stationed in Commercy, France at that time. When we heard he died, we all had tears streaming down our faces--he was our President!

Soon it was time to catch the Tourmobile and depart at the Union Station. We were hungry so we ate at one of the 100 plus eating places and then headed for our locker and we DID open the locker and dragged out our carry ons.

Soon it was time to line up to board the Amtrak to go home. We waited hours--we were told the Amtrak was waiting for a new part ??????????#####. We did board 2 hours late. We did get a seat in the lower level of the coach. For some reason there was room for just 16 passengers--liked that. Mac And I sat in the lounge car awhile but mostly in our assigned seats--eventually several passengers left and we then had 2 seats, so could curl up if we decided to do so. Sleep wasn't

to be as there was a man and woman directly across from me and they took turns snoring--if only they had done this in cadence!

Pittsburgh looked like a booming city early in the morning. After Pittsburgh we were told we would have to move back to our original seats as 5 passengers would be boarding at Cleveland. The party of 5 included a little boy of 2, who was very vocal (cute and bright), his older brother, seven years old and an invalid--he appeared to be a quadriplegia--seated in a wheelchair. He was completely helpless, and had to be fed through a tube into his stomach. His mother and grandparents took turns being with the children and were so nice and patient. This was sad but good to witness as well. They were on their way to Denver--on the coach.

Soon we left the train in Toledo and bussed it to Detroit and Dearborn--the bus driver passed every car and truck on the way. I was glad to arrive safely--a cab ride home ended our trip to see our memorial. The whole trip was wonderful, awesome, unbelievable and one that will always linger in my memories. It also renewed that bond between veterans and made us all proud of our country.

MEMORIES OF THE 50TH GENERAL HOSPITAL

A little information about the author, Gretchen L. Hovis

I was born and "brought up" with my mother, dad and brother in Gibsonburg, a small village in northwest Ohio. We were a close family that included 3 grandparents, 12 aunts and uncles, and 21 cousins. I have always felt proud of my town, family and friends. We had a happy life, interspersed with sad times too. I felt we had many advantages living in a small town AND we were close to Toledo, Cleveland and Detroit, Michigan, in case we wanted to visit art museums, musical events, shopping and/or sport activities. I attended Gibsonburg public schools and graduated from Gibsonburg High School. My college days were spent at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio (2 years) and then graduating from Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio.

I am dedicating my memories of the 50th General Hospital to my 50th General Hospital friends, wherever they may be, and also in memory of all our members who have died...



MEMORIES OF THE 50TH GENERAL HOSPITAL

After graduating from college and thinking about my first job, I had a chance to work at Erie Proving Ground, near Port Clinton, Ohio. Guns, such as 50mm, 80mm, and 240mm Bofors were tested at this huge proving ground near Lake Erie during WWII era. I was a clerk typist there for six months during 1941 - 42.

As I was undecided about my future occupation, I, at an aunt's suggestion, checked a Civil Service job description for, at that time, "Physiotherapists," that was hung on our local post office bulletin board. To me it sounded so exciting and mysterious! I observed in a "Physiotherapy" Department in Toledo, Ohio for three weeks; this convinced me to send in an application. Soon I was accepted and through the U.S. Civil Service Department, started the six month therapy course at the Army Medical Center (Walter Reed General Hospital) in Washington, D.C., hopefully on my way to become a "Physiotherapist!" Wasn't I lucky to have the right prerequisites in college?

At the hospital, we were under all army regulations, even though we weren't actually "in" the army. Our unattractive blue uniforms measured twelve inches from the floor; we wore hair nets, no rouge or lipstick could be used and we had our fingernails checked frequently for cleanliness; one could say we weren't glamorous in any way but we decided that wasn't really necessary because we had to study day and night! I distinctly remember when our class was lined up for inspection, one of our classmates was told to go immediately to wash off her rouge; this was so impossible and funny because her cheeks were naturally red. Imagine - our class of around fifteen had to stifle any giggling or snickering at this incidence in front of our Colonel instructor! During the months at Walter Reed General Hospital, we studied and studied and crammed some more and eventually, with close supervision, we were assigned patients. Our instructors were very thorough and kind but we had to make the grades to continue and complete the course. I remember one very embarrassing incident - as I was bandaging an amputees's stump, I dropped the bandage and it unrolled across the



September 30, 1942---after
we received our certificates
Army Medical Center,
Washington, D.C.

Cantonment Hospital
Quarters
Fort Sill, Oklahoma



My first ARMY issue
of clothes



room. There was complete silence as I chased that down, and rebandaged my patient with a brand new elastic bandage. Such incidents happened frequently but somehow I learned to "cope." I did feel very lucky to complete the course at the Army Medical Center - it was very difficult.

At the end of the six months in Washington, we had to leave our new friends and go to our new assignments. I was sent to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma for my six month practical course. My new friends were laboratory technicians, physical therapists, dental hygienists and assistants and nurses - we all lived in quarters at Cantonment Hospital. However, I was appointed to work at the Station Hospital, so went by an army vehicle from Cantonment Hospital to the Station Hospital. There I worked with patients by myself but of course, the Chief of the department was always helpful whenever needed. It was here at Ft. Sill on 1 May 1943 when I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Medical Department of the United States and received my first army issue of clothes, shoes, etc. I felt proud and at the same time, somewhat apprehensive of my future!

Our course at Walter Reed and Ft. Sill included many other modalities and types of patients and treatment but during WWII, especially overseas physical therapy modalities included the use of luminous heat (heat lamps and bakers), arm, leg and body whirlpool, range of motion exercises, active exercises, gait training, bandaging, massage and self care (activities of daily living). Many treatments were prescribed to "physical therapy aides" by our doctors making daily ward rounds and of course by telephone and written orders for the following types of patients, ulcerated skin areas, burns, psoriasis and skin lesions, orthopedic problems including fractures, sprains, strains, contusions, amputations, trauma, neuritis, peripheral nerve injuries, facial paralysis, arthritis, head and other war injuries as well as various medical conditions.

In July 1943 orders came for me to join the 50th General Hospital at Camp Carson, Colorado and on 15 July 1943 I was assigned to quarters in one of three housing units for the nurses and women personnel attached to the hospital. We each had our own small room; the showers and bathrooms were in the center of each unit. The 50th General Hospital was composed mainly of doctors, nurses and some enlisted

men from Seattle, Washington area; the hospital was sponsored by Seattle College. There were approximately 65 officers (doctors, dentists, Chaplains, Medical Administrative officers, pathologists, anesthesiologists), 110 nurses, 2 dieticians, 2 physical therapy aides, 5 Red Cross members and 500 enlisted men - that was the usual number in each general hospital. While at Camp Carson, we really trained for overseas duties. We were one of the first general hospitals in the states to go on hikes and bivouacs. We started out gradually by hiking 2 miles, progressing up to 14 miles in one afternoon. Our bivouacs extended from one night to 4 nights and 5 days; during this time we hiked, did calisthenics, and ate 3 meals a day. Throughout our hiking we had "latrine stops"; the latrines and tents were set up by our enlisted men. During our rest periods we could remove our helmets and our boots to rest our feet, at least temporarily. After 10 or 15 minutes we were on our way again. I remember when at various times our fingers tingled from hanging down we would all, almost in unison, raise our arms to shoulder height to get "feeling back in our hands."!

Our meals were prepared by our "mess crew". We made full use of our canteen cup and mess kit for our most welcome meals. Our chairs and tables were our helmets and the ground. After our meals cleaning our mess kit (canteen cup, kit and silverware) was an experience; first we scraped (if there was any food remaining) into a big galvanized garbage pail; 2) pre rinsed by dipping utensils into a solution in another galvanized pail; 3) dipping in a sudsy solution in the next pail; 4) rinsing; 5) air drying by shaking 6) placing silver inside the mess kit and snapping it closed 7) hooking the kit onto our pistol belt.

At night we all gathered around a bonfire and sang many familiar songs under the leadership of 2 enlisted men, Marty and Tommy, both from the Boston area. We always warbled "MacNamara's Band! It was a memorable experience for around 700 of us - it was a warm feeling! I've often wondered just how good we sounded!!!

When we returned to Camp Carson we encountered another activity, scary and dangerous as we crawled, (wearing helmets and fatigues) as close to the ground as possible, through the infiltration course under fire (live ammunition). It seemed we crawled for ever and felt so lucky when we completed the course by falling or crawling



Mary--one of our nurses
and her bed roll
Camp Carson, Colorado 1943



Clara and Gretchen--
physical therapists
at Camp Carson
1943



Bivouacing at Camp Carson
"Chow line"
Please note our fine China"



Tommy and Marty
Good "buddies"



LOUISE BATES

A pause during our hiking at
Camp Carson, Colorado
1943



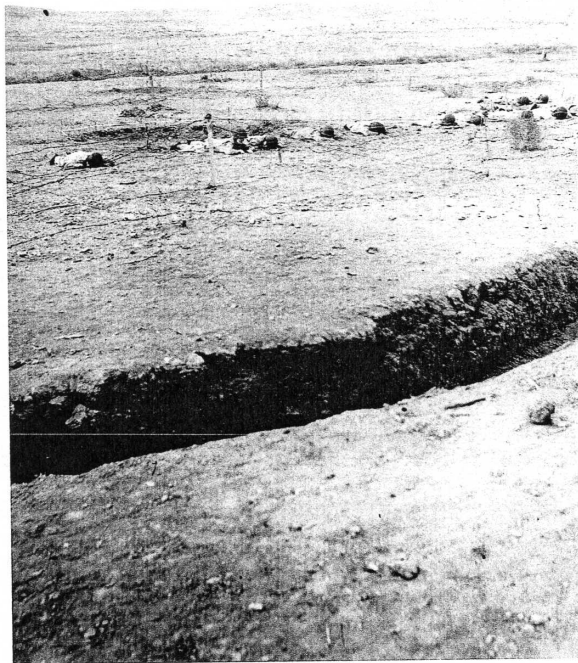
Resting during our bivouac
days---Camp Carson, Colorado
1943



Exercising enroute during
bivouac days at Camp Carson,
Colorado 1943



Clara and Gretchen
waiting to crawl the
infiltration course.
Camp Carson, Colorado



Infiltration course--
Camp Carson, Colorado

into a trench! This was our initiation to live fire!!!!

We also went through the gas chamber with and without our gas masks; after walking part way through with out our gas mask, we very definitely knew that tear gas was used because we cried all the way back to camp.

The army soon decided our hospital unit was ready to move on and the order was "to pack". We weighed bed rolls, rolled bed rolls and blankets over and over; we sat on each other's foot lockers to close them; we packed musette bags: these articles contained our personal items, clothes and shoes we would have with us until we returned him. *Done*

December 16, 1943 was departure day leaving quarters at Camp Carson, lined up alphabetically, loaded onto big trucks and departing on the troop train on time, a rather rare thing to happen! Our days were spent playing cards, sleeping, eating off cardboard plates, singing and guessing just where the train would come to a halt; and this happened as we arrived at Camp Myles Standish, near Boston. Bands greeted us as we crawled up into the convoy trucks and on to our quarters. The quarters were some sight with 56 gals in each of two wards; it seems our "privacy days" were a thing of the past but neither did any of us miss anything that happened! We had double decker beds, one bathtub, one leaky shower and three "water closets." Our equipment, such as bed rolls and foot lockers were stacked up by the bunks. Three clothes lines were strung up in the porch. The wards were modified obstacle courses.

Silly, fun and otherwise happenings at Camp Myles Standish included the following: we marched to meals, the taller girls in the rear; it was stop and go at the mess hall door and when in the hall picked out silverware and dishes, balancing our plates as we maneuvered onto long wooden benches attached to the tables. We were assigned to latrine, hall and scrubbing duties. Tables were used as ironing boards! Polly and Louise took baths in the tub! We made our beds and at times the beds were short sheeted and odds and ends were stuffed smoothly under the blankets; inspection was at any moment! Bridge games and nail polishing were prevalent and Helen K. and Helen P. were kept busy sticking hairpins in many "heads;" we kept them busy! Mid W. had a picture of that "Mann," showing him off again! Lona was very interested in the

New York Times newspaper, which was sold in the Post Exchange!! At intervals Whitey screeched "Van, come here, I did something wrong"; yes' she was learning to knit - under Van's supervision. We went "PXing;" fudge sundaes, milk shakes, sandwiches, coffee and the nickelodeon -- what more could we want at this time!?

GI clothes were issued so consequently there were many style shows with our chief nurse "fitting some of the gals"!! Needles pricked us again -- typhus shots this time! Van, Mary R, Roberts, Ras, Nellie, Lona and Iris practiced the 50th's favorite indoor and outdoor sport - ice skating with figure 8's and all designs executed properly. There was "clubbing" at the Officer's Club with the Tankers and harmonizing "You'll Never Make a Tanker Out of Me"! Dancing to an orchestra was popular; Claire was a jitterbug specialist in one nook of the dance floor. Mid and Mary Anne stationed themselves in the Red Cross Building, telephoning during the late hours.

Lights were out at 10PM or hour designated. Those of us sleeping on the top bunk climbed into the bunks by a ladder route. Cigarettes glowed in the dark and whispers were heard. Those on the top bunk could view all happenings! Music on the radio was disturbed by one of the nurses yelling in her sleep; chanting snores were heard here and there; one of the nurses, Swanie, telling Mary D. to turn over on her side and then Mary retorting to Swanie to turn over on her own side!

Van's sock she hung up Christmas Eve was still empty Christmas night! Christmas carols were sung over the radio - we all thought of home! Christmas was just another day but recognized by tablecloths on the tables. One night at midnight, we were awakened from the arms of Morpheus with orders to "chalk mark your helmets and here are tags for your suitcase"! The next minute the tags were collected and the word was "We'll do it tomorrow - be quiet and go to sleep"!

29 December 1943 - luggage was lined up in many rows. The time to depart was approaching; each of us were loaded down with pistol belt and canteen, musette bag, gas mask, purse, blanket roll and helmets! Pete and Shunk had to make a bathroom trip after all encumbered with everything; Whitey, knowing how hard it was to get up from a sitting position, playfully pushed Mary R. on the floor but after a struggle, Mary made it to the upright position. Lined up, not only alphabetically, but numerically; we,

with tugging on all sides, climbed into buses. We were then driven to the depot, where we waited until we could get on the train. While on the train, Hrella couldn't find her gloves and we all remembered her suitcase!! Polly and Louise brought along sandwiches and were glared at by the rest of the starving P's, R's, and S's! Soon we were at the dock and on our way to ?? Still lined up alphabetically we filed down the gangplank but not for long as it started to crumble as Mary D. was in the middle; it was very scary but she made it back to land instead of falling in the water. (Another solid gangplank replaced that dangerous one).

We were led to our spacious (?) staterooms aboard the Edmund B. Alexander troop ship; here we lived 4 to 6 in a stateroom where we had triple decker bunks. Some of us were lucky to have mirrors on the stateroom doors - how vain we were!! Some of us bunked in wards. We immediately "primped" for dinner and consumed that in a hurry as we were hungry. We roamed around the decks, port and starboard, fore and aft the next day until the signal "all military personnel and all hands below." This meant it was time for the big shove off to places unknown - 29 December 1943.

Weather permitting, we spent most of the day time on deck, just watching the water and the huge convoy which consisted of approximately 50 ships. The rest of the time, we napped, slept, played cards, read, bathed in salt water showers - there was no suds but we felt cleaner. Mayme spent much time in her middle bunk, Hrella tried manicuring our nails but it wasn't really her specialty, Johnny told us the latest rumors, Jennings practiced her needle work, several or more nurses left the dinner table very abruptly, Ras and Whitey kept knitting socks, Mary Bell reserved her special place by a port hole, Krulic and HOFFIE were learning to play bridge, Bea read palms, drilling was practiced on deck, we hurried to church service each morning, saying more prayers, Thelma B. plucked eyebrows and we had most fun shuffling from side to side at the New Year's Eve dance. Now I'm wondering if we ended the dance with our original partners!!!

Naturally, we weren't allowed on deck after dark; because of the great danger, and there was a complete blackout! The food aboard was very good; we ate two meals a day with three sittings at each meal; one sitting, for example from 6:30 to 7:30 AM -

one from 7:30 to 8:30 AM and the third from 8:30 to 9:30 AM. After ten days we sighted land and wondered which land. At our last meal on the Edmund B. Alexander, we tipped the stewards and bid them farewell.

Before long, we lined up the gangplank to walk ashore on our "sealegs" to Liverpool, England. This was 8 January 1944. We were greeted by Red Cross girls who served hot coffee and doughnuts. There was "shutter snapping" of Wiles and Willis; their faces appeared later on the newscreen in "Yanks Invade England." After debarking, we wiggled onto a train where we were six persons to a compartment; the British trains had compartments the full length of each coach with a main aisle along one side. We drank more coffee, ate more doughnuts; -- gum and cigarettes were distributed by the Red Cross. We glanced side to side peering out the windows to see all we could see. That night, from train to trucks was another struggle, loaded down with bags, bed rolls, etc. We arrived at Camp Oulton Park, near Chester, England in the blackout. In the darkness, we, somehow, were led to Nissen Huts, where we lived for several weeks. Twelve or so stayed in each billet - furniture consisted of double decker bunks and a stove in the center of the billet. After we unloaded, we went to chow - the sign read "Stork Club"!? Viv had a Colonel point his finger at her and her plate, reminding her she didn't eat everything as she was (and we all were) supposed to do!! We stumbled back to our huts and fired up the stove with coke, coal and wood. We learned how to fold our blankets to keep the cold out (it seems we crawled in from the top opening). An enlisted man hiked with us and guarded us the latrine and ablutionary (we were so glad Rosie brought her Webster's dictionary). Various activities included keeping vigil all night round the stove, -- bunk fatigue as a result of our 3 piece mattresses, card playing, hiking in the country, shining shoes and lining up gas masks and helmets in preparation for inspection, having midnight snacks on K-rations but the bullion and hot chocolate made from chocolate bars did taste good!? We also drilled on the puddled field and marched to classes. Some nurses were hospitalized in Wales as a result of colds, and coughs. There was a shortage of Kleenex and Government Property paper. Clara met her husband after fourteen months apart - a happy happening!

We had chances to go by truck to Chester to sightsee and to hotels, shows, pubs, cathedrals and stores. One day several of us, Ras, Ruth L. and I stopped in a hotel for dinner - we ordered "almond chips" so we thought that was what the waitress said - when she served our meals the "almond chips" transformed to ham and chips (potatoes) - the British accent betrayed us -- we laughed and laughed at ourselves! We "waltzed" at White Hall; our dance partners were civilian workers. We did have fun! We had decisions to make - which uniform, Class A, B, C, or D to wear; we had to measure caduceus and other insignia to the "100th" part of an inch for placements on our uniforms. We learned to count shillings, half crowns, pounds, farthings, etc. - our US money was a temporary thing of the past!

One morning, thirty gals left for Glasgow, Scotland, so again there was moving out of billets into other billets. We continued drilling and attended classes. We finally received letters - most welcome to all. Tootie and Haynes passed around fudge, cookies, candy and nuts from the United States. Before long, we all were in Glasgow, Scotland - we took over a hospital an Evacuation Hospital had started several months before. Cowglen, the actual place we were stationed, was only twenty minutes by tram to downtown Glasgow, a port city. The Scottish people were friendly and we made some very nice acquaintances. We went to shows, plays, dances and many of us bought bicycles that had brakes on the handlebars. We rode our bikes often and usually stopped to buy fish and chips, which was always wrapped in newspapers. While in Glasgow, we had a weeks' leave and several 2 day passes so we visited Ayr, Oban, Stirling, Edinburgh, Dundee, Loch Lomond, etc - all very pretty country with its Lochs or lakes to us, hills and flowers, especially rhododendrons.

One Sunday afternoon at our hospital, we heard some music - we looked out the window and a Scottish band, including bagpipers, with the members dressed in kilts, had come to serenade us. We dashed out to follow them as they marched around the hospital area. They also danced the Sword Dance, which was very interesting and fun to watch.

In July 1944 we were alerted to move on - we were sorry to leave Scotland, but the army wanted us so we rode the train for two days. We stayed for five days in

Plymouth, England - we had our last tea and toast, crumpets and tarts. We also had our last look at billboards with the name "Hovis" on them; the signs read "Hovis is much better toasted" and "You can get a lot of goodness out of a little Hovis" - it was bread being advertised. I thought this was quite a coincidence, since it is my last name.

On July 16th we rode by truck to the English Channel and then into LCT's, in which we rode to a point in deep water where a Liberty troop ship was waiting to load the 50th and 298th hospital nurses plus infantry men. With cranes, we were lifted, still in the LCT up to the railing and crawled over onto the ship. We went directly below to our quarters, a big room with 300 triple decker cots, where we lodged for only one night. The next day we again were met by LCT's and rushed to shore, landing on Utah Beach, 17 July 1944. This was quite a sight, seeing many warships, barrage balloons and we felt very lucky we didn't run into any mines and we were glad to touch the land of France. The 5th General Hospital had landed several days before and so we were the second and third general hospitals to land in France. We waited for transportation and had a dusty trip to a bivouac area where we were told to pitch our pup tents for the night; however, orders came later to take us to Cherbourg because it was too dangerous there for us. We were happy to get into ambulances and when we drove in convoy and passed convoys through Montebourgh, Valognes, and other ruined towns, saw dead animals and soldiers, we all were quiet and just began to realize that there was a war going on and we weren't too far away! We were in Cherbourg about midnight and stayed overnight at the Louis Pasteur (French Naval Hospital) from where the Germans had evacuated several days before. It was a dirty place so we had to scrub and sprinkle a certain powder on the mattresses before we could go to bed. We were restricted to our own area here and could not stray "off the beaten path." We ate K-rations - K-rations included meat or cheese, biscuits, nescafe, gum and chocolate. Soon at eleven PM we were loaded down and on the move again in trucks - we had a very spooky ride in almost a complete blackout; there was just enough light for the drivers to see that we were on the road. We passed convoys, saw lights in the sky in all directions - heavy artillery flashes and flares, heard rumbles and we seemed to head right into it all! At 4 AM we turned into a place that was our bivouac area. Our

commanding officer met us and told us to line up, to be quiet, to use no matches or flashlights and that we were safe - only 4 miles from the front! He guided us to our tents and we fumbled around for our blanket rolls but as we couldn't do much in the dark, found a blanket to use and slept on the ground. The next morning our cooks had a hot breakfast for us and we felt better. We saw our doctors and enlisted men and it was quite a reunion because we hadn't seen them since leaving Scotland, about 3 weeks before. At this area, we lived in tents, slept on cots, washed out of helmets using cold water. We did nothing else in the day until we started playing baseball, sunbathed, "told fortunes" with tea leaves, wrote letters and talked. We had several shows in tents, went to church (in a tent) every day and sat on the ground or on our helmets for the shows and church services. Every night at 11 the Jerries flew over and we "hit" the foxholes the enlisted men helped us dig; we were located at Carentan and the Germans were trying to bomb a bridge 1/2 mile from us. The main road (the Red Ball Highway) for supplies, tanks, artillery and personnel went past us, so we heard a lot of noise from the heavy convoys, from the anti-aircraft next to us and from the planes overhead! We saw chandelier flares, falling planes, and smoke at St. Lo, not far away. It was scary!!

On July ^{15th}~~20th~~ 3000 planes that bombed St. Lo flew directly over our area - we watched for five straight hours and we thought they would never stop coming but eventually that ended. It was an awesome sight. During this month, some of our doctors, nurses and enlisted men were sent on detached service to field and evacuation hospitals, which are closer to the front and move with the army - the medics worked while bombs were dropping and often the nurses, doctors and enlisted men gave their helmets to nervous patients waiting for surgery, thus endangering their own lives. Back in our bivouac area, 3 of us had quite an experience one night - we had been in foxholes from 11 PM and at 3:30 AM there seemed to be a lull in the strafing so it seems everyone made a dash to the latrine, an outdoor type. The three of us decided to wait until the queue was smaller and then attempted to get to the latrine. No sooner had we walked to the latrine, when the bombing started again so we made a dash out the tent, crawling along the hedgerow and to the foxhole. We made it safely but it was very scary as several German planes directly overhead were showering down some



Ward Tents
Carentan, France
1944





Our banquet table



USO Show



Carentan, France
Tent Hospital

On my way to the Lister bag--
to fill the canteens with
water.

Carentan, France

Departure day from Carentan
to Commercy, France
Lined up alphabetically



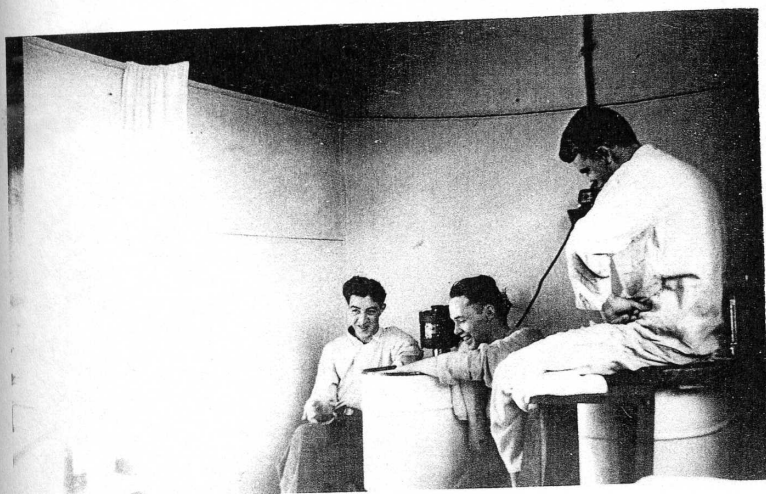


Scraping off mud from
our boots
Carentan, France 1944

Marianne scrubbing her
fatigues while I watch



Patients in "whirlpools"
Physical therapy department
Commercy, France





gunfire. This firing was plenty for us but it wasn't anything at all compared to our men at the front line. Hospitals were not supposed to be bombed and medics didn't carry firearms; hospital tents had red crosses on the roof; ambulances were parked in a criss cross pattern in the form of a cross and medical personnel wore red cross brassards on our sleeves - all done to help prevent bombing.

While bivouacking near Carentan and waiting for the engineers to complete our hospital site, we went by truck to several parties given by men who were waiting to go "to the front". The men were good hosts and served food and drink and we usually danced until our hour of departure - we had to return to camp by 11PM.

We soon moved to our hospital; it was really interesting and fascinating to see how the engineers started from just land and then build a water tower, fix the sewerage, pipes etc. for surgery, clinics and wards; enlisted men put up the huge tents; equipment was placed in the right places, roads and sidewalks (stone and gravel) were built and then we all made hundreds of beds, everyone working together until the patients were sent to us by ambulances, starting 14 August 1944. There were many wounded but they were always wonderful patients; the graver their wounds seemed to be, the higher their moral; they could hardly believe the clean sheets and blankets on their beds, hot meals and American girls!

We lived in tents and learned to fix fires, chop wood with use of flashlights, showered, usually in cold water, read and wrote letters by candlelight and when we had no fuel except for the patients, realized that warmth was a luxury. We had a sad experience when one of our nurses, ill with pneumonia, died 5 October 1944 and was buried in an American cemetery at St. Mere Eglise, France. Tears streamed down our faces as we attended the funeral and watched as our friend Joy, wrapped in the American flag was lowered into the ground.

Some of us had permanents in Carentan; the shop we chose appeared to be clean but we were fooled because the "beauty operators" used the same comb on all their customers, didn't wash our hair before the permanent (it would remove natural oils, they said), and used any cut hair to put on the permanent solution; we were there for six hours, one reason was because they were more interested in selling "parfum"!

Unbelievable as it would seem, these permanents happened to be one of the best we had while overseas. It was dark when we left this "beauty salon" and we were lucky to get a ride in one of our Jeeps back to our quarters.

In November our hospital unit received orders to move again so that meant packing once more. We always left some things we had accumulated, so before we left the french women moved in quickly to pick out clothes and shoes they could wear - we had to laugh at them trying on big GI shoes and clothing.

On our way to the next hospital area, we rode the train to Paris, where we stopped for several hours before we climbed on to the buses again, on to Commercy 18 November 1944. We were near Verdun and Metz and in the combat zone once more so hear the Jerries anew. We lived in a building with no fuel or lights, but eventually we had electricity and fuel and our quarters were very nice! Here, approximately 12 to 20 lived in a big room. Our entire hospital wards were in buildings that were formerly a French Cavalry post. Patients were admitted 4 December 1944. We were very busy here and at one time cared for over 2,300 patients; in addition to our many wounded GI's, we treated Russian, Italian and German patients. The Russian patients had been German prisoners and were very thin as a result of malnutrition, plus tuberculosis as an added problem. They were fed slowly and those that lived looked quite healthy after several months of treatment. The Russians were very fond of American food, especially bread and when we had a bread shortage at the hospital, it was traced to the Russians who hid bread under the mattresses and also - they would argue over one piece of bread and wanted it divided equally!

We had quite a few amputation cases in the hospital and one morning, we, in our Physical Therapy department, were called to surgery to watch a demonstration by 2 enlisted men who had been wounded in the South Pacific area - one had lost a leg and the other had lost an arm. Since they were all healed and able to use their artificial leg and arm, were on a tour through hospitals, including ours, in the European theater. The one who lost his leg carried a tall, large doctor across the room, showing how much weight he could carry. The other man with the artificial arm, took off his shirt, put it back on, buttoning each button with the artificial fingers; he also showed how he could pick

up a small coin tossed on the floor. The 2 men toured the wards later in the day - the psychology was very effective for our patients.

When in Commercy we discovered ways to get our clothes cleaned; we would take our bundled clothing to a certain home and from there the members of that family took our clothes to a river and there they "made suds, rinsed, dried and pressed" for us - in exchange for our bundles they were paid in beaucoup francs and we then felt cleaner and looked neater!

During the Battle of the Bulge, we had orders to pack only our bare necessities in case we had to evacuate hurriedly; however, we were very fortunate and were not surrounded - a lucky time for us!

We had been wearing fatigues and trousers and had worn big GI shoes or paratrooper boots since the preceding July. One day an order came through and April 1 was a big day for everyone at the hospital when the nurses, physical therapists, and dieticians were allowed to wear seersucker uniforms and caps - we looked like girls once again. The air was full of "wolf whistles" and many patients were cured that day!!!

When our number of hospital patients decreased, we were given 3 day passes and week leaves; we were chosen by our chief nurse who picked names from a helmet. Four of us went to Paris, where we went sightseeing, night clubbing (Follies, Bel Tabarin) and window shopping and rode the metros, which is like our subway system. Some of the nurses went to Brussels, Belgium, some to England; we went to the Riviera, a resort on the Mediterranean - it was beautiful and wonderful. We were billeted at Hotel Juana, Juana les Pin, near Cannes. We swam, rode the pedalos, biked, walked, toured a "parfum" factory in Grasse during the daytime and at night ate dinners in the hotels and went dancing later in the evening - our dancing partners were army personnel also on 3 day passes! Our week on the Riviera was over too soon and we wished we had a summer home there as did Maurice Chevalier.

On our return trip to Commercy, we had to stop over in Dijon - when we arrived at 4 AM we showered in hopes to wash off a layer of dust and dirt we accumulated from the French train. The next day we had a little trouble; one of the nurses was guarding our coats, souvenirs, etc. on the train - our suitcases were at the gate and we had 2



Nurses--officers---
baseball game
Commercy, France
1945



WE WON THE GAME



VE Day "Parade Rest"
Commercy, France
1945



minutes to board the fast coach car called the doodlebug. We were all ready to climb the steps into the car when the French engineer left without us. We had to wait several hours and ride in a slow dirty train but we were met at Nancy by one of our enlisted men with a car so we made it to the hospital before we were AWOL - we did kid Aggie for leaving us without a franc.

For exercise we could play badminton and basketball in a gym, and play tennis on a court our men made. We also watched our teams play baseball - sometimes 3 games in the evening after dinner.

Our officers played too and since they weren't too good, wanted to challenge our girls team; we weren't sure, but after practicing several times, and almost catching a ball thrown directly to us, we decided the big game would be on a Sunday afternoon. The officers, if right handed, were to throw, bat and catch left handed, run backwards and play according to other crazy rules! The game was "on"! We played 2 innings and then 2 of our men's regular team added on to the girl's team. The men dressed in nurses seersucker uniforms, anklets and oxfords, bandannas and wore lots of rouge and lipstick! Of course our new team members hit home runs for us and caught most all fly balls. We had so much fun and everyone laughed until we cried. The girls won the game, of course, and the patients and enlisted men thought that show was better than any USO show they had seen.

Our hospital had its own very good orchestra, so usually on Saturday nights we danced and danced to all the wonderful tunes.

8 May 1945, VE day was a day of great celebration; patients tore down the blackout curtains, cheers were heard all over the grounds; the enlisted men had a dance and our officers had "open house." The army designated a parade retreat for every post so we, including ambulatory patients, marched the streets of Commercy and were cheered by the French who lined the streets - the old and young French people played in their band too and were at the ceremony at the big square downtown. It was another day we'll never forget!! After VE day we were still busy but gradually the patients were evacuated back to hospitals in the United States. We had a lot of extra time then, so we sunbathed, walked the countryside and at night didn't have to worry

about blackout curtains!

In August I was transferred to a hospital in Luxembourg. There, we swam often in a pool, and took trips to Bastagne, Spa, St. Vith and Malmedy - they looked like the majority of French towns we saw - not much left of any of them - unbelievable sight! We went to Rheims to see the cathedral there - we hoped to go through the champagne factory but didn't have any extra time. I was transferred back into the 50th GH and was very happy! Soon we were on our way HOME. We stayed in Verdun for 10 days in late August 1945 and then boarded a train with 3 other groups of general hospital nurses and were on our way to Marseilles. We ate K-rations and stopped for 1 hot meal a day. We ate a supposed Sunday night chicken dinner at 6 AM Monday morning but it tasted just as good. We arrived in Marseilles 9 September 1945 and never saw so many nurses at one time - 2300 waiting patiently. We had a lot of fun at the staging area - swimming, tennis, archery, shows and formed long lines buying coke and ice cream - all fun activities. We toured Marseilles - a fascinating city. Here we heard a very fine violinist play "Symphony" when it was just "hot off the press" so to speak - whenever we hear that beautiful song, it brings back good memories!

We watched and waved goodbye to 2100 nurses before we left, but October 15 was our lucky day - we walked the gangplank on to the George Washington and left Marseilles that night. It was a cruise on the Mediterranean, a very blue and calm sea - we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, viewing the coasts of Spain and Africa. The weather was wonderful day and night - we walked the deck during the days, played cards, saw shows and planned for our future in civilian life.

Four days before we landed the weather changed into rain, fog and wind that caught us in the tail end of a hurricane; however, we were on one of the smoothest sailing transport ships and had no problem. We were told 2 days from shore we would dock in NYC - that was a dream come true! On the 25th of October, we all were on deck trying to sight land but it was so foggy we couldn't see a thing until we were in the Hudson River that night and saw the "Jersey Shores" and car lights. We were anchored all night and were out on deck at 5:30 AM to watch the ferry boats and barges - and glided by the Statue of Liberty. That was our biggest thrill and we all had tears

streaming down our faces. After debarking, we were whisked away in buses where we had our first carton of milk since we left the states on our way to Camp Kilmer. There we were sent to separation centers (I went to Ft. Dix, N.J.) and onto our homes throughout the United States.

As we were being led to our quarters at Ft. Dix, I heard a voice that yelled "GRETCH - what in the hell are you doing here ???" I turned around and there sat a nurse - physical therapist I had met and known at Fort Sill, Oklahoma (the hospital she had been assigned to took over ours when our 50th moved on to Commercy!) It was some happy meeting for us and quite a coincidence! My friend and I kept in contact with our yearly X-mas cards. Many years later, I was notified she died and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. In 1993 when in Washington, D.C. our tour guide led me to her grave.

We all "put in" calls to home - my parents had read of the docking of the "George Washington" in the Toledo Times, so they were waiting for my call that reached them at 8:40 that night - I could hardly wait to see them ~~and my~~ and all my relatives!

My train ride from Philadelphia to Toledo was an overnight trip, arriving early AM. I'm sure I didn't sleep "a wink" as I was so anxious to meet my parents. My luggage I carried on the train had a note attached to it - it read "In the true Buckeye spirit, I carried your luggage for you to the train!" the writer of the note was from a town 25 miles from my home! That note gave me a warm feeling! When I left the train in Toledo I expected to see my parents at once but they didn't meet me so I sat on my luggage until they found me - (I was on one level of the station and they were on another level) and then I was really home! On our way to Gibsonburg, I handed my mother a list of food requests and here is the list (Jello, custard, chocolate pie, oatmeal, angel food cake, oatmeal cookies, corn-on-the-cob, peas, chocolate pudding,, 1,000 Island Dressing, nut bread, cheese salad, rolls, peach and chocolate ice cream, sherbert, cookies chocolate cake, stuffed baked tomatoes, planked steak, tomato soup, potato soup, noodle soup, chocolate steam pudding, spaghetti and meatballs). It seems I craved "desserts and soups and of course, my mother complied, as I knew she would - it was wonderful to be home again.

We, of the 50th General Hospital, were so happy to come home but hated to say goodbye to all our friends we knew so well. We had a lot of fun throughout our years with the 50th General Hospital personnel and we also had experiences that weren't so nice but we met many people, saw interesting sights, and best of all, were able to help care for our boys who had sacrificed so much in battle. I know I "grew up" during those years and I know I have a much deeper and reverent feeling for our national symbol, the flag of the United States of America. I have tried to write some of the highlights of our army life and they are a sample of all nurses and medical departments that served overseas.