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It was World War II and for months I impatiently waited for Congress to finally create the new Woman's Navy Corps -- (WAVES)! I was among the first to hold up my hand and proudly say "I do" in October of 1942. Up until that time, I had been active in the Women Flyers of America, a civilian group organized to ferry bomber planes from the United States to England. While as a member of this organization, I was able to accumulate my licensing groundwork credits in meteorology and navigation. When finances prevented me from continuing my flight training, the Navy had another option open for me to not only acquire my pilot's license but also to help out my country as well. Although the recruiter had promised me an Aerographer's rating (currently no longer in existence), I ended up in the first Yeoman class at Oklahoma A & M University.

Three months later, when training ended, I was one of only 13 who were asked to volunteer to start the Coast Guard SPARS. Upon entry, I was sent to Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., Contract Section. There, I was assigned the duty of recording all the specifications and negotiations for the construction of four *ice breaker* ships. These four were named after the points on a compass, the four winds -- East, North, West & South -- and were to be used to keep the Northern Passages open. Since two of these were promised to Russia under the Lend-Lease Program, Russian Navy Officers had been dispatched to Washington to make their specifications and needs known. I was assigned, along with an interpreter, to record these specs right down to the details of ships bells. It was very stressful, exacting but intriguing duty.

My next assignment was at the *Industrial War College* at the Pentagon. Officers

from all branches of service met to identify their materiel procurement needs and requirements for the battles ahead. My role was to attend these meetings, some lasting two to four hours, taking notes in shorthand, and then transcribing these notes for distribution to all those personnel in a need-to-know capacity. It was extremely important that my translations were accurate down to the last detail so that the diversification order of contract awards was correct to assure use of varied logistical areas in the country in the event of attack on the U.S. mainland.

Women in service was such a new concept at the time that adequate provisions for our housing and dietary needs were not as yet addressed. We, in the Coast Guard, were assigned to mostly sub-rated hotel rooms with no cooking facilities or organized mess available. Our enlisted personnel salaries ranged from \$50 as Seaman, to slightly over \$100 a month for those in the petty officer class. We were allocated only \$1.50 to pay for three meals a day in wartime Washington. We, consequently made many visits to the Pepsi Cola canteen for 5 cent hotdogs, 10 cent hamburgers and all the Pepsi we could drink!

I was in Washington, D.C. for about two and a half years. Then due to the stress of my assignments causing digestive and emotional problems, it became medically necessary that I be stationed closer to my family home in New York City. I was stationed at the Brooklyn Supply Depot, assigned to contract expediting and traveled between New York City and Washington where most of the military contract files were located. In August 1945, due to an accident in which I was seriously injured and ongoing digestive problems, I was honorably and medically discharged from the Coast Guard.

Despite my medical problems, I very much enjoyed the experience and camaraderie I had during my Navy/Coast Guard service. While one wishes

that WWII never had to happen, think of what our life would be like today if our country hadn't intervened.