



Sadie (Miller) McKay

USNR, Yeoman 1/c

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I was born in New York City. We lived in, Manhattan near Central Park until I was 3 years old, when my Father died. My Mother and I moved to Mt. Kisco, NY, 60 miles from New York City. My Mother married again and we suddenly were a big family, my Step-Father had 4 children and then my half brother and sister were born.

It was the time of the “Big Depression”. We never thought of ourselves as poor, because everyone was the same as we were. We had Victory Gardens with the town providing the seeds and land. All our toys, games and clothes were hand made. We were always busy going on hikes, singing and lots of pot luck parties.

My Mother was born in Poland. She was very community orientated and volunteered whenever needed. She was also very patriotic and instilled in us the pride of living in America. In Poland, they could not vote or speak freely. She taught us how to study the issues and the importance of voting.

When I was 10, I belonged to a girls club. We were invited to Albert Einstein’s Estate for a picnic. He shook hands with us and asked our names. Even then, Einstein was famous.

In High School, I worked on weekends typing menus for the Dietitian at the town hospital. During the summer vacations, I worked at the Readers Digest in the next town of Pleasantville, NY. When I graduated, I worked for 2 years at the Northern Westchester Bell Telephone Company.

WWII had started and 2 of the friends I worked with found out they were taking women in the military. Dorothy joined the Army, Mary joined the Marines, and I joined the WAVES in 1944. After Boot training at Hunter College, I was sent to NAS Lambert in St. Louis,

MO where I worked in communications. I met my husband, Hal McKay, who had just returned from the South Pacific. Five days after we were married, I was transferred to NAS Norman, OK and Hal was transferred to NAS Olathe, KS. We did not see each other for one year.

While on the train to Oklahoma, an Indian, who was sitting next to me, wanted to take me to his Indian Reservation, but the M.P.s would not let him. At NAS Norman, I worked in an airplane hanger at a Supply Depot "striking for Aviation Store-keeper" with training on the job. We ordered, stocked, and issued airplane parts and parachutes. When someone said what would happen if the parachute did not open, I told them to bring it back. We stood "Duty" once a month with a carbine rifle strapped to our back. Two WAVES one from Belleville, IL and one from Millstadt, IL became my lifetime friends. We had a reunion every year for 50 years.

After V.J. Day, Hal and I were discharged and moved to St. Louis where his family lived. He worked as a police officer for the city until he retired. I worked for Missouri State Employment Office as a veteran's representative for 30 years. After I retired, I volunteered for OASIS and the International Institute teaching English. One young man from Arabia, wearing flowing robes, told me what he liked about America were the blond haired blue eyed women.

I have 2 daughters, 3 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. Granddaughter Dianna was in the Army Engineer Corp and in 1997, she flew from Hungary to Bosnia everyday to inspect the underside of bridges for mines and explosives. One great-granddaughter lives in France with her Mother.

Hal and I have been married 55 years and have lived in the same house in South St. Louis for 40 years. Besides membership to the Gateway WAVES, I am a past Commander of the American Legion Service Women's Post 404.



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