



**FRANCES GERTRUDE SCHOPF**  
**USNR, SK2/c**

I, Frances Gertrude, was the seventh of eight children born to Mary and Joseph Schopf in Spokane, WA, on December 16, 1915, the blizzardiest night of the year. The doctor couldn't even get out. A neighbor lady was there to help my mom. My first three years of school were at the Adams grade school, then Sacred Heart where I graduated in 1929. High school was at Marycliff and college at Holy Names in Spokane and Maryhurst in Portland, Oregon. In the 1930's, jobs were scarce so I went to comptometer school. Finally, I got a job working for a contractor building the Navy Supply Depot in the valley.

December 7, 1941 and we were at war. The fall of 1942 a visiting Navy recruiting team was in Spokane so I went to see them and joined them. Cedar Falls for boot camp, Bloomington, Indiana for Storekeeping School, Memphis, TN, and at NAS, Hilo, Hawaii until the end of the war.

On February 13, 1943 we sailed from San Francisco out under the Golden Gate Bridge headed for Hawaii. Since it was wartime, we went blacked-out. The first three nights the sky was overcast so the green phosphorescent lights in the water made the sea unbelievably beautiful, like emeralds on water. We were on the converted Lurliner. Instead of private staterooms we had three-deep bunks. I was glad to be in a bottom one. We were happy to have Navy raincoats with liners. The further we went the warmer it got; by Sunday morning when we arrived it was very warm. The band was out to meet us. Our group of 60 was the last to be assigned.

The officer in charge said she couldn't tell us where we were going, only that it rained a lot. She was right. Hilo is one of the rainiest places, but the soil is black as coal and is never muddy. It rained at least every day. I was assigned to the supply department and was in charge of one-third of the Quonset huts for receiving and storing all of our supplies. I didn't think it was funny when a tarantula came in with one of our shipments. When they finally dropped a case of shoes on it, I was relieved.

The day the war ended we were restricted to quarters for safety's sake, but they opened the beer hall. We had signed up for the duration and six months, but they sent us home as fast as they could and so ended one of the most exciting times in my life.