

## F O R E W O R D

The WAVES were trained to replace the men for overseas duty. The men were needed for combat and the girls who joined the WAVES took over the stateside duties previously handled by men. We were not allowed to go overseas but we filled in where we were needed. Thousands of us enlisted and thousands more were requested as the war went on. We were proud of being of help, in our small way, and the experience we gained was beneficial to us in many ways after we were discharged. The memories will be with us forever.

) Artie Shaw, Freddy Martin, Xavier Cugat, etc. Of course we all had jobs... Sullivan was a Draftsman, Sue was a Secretary and I had an Administrative job in an office on 42nd Street.

New York was teeming with servicemen - not just ours but British, French and other countries. I became a member of Marble Collegiate Church and our "Young Adults Group" set up a sort of "home away from home" for the military, providing entertainment and refreshments every evening and on weekends. We used the large "banquet" room in the basement. There was a piano and I spent hours playing so that everybody could sing. Also had some great times doing the town with some of the Navy guys until around 2:00 AM and then stopping at the Automat for an early breakfast. New Year's eve dates will never be forgotten. The mob at 42nd and Broadway was so thick I could hardly hold onto my date's hand! I couldn't fall down even if I fainted! Actually I even had trouble managing to kiss the right guy when it was Midnight...there were so many other faces in the way!

Sue and I became interested in flying. In preparation we joined the "Women Flyers of America" and took classes in Aerodynamics, Navigation and Meteorology. Then we began spending weekends (when the weather permitted) at Stormville Airport in upstate New York. The airport was out in the country and consisted of one small shack, two yellow Piper Cub planes and a large expanse of grassland (marked by a couple of air strips) where about 15 of us would loll around telling jokes, etc. until we could get a hop in one of the planes. The only place to stay was a large farm house across the road where we got "bed and breakfast". All other meals (and

parties) had to be enjoyed at "Mike's Place", a combination bar and cafe about a mile up the road. There was no transportation so we got our exercise walking back and forth, but "Mike's" had a lot of atmosphere...the "juke box" featured such numbers as "Pistol Packin' Mama", "Heil! (pblsst) Right in Der Fuhrer's Face", "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition", etc., etc. "Pblsst" is the only way I can spell the "Bronx cheer"...the dictionary doesn't list it!

Then New York went to the "brown out"! The lights of Broadway and the tall buildings acted as a beacon and could help the enemy in case of an attack on our country, so Broadway was no longer the "great white way" and the tall buildings went dark. Only necessary lights such as those at street level would be permitted (or emergency beacons for our aircraft). The city became ghostly! People were getting edgy! I became an Air Raid Warden, checking out every building in the square block where I lived, to record the names and number of people in each residence or apartment so they would know how many people to search for in case of an air raid. However, when it came to going out into the dark all hours of the night and standing guard at my "post" it was more like a "comedy of errors". Most of the time the alarm went off when I was in the shower and I had to grab my coat, helmet and flashlight as I ran out the door - dripping wet! Other times I simply slept through the drill!"

There had to be a better way to help my country but I wasn't cut out to be a "Rosie the Riveter" and although I knew about the WACS I couldn't face what I considered to be "giving up my feminity" for a uniform!

I would like to have joined the WASPS (women service pilots overseas) but Dad would have had a spastic attack! He had spent a weekend with us in New York, including a visit to Stormville where he saw me take off solo in one of the planes. It was almost too much for him because his attitude toward planes was to fly "low and slow" if you had to fly, but he wasn't going to get in one until they "put stilts on 'em"!

Then I found out about the W.A.V.E.S. (Women's Auxiliary Volunteer Enlistment Service" as I recall). Their uniforms were created by a leading dress designer and I liked the results. Instead of giving the girls that "straight up and down" look, they let curves show where they should show without emphasizing them. In addition to that I had always liked Navy blue. I wrote Dad and told him my intentions and, although he hated to have me even farther away from him he was glad to get me away from "those damn planes".

The Navy required that we enlist at the recruitment center nearest our home and for me that was St. Louis, Missouri. I hated leaving my job and the church, and I hated giving up flying, but mostly I hated giving up the excitement and glamour of Manhattan night life. As for Sullivan and Sue, we knew by that time that we were life-long friends and our close friendship would keep us together forever - no matter where we were.

The enlistment process was almost enough to make me change my mind! It was around the first of April and the recruiting office was in one of those dreary old brick buildings. Several other girls were there, each being interviewed, and I found myself included without any comment other