

Kathy Leavy Smith

U.S. Navy WAVES



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Katherine 'Kathy' E. Leavy Smith enlisted in the U. S. Navy WAVES on October 5, 1944 at the age of 21 and received her basic training at Hunter College in New York City. Kathy came from a family of 12 children, six girls and six boys. Three of her brothers served in the armed forces, as did her late husband Grover R. Smith, whom she married after the war.

Because of her prior experience as a civilian working in the payroll department at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey, following basic training, Kathy was assigned to store keeping school in Milledgeville, Georgia. In February, 1945, she was assigned to the Schools Command at the San Diego Naval Training Center where she took care of supplies for the various schools and spent the remainder of her military service there.

During World War II women in service traditionally replaced men in clerical, communications and intelligence jobs in order to free those men for active duty. Kathy likes to mention that her only combat experience was hand to hand combat while on dates. After serving honorably with her comrades, she was discharged from the service on July 12, 1946 having obtained the rank of SK1/c.

Kathy Smith has served as Assistant Treasurer and Chair of the Brick Committee for the World War II Illinois Veterans Committee throughout its history.

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Rochester, Illinois