FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Quiet Heroes: Navy Nurses of the Korean War Far East Command 1950-53

Frances Omori
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"The doctor told me one of my boys [a patient], aged twenty, would have to lose his right arm. He was running a high temp, so I tried to combine a few words of comfort with an alcohol rub. But if there is a formula that covers such situations, I haven't found it…" The words are Marion Haire's from her journal entry dated November 9, 1950. She was an American navy nurse assigned to the USS Consolation—one of three hospital ships stationed in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea during the Korean War.

Hers is one of the many memories collected in this volume that pays homage to the roughly 3,000 women in white who served during the conflict, with particular emphasis on those closest to the fighting.

The book, written by Omori, an active duty commander in the U.S. Navy, began as an oral history project, but eventually focused on the experiences of nurses stationed at the Naval Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan, and the three "floating" hospitals. Intermingled with figures and facts ("By 1951, over 10,000 patients had been treated in what had been a 100-bed hospital [Yokosuka] less than a year earlier"), are real-life stories. "I was wounded the night of 23 December 1952. My wounds consisted of mortar fragments in the hand, arm, neck and in my eye, which was destroyed," writes 1st. Lt. William Gilwee, a retired Marine. Referring to the medical treatment he received on the Consolation, he continues "I will never forget their cheerful faces and how they helped me get over some rough times."

The people (brief bios on some of the nurses), the places (descriptions and photographs of their Korean and Japanese visits), the processes (how the wounded were transported), and occasional respites (savoring a treat of ice cream) that momentarily hid the reality of the nearby war all combine in a behind-the-scenes look at the women involved in the first conflict that engaged the United Nations fifty years ago.

One Marine, stricken with infectious hepatitis, recalls boarding the Haven in March, 1951: "I was filthy dirty and sick as a dog. This nurse had me bathe and dump my clothing. She gave me clean PJs and put me in a nice clean bunk. She gave me a tall cold glass of milk. I'll

never forget her. Don’t know her name.”

Robin Farrell Edmunds