

Ardice Brower, United States Marine Corps, 1943-45

Ardice Brower's family had a farm near Kennedy in northwestern Minnesota, where she was born in 1921. In 1943 Ardice joined the Marine Corps, becoming one of the first women enlistees in this branch of the military. A woman in uniform, she recalls, was sometimes viewed critically.

My family, they just accepted it. My family was not a controlling family, so they didn't say, "You're going to do this or that or something else." I don't think I exactly had a pat on the back, or anything *negative* either—just more acceptance is probably the word.

I joined because I wanted to help end the war and was responding to "Free a Man to Fight." But it definitely wasn't because I thought I would be happier or because I thought I would have a lot more dates—because there were no men around—or because I was a "loose woman," as many people thought *happened* when you joined the service. In fact, I talked to a woman here in town who joined, and she didn't even like to tell people she'd been in the service because people would think that she was not a very moral person if she did that.

You have to remember the times. . . . Women didn't *do* things that men did. Women started working in war plants, and that was totally new. Joining the service? That's about as bad as you could do.

I hadn't even especially thought about joining a women's group, and I just thought those Marines were terrific. We heard all the stories about the fighting in the South Pacific, getting teletypes [at the radio station] about the fighting and the losses. I don't know if I thought I was safe when I said, "I'll join when the [women] Marines are formed," but that's what I said. And that's what I did.

—Thomas Saylor

Thomas Saylor, associate professor of history at Concordia University, St. Paul, interviewed Ardice Brower for Remembering the Good War: Minnesota's Greatest Generation (2005).



Ardice (left) and sister Bea, 1945, at Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, North Carolina

COURTESY ARDICE BROWER



In 2005 the Minnesota Historical Society launched a long-term project to preserve and present the history of "Minnesota's Greatest Generation," the men and women who grew up during the Great Depression and came of age during World War II. This essay is part of a series that spotlights the experiences of generation members from all walks of life. For more on the MHS project, visit www.mngreatestgeneration.org.

Kahler Grand Hotel Rochester



IT ALL BEGAN IN THE LATE 1800S with two men—Dr. William Worrall Mayo and John Henry Kahler—and a vision. Mayo, recognizing a need for medical services after a tornado destroyed much of Rochester, opened St. Mary's Hospital. Not long after, Kahler arrived and opened his first hotel, the Cook House, to accommodate both patients and guests. This pairing of medical services and accommodations created a lasting relationship linking the Mayo and Kahler names to this day.

St. Mary's Hospital grew to become the Mayo Clinic,

and Kahler greeted the subsequent increase in visitors with open arms, building the Kahler Grand Hotel in 1921. Innovatively designed, the 220-room hotel included a 210-bed hospital with operating suites for oral, plastic, and general surgery, as well as a 150-bed convalescent unit.

Hard times during the Great Depression and World War II affected the Kahler Grand as they did the rest of the country. After the war, Kahler decided that the building should operate exclusively as a hotel. Its hospital areas were converted to hotel uses but, as late as the 1980s, a portion remained as a hospital with nurses on staff. Over the years it has served visitors from all walks of life, including well-known figures such as Ed Sullivan, Richard Nixon, King Hussein of Jordan, and Johnny Carson.

Lobby of the Kahler Grand Hotel, 1955





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