**HELEN BRIGGS GECKLE**

Brick Location:

**NURSE HELPED SET UP MILITARY HOSPITAL IN WEISBADEN, GERMANY**

Helen Briggs Geckle graduated from Samaritan Hospital Nursing School in Ashland, Ohio, in September 1942. She entered the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in August 1943, completing basic training at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis. In November 1943, Helen was transferred to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, for further training. The 317th Station Hospital was formed there and then moved to Camp Kilmer, N.J., for further activation.

On December 28, 1943, (Helen’s 22nd birthday) the unit shipped out aboard the Bremmerhaven, which was headed for Belfast, Ireland. They were at sea for 10 days among various ships in the convoy, which carried supplies and artillery. The unit spent six months living in Quonset huts while in Belfast, staying through D-Day, June 1944. Helen served as a surgical nurse. From Ireland the unit traveled through Scotland, London and on to Cheltenham, England, where they spent nine months functioning as a rehabilitation hospital treating wounded soldiers.

Helen served in detached service away from her unit along with other nurses in Hereford, England. Upon returning to the 317th, the unit traveled through Le Havre, France, on to Reims, France, where the peace treaty was signed. After Germany surrendered, the unit crossed the Rhine River to set up the 317th Station Hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany. This was the first American hospital created after the peace treaty was signed. The hospital functioned much like a civilian hospital providing care to soldiers and officers of the U.S. Army. Helen served as an operating room nurse as well as a floor nurse.

Helen remained in Germany through January 1947. Upon returning to the United States, she completed her duty at Percy Jones Hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan. Helen was discharged on May 31, 1947, at the rank of captain. She was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign medal and the World War II Victory Medal. One of Helen’s most vivid memories was meeting Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Gen. Omar Bradley who both visited their unit while they were stationed in Wiesbaden.

Helen Geckle died on January 23, 2015.

Submitted by:

Gretchen Geckle Brooks

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