

Manor Woman Shares WWII Service

(for the newsletter of Maria Joseph Continuing Care Community)

For Margaret Dugan, 94, the late 70s television show, MASH, has personal meaning. The Manor resident served as a nurse in England during World War II, and she says the conditions were just like those portrayed in MASH, although it was a different war. "We worked in tents and lived in brick huts with no running water, a potbellied stove, and latrines located a city block away." Margaret adds that medical supplies were inadequate and each nurse was responsible for up to 12 patients at a time.

"We made do with what we had," Margaret says. "It was so hard to see all those young men injured and traumatized by the war." She served in the Women's Army Corps, as a lieutenant, from 1944 to 1946.

She met her husband-to-be, Nicholas, in the United States before both went into the service. (He is now deceased). Margaret shared that her fiancé visited her at the medical camp a few times from where he was stationed in Germany. "Since he was a lower rank, a corporal, he had to walk behind me at all times," she said. They married after the war and settled in Allentown, where they had 7 children and eventually 19 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

When their youngest child went to school, Margaret returned to work as an R.N. Her last job was at the Phoebe Home in Allentown, where she worked for 10 years before retiring at age 68.

Margaret's children are now scattered throughout the country, but frequently gather in the family home in the Poconos. One daughter, Diane Giacomo, lives in Danville and takes Margaret to the Poconos most weekends.

Margaret says she loves living at the Manor, where she has made many friends. "The staff here do a great job. I find it very homey," she said. In addition to attending activities for residents, she spends time painting water colors and quilting. She even continues to take art classes in the Poconos.

In 2013 and 2015, Margaret had the honor of being named Grand Marshall for the Danville Veteran's Day parade. "I consider myself a very lucky person," she shared. "Life has been good to me.