

Betty Eeten

Memory by Betty Taylor

Everyone who knew Betty Eeten remembers her hearty laugh, her patriotism, her pride in being a veteran, and her dedication as an excellent nurse. I once heard her comment, “You know you’re a good nurse when you can walk down the hall carrying a bed pan in one hand and a sandwich in the other without losing your appetite.”

Betty’s training dated back to the time when rules were rules, made to be followed, and not every occasion brought forth laughter. In the fall of 1970, I was in the hospital recovering from surgery for an ectopic pregnancy. The doctors measured the blood removed from my abdominal cavity—seven pints.

At that time Hartley had a walking blood bank and five locals were called in to donate blood for me. Among them were Donald Hanson, Rich Andersen, Merle Groff, Lois Roth and one other woman whose name escapes me. The transfusions went well, and the following day, two more pints were flown in from Minneapolis.

For some reason I was not able to tolerate those last two pints. They had to be discontinued as I went into shock. When my fever spiked, nurses applied ice packs; when I had uncontrollable chills, they wrapped me in warm blankets. During one of the feverish times, my husband was bathing my face.

Suddenly he commented, “I think your fever has broken.”

He picked up the thermometer beside the bed to take my temperature. About that time Betty Eeten walked into the room. She took one look at us and firmly announced, “We can’t have patients taking their own temperatures! I’ll have to take the thermometer out of this room.”

Surprised at the stern reprimand, I assured her she could leave it where it was and we wouldn’t use it again. The next time she came into the room, her good humor was restored, we said no more about it, and I was careful not to upset her again.