Clifford Brittin Wilson II

Professor
Physical Education and Sport
(1948-1976)



U. S. Navy
WWII

[Information provided by daughter, Darlene Wilson Moore]

Dad was teaching at Millerton, NY when Pearl Harbor occurred. He resigned his job & joined the Gene Tunney program, which was a Navy program urging physical education teachers to join the Navy & then train the recruits. Mom & Dad got married that next June at Syracuse University (Mom was attending & Dad had graduated from there). They then went to Great Lakes Naval Station at Lake Bluff, Ill. This was just outside of Chicago. Dad was a Chief Petty Officer at that point (1943 I think). In 1944 Dad was given a promotion to Lieutenant Jr. Grade & sent to Princeton for training. Upon completion of his training, he was sent to New Orleans for more training as a Lieutenant @ the U.S. Navy Gunnery School. Then on they went to NYC to await orders. Dad was then sent to the Pacific assigned to the Hiram S. Maxum as the only officer aboard in charge of the gun crew. These ships were loaded with ammunition, traveled in convoys for protection and relied heavily on their Gunnery Crews. The convoys were often subjects of attack and many were lost, as one hit to the ammunition they were carrying would blow the ship up. From Mom's notes, it looks like Dad was in the Pacific for 14 - 18 months.



[On the following page is an excerpt from an interview with the late Sadie Wilson, wife of the late Clifford Wilson, for the Public History Project for the Brockport Community Museum. Interviewer: Amber Wodraska, student, SUNY College at Brockport, with facilitator Sue Savard Interview date: Thursday, November 29, 2013. See full Interview at:

http://www.brockportcommunitymuseum.org/pdfs/interviews/Wilson,%20Sadie%2020150227s.pdf]

I was a war bride. I followed him all over the country.



"We went to the Great Lakes Naval Station outside of Chicago and then to New Jersey. He had to take training courses to be a lieutenant. I had a room there while he was completing his training. My father died while I was in New Jersey, and I was unable to go home. I stayed with my sister and her husband. I was pregnant before Cliff left the country, but Cliff left for overseas, and I had my first baby without him.

"We came through the war the lucky ones. My husband was on a war ship in the Pacific Ocean. The ship was filled with ammunition, and they went on conveys. With one good hit, they could blow everything up and everyone was gone. But I had faith that Cliff would come home, and he did.

"We finally moved to Brockport in 1948. He was Dr. Wilson, Professor at Brockport State University of New York, until his death in 1977."

