Escorting "Royalty"

ON NAVY DAY, in October 1945, a number of ships were welcomed back to San Francisco by the city fathers, and models were assigned to represent each ship in a pageant to select "Miss Navy Day, the girl who you would love to come back to."

The crew members on my ship, the USS Quincy, did not return in time for the celebration, but we were greeted by a yacht with flag-waving girls, some of them models from the contest. As the girls came aboard, each was escorted by a crew member to the wardroom.

I asked which one of the girls was chosen Miss Navy Day, and lo and behold, I was the lucky one who had escorted her, Miss Bette Hocking.

We have remained friends over the years and celebrated our 60 years of friendship last year by walking across the Golden Gate Bridge. —Kenneth M., Steger, Illinois

Better Safe Than Sorry

IN 1950, while I was serving at Selfridge Air Force Base in Michigan, I heard that the football team from my high school was playing in the Minneapolis, Minnesota city championship.

I got a 3-day pass and caught a hop on an Air Force plane over Lake Michigan to Minneapolis. Since it was an Air Force plane, I had to check out a parachute.

Well, our team lost the game, and I had to fly back to Detroit aboard a brand-new Northwest Airlines Boeing Stratocruiser.

I got to sit in a small lounge for 15 people on the upper deck. The hostess saw my parachute and asked, “Don’t you trust us?”

We all had a good laugh until the emergency light and buzzer came on about 75 miles out of Detroit. Everyone looked at my parachute, and I said, “No, it’s mine!”

It turned out that we were just being diverted to Cleveland.

—Don C., Longmont, Colorado

Mighty Fine Apparel

MANY PEOPLE thought that we women in the military would automatically have nylons, but we stood in line like everyone else when word arrived of a store shipment. There was a song in the Waves that went like this:

“The stockings that they gave us, they say they’re mighty fine. They call them Navy nylons, but take a look at mine!”

Another verse ran:

“Oh, the jackets that they gave us, they say are mighty fine, but I need Lana Turner to fill the front of mine.”

—Maxine E., Coronado, California