



PBY "Catalina"



Gloria
April 2009



Gloria Anna Michael (nee Kuhns)
(Center)



B-24 "Liberator"



BT-13 "Valiant"



TBY-2 "Seawolf"



Gloria was born on 16 February 1924 in Lehigh County near Guthsville, Pennsylvania, in South Whitehall Township. She attended grades 1–12 at South Whitehall School, graduating from high school in 1942. She and a friend then shared an apartment on West Hamilton Street in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Her first job was making hot dogs at the Arbogast and Bastian (A&B) Company Meat Packing Plant on Front Street in Allentown. During World War II, 70 percent of A&B's meat produced went to the U.S. Armed Forces and, through the Lend-Lease program, to the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, China, France, and other Allied nations. Gloria commuted to and from A&B by riding the trolley car, and by bus for subsequent places of employment in Allentown. About three months after she joined A&B, Gloria heard about a job making parts that were used in tracer bullets, which sounded better than making hot dogs, so she left A&B to work for American Armament Corporation in Allentown just off of Lehigh Street. The company, located near Mack Trucks' 5C plant, was formed to make light artillery and ammunition to support the war effort. As it turned out, American Armament closed down after Gloria was there only three months. She then learned to rivet in a training building next to the 19th Street Theater in Allentown, and went to work for Vultee Aircraft Corporation which took over the Mack Trucks 5C plant in late 1943 to begin production of the TBY-2 "Seawolf," a folding-wing torpedo bomber aircraft, for use by the Navy aboard aircraft carriers. She and another co-worker inspected the work of the primary riveters, and installed rivets at locations where they had failed to install one. As fate would have it, the Navy cancelled Vultee's contract, and the plant closed. Gloria then found a new job with Mack Trucks, for which she operated a drill press in the company's plant across the street from their main office on 10th Street in Allentown. Gloria used the press to drill holes in large hinges for use in PBY Catalina flying boats, as well as components for the BT-13 "Valiant" Trainer and B-24 "Liberator" Bomber. Gloria worked at Mack until it scaled down after the war ended to the point where the men who were coming home from the war replaced the women at their jobs. She left Mack in 1945 to work at Western Electric Company in Allentown, where initially she etched crystals to a frequency for radios used by the Navy. Later, she performed experimental work on the first diodes that were produced for use in electronic equipment. On 26 November 1948, Gloria married **Leo Franklin Michael** (24 December 1924 – 6 June 2001) in St. Paul's Union Church in Trexlertown, Pennsylvania, and then became a housewife and mother. Leo and Gloria made their home in Wescosville in Lower Macungie Township. They had three children, **Tamara**, **Phillip**, and **David**. Leo served as a Machinist Mate in the Navy during World War II in the Pacific Theater, and Phillip served in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. In 1972, Gloria went back to work making stop brackets at Allen Organ Company in Macungie, Pennsylvania, until she retired in 1995. In 2008, Gloria, along with a number of other "Rosies," was honored in a ceremony conducted by the Lehigh County Historical Society at the Allentown BrewWorks. Gloria's parents were **Lamont Horace Kuhns** (28 January 1902 – 23 June 1937) and **Sallie Agnes Snyder** (8 August 1901 – 12 November. 2008). Lamont is buried at Grandview Cemetery in Allentown. Sallie died at the age of 107 in Lehigh Valley Hospital, and donated her body to science.



Leo F. Michael