

*THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – May 2, 2013*  
*Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society*

**BETTY NOBLE – SEMPER FIDELIS**

In 2001, Vikki Coffey started the Voices of Alpine Series for the Alpine Historical Society. Vikki interviewed long time Alpine residents in an effort to further the documentation of the history of our mountain community. On October 12, 2001, she spoke with Betty Noble about Betty's early life at The Willows, Alpine's famous resort, the time Betty spent in service to her country, and her long dedication to the Alpine Cemetery Association. The interview, forty-six minutes in duration, showed Betty's devotion to family, friends and, perhaps above all, the Marine Corps.

Those of us who remember Betty's delightful sense of humor will enjoy reading a transcript of the interview. It is on the Historical Society website, [www.alpinehistory.org](http://www.alpinehistory.org), under Historical Research, People of Alpine, Voices of Alpine, Betty Noble.

Betty lived at The Willows from the time she was three years old, in 1925, and helped with the family resort. Working with her extended family—grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins—the family provided for housekeeping guests and overnight guests and even those who just stopped by for a meal. She tells of graduating from scraping plates to waiting tables as she grew older and of having “pea shelling contests” at birthday parties in order to help with upcoming meal preparations.

When World War II broke out, Betty was attending what was then San Diego State College. She left school and took a vocational class in order to be qualified to work as an aircraft worker at Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego. She said she was “Betty the Bender” and did gas lines, oil lines and tubes for the airplanes that were manufactured and assembled in San Diego. During the week Betty stayed with an aunt in San Diego and on weekends she traveled up to Alpine to be with her family.

Soon, the need to further serve her country became strong. At that time, parental consent was required to enlist in the service until the age of twenty-one. Betty was twenty when she asked her mother if she would stand in the way of her doing something she truly wanted to do. Her mother immediately replied, “What...join the service?” Mothers just know sometimes. With the backing of her parents, Betty enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943 and traveled across country by train where she entered boot camp at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Because of her experience delivering milk throughout Alpine for the Willows Dairy, run by her Uncle Doug Walker, she was assigned to the motor transport unit.

Freckles, a black and white Springer Spaniel, accompanied Betty for six or seven years and quickly became the mascot of all the companies in which Betty served. Bringing Freckles to the post was not endorsed by her commanding officer; however, Freckles quickly proved he was a true Marine. The first night in camp he was tied to a post outside the barracks. When a Marine tried to climb in the window of the women's barracks, Freckles made a commotion and brought the guards. The very next day, he was promoted to PFC and eventually reached his highest rank, Staff Sergeant.

When Betty retired in 1968 she held the rank of Sergeant Major—the highest enlisted rank in the Marine Corps. While her sister Suzanne, an Air Corps nurse, outranked her as a Lieutenant Colonel, Betty reported, “...I never have saluted her!”

After retirement, Betty became actively involved in the Alpine Cemetery Association and served as its President from the early 1970s until her death in 2005. Another of her volunteer endeavors was with the Women Marines Association. Betty and her fellow retired Marines visited the psychiatric ward of the VA Hospital every two weeks to deliver hot dogs, desserts and other refreshments to the patients on Bingo day. Betty said, “...we had to be escorted in and out, but we never had any problems. Those men were so appreciative.”

As we approach yet another Memorial Day, a day set aside for the country to honor those killed in the service of their country, let us also remember one of Alpine’s own. Although not killed while in the service of her country, Betty Noble exemplified the Marine Corps Motto: Semper Fidelis—“Always Faithful,” “Always Loyal.” As inscribed on her tombstone, Betty was a friend to all who knew her.

*Carol Walker and her husband Paul lived in Alpine for 19 years. Carol is the webmaster and newsletter editor for the Alpine Historical Society. If you know someone who should be interviewed as part of the Voices of Alpine Series, please contact her at [cwalker@alpinehistory.org](mailto:cwalker@alpinehistory.org) or 619-467-7766.*



Betty and Freckles