

**Proud Reflections From Rena the Rosie  
by Rena Van Buren**

In 1942, I was an 18 year old single mother in Frostburg, Maryland. I lived on a quiet street where everyone knew everyone else and many were related to each other.

On December 7, 1942, when Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japan, my life changed. I answered the call for factory workers and went to work at the Celanese Munitions Plant in Cumberland, Maryland. I was so thankful to have such a wonderful Mom to raise my son, Donnie, while I worked. My dad even bragged about how I could make more money than he did. They were both proud of me.

Each morning I would board a bus for the eleven mile ride to the plant. I wore a beige slack suit, special shoes, and goggles. I also wore a badge to give me clearance to enter the plant.

My job was shell casing inspector. For eight hours a day I would sit on a stool with bright colored lights in my work area. Above me, shell casings were dumped and funneled down a tube one by one. I would carefully inspect each one for dents or any kind of imperfection.

There was no talking permitted between employees. Everyone was