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**"She Recalls Days at Fort Here"**

**by Lillian McLaughlin**

Reporter Lillian McLaughlin covers the reunion of a former WAC lieutenant, Patricia Ledyard Matheson, and an old friend from the Fort Des Moines years, Mrs. Carl Mitchell.

The women became acquainted during Matheson's officer's training school at Fort Des Moines and later as the Fort's public relations officer. The article does not clarify how Matheson and Mitchell became friends, but the 1969 reunion brought both of them and Matheson's foster daughter and daughter together.

# She Recalls Days at Fort Here

By Lillian McLaughlin

A former Women's Army Corps (WAC) lieutenant returned to Des Moines this week to visit a friend whose home 25 years ago was for her an off-post haven during officers' training school and a year following as a public relations officer at Fort Des Moines.

The reunion for Patricia Ledyard Matheson, the former WAC, and Mrs. Carl Mitchell, 3101 Prospect drive, was one stop on a 20,000-mile journey and another thread in a romantic story.

Mrs. Matheson, wife of the late Dr. Farquhar Matheson, came from her home on Vava'u, northernmost stop in the kingdom of Tonga, a tiny, beautiful archipelago in the central South Pacific.

### "Chapters"

With her she brought two "chapters" in the story, both 16-year-old girls, her daughter Tuifua Ann (Tami), and her foster daughter, daughter Tupoutu'a Tonutonu (Tupou, pronounced Tu-bow).

Tupou, a Tongan with storied Polynesian smile and grace, has lived as a foster daughter with the Matheson family since she was in the third grade.

The two girls who the past year attended St. Anne's Episcopal School for Girls in Boston, Mass., are en route with their mother to their home in Tonga for the summer.

### Enlistment

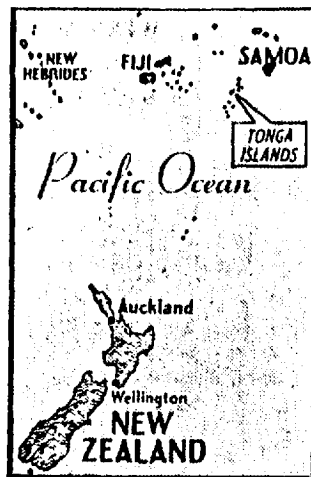
A native of California, Pat Matheson enlisted in World War II service when the WAC was the WAAC, an army auxiliary corps. She was commissioned a second lieutenant on Memorial Day, 1943.

"I remember the date very well. We had to tramp out to some graves in our winter uniforms," said Mrs. Matheson.

During 1943 and early 1944, Lieutenant Ledyard, with other WACs on leave, would head for a home down Army Post road, the tiny islands southeast of the



After 25 years Mrs. Carl Mitchell (left) of 3101 Prospect drive is enjoying a reunion visit this week with a former WAC, Patricia Ledyard (second from left), now Mrs. Farquhar Matheson of Vava'u, Tonga Islands, in the Central South Pacific. With them are Mrs. Matheson's foster daughter, Tupou, and daughter Tami (right).



Tuifua, one of her teachers, for whom the Mathesons named their daughter.

It affords two delightful glimpses of Tonga's towering, majestic Queen Sarote, who ruled wisely from 1918 until her death in 1965 and made Tonga a household word around the world when she went to London to see the young princess crowned.

It is a happy book of the story-book region where she and Farquhar lived and worked together until his death in 1967, where she and Tami and Tupou Thursday will head home.

Fijis in the late 40's to be head mistress at Siuilikuatapu College, a mission-run girls high school on Vava'u, one of the Tonga islands.

Waiting to disembark at Vava'u, the ex-WAC met a Scottish doctor who had come aboard to clear the ship. His name: Farquhar Matheson.

"Four months later we were married," Mrs. Matheson said.