

BOZAK, CARMEN CONTRERAS (1919–)

“I was only out of basic training not two months, and I was going overseas already...I was so happy even though I got seasick.” Carmen Contreras Bozak. *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*.

Born on New Year's Eve in Cayey, Puerto Rico, Contreras was raised and educated in New York City. She worked as a payroll clerk in the War Department in Washington, D.C., and was inspired to join the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). One of 195 women of the 149th WAAC, she was stationed in Algiers, Algeria where she worked as a teletype operator sending encoded messages to the front. Discharged as a technician fourth grade with several medals to her credit, Contreras married Theodore J. Bozak and raised a family. In 1989 she was the founding president of a chapter of WAC Vets in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, as well as a chapter of the Society of Military Widows ten years later. In retirement, Contreras Bozak volunteers at the Oakland Park VA Outpatient Clinic; attends Veterans of Foreign Wars meetings, and travels to WAC reunions and conventions.