

Interviewee: Lottie Stradtman Shultz

Interviewer: Thomas Saylor

Date: 14 August 2002

Location: living room of the Shultz home, Minnetonka, MN

Transcribed by: Linda Gerber, August 2002

Edited by: Thomas Saylor, November 2002 and February 2016

Lottie Stradtman Shultz was born 26 February 1920 in Walsrode, Germany, and at age four came to the US with her parents. The family lived on several farms in southern Minnesota, eventually settling in the St. Peter area. Lottie graduated from high school in 1938 in St. Peter, and from the nursing program at the State Hospital in St. Peter in 1942. Following some time working as a nurse in Mankato, Minnesota, in January 1944 Lottie enlisted in the US Army.

Basic Training was at Ft. Carson, Colorado, after which Lottie was sent to England and posted to the 187th General Hospital Unit at Tidworth. Lottie's duties ranged from surgical room nurse to regular shifts in the amputee and colostomy wards. Following the end of the war with Germany in May 1945 Lottie was transferred to a new unit and scheduled for re-assignment to the Pacific, but V-J Day in August 1945 made this unnecessary; she spent some months at a base in Alabama before being discharged in December 1945 with the rank of 1st lieutenant.

After military service, Lottie got married (husband William) and spent four years living in Pennsylvania before returning to Minnesota in 1949. She worked in the nursing profession in the Twin Cities for many years, finally retiring in 1994.

Interview Key:

T = Thomas Saylor

L = Lottie Stradtman Shultz

[text] = words added by editor, either for clarification or explanation

(*) = words or phrase unclear**

NOTE: interview has been edited for clarity

Tape 1, Side A. Counter begins at 000.

T: This is the 14th of August 2002 and first, Lottie, for the record, thanks very much for taking time to talk with us this afternoon.

L: You're welcome.

T: I want to start with just a couple basic questions. When and where were you born?

L: I was born in Walsrode, Germany in 1920.

T: Your folks came over to the States. You were talking before a little bit. It was not long after that when you were a small child.

L: Yes. I was four years old. In 1924.

T: Were you the oldest of the kids?

L: Yes.

T: What brought your folks over here to this area?

L: I think the Depression hit over in Germany before it came here. My father couldn't find any work.

T: So they ended up in Minnesota.

L: Yes. Glencoe, Minnesota.

T: Do you remember much about growing up in that area?

L: No. I did start school and I had to come home. I couldn't speak English when I started school. So I learned English and then came home and kind of taught my parents I guess. I had to repeat what I learned so they would learn to speak English.

T: Did you speak English or German at home?

L: I can't remember. Probably a little of each.

T: Did your folks like it here in the States? Were they satisfied with what they had come over for?

L: Yes. My dad was a carpenter. There was no work for them either, so he took up farming and he was not a farmer. But we got along all right.

T: I think you mentioned earlier that your folks lived on a number of farms in the 1930s.

L: Yes. He worked as a hired man before we rented our own farm. They were farmers.

T: Did that mean that you went to a number of different schools over the years?

L: No. I went to a country school to begin with and then after that we were bussed in to the city of St. Peter.

T: That's where you finished high school as well?

L: Right.

T: In St. Peter. What year was that?

L: 1938.

T: Were you in high school when you decided that nursing might be a good career for you?

L: No. I graduated from high school and went to work in Minneapolis as a housemaid. I thought, "I'm not going to do this the rest of my life!" So I saved my money for my uniforms and things and then went into nurses training in St. Peter.

T: Was there an application process that you had to pass a test or something to get into nursing school?

(1, A, 55)

L: No. They just wanted your high school records at that time.

T: And you had finished high school a little bit ago but you were all set to go then.

L: Right.

T: Did you like nursing school?

L: Yes. It was a new experience for me. St. Peter was a mental hospital. We had to work, literally, we worked our way through training because we were paid minimal wage I guess. We got our room and board there.

T: The training was at the State Hospital there in St. Peter?

L: Yes.

T: Was there a large class of students?

L: There were about twelve.

T: That's pretty small then.

L: Yes. We were the last class. After that the State cancelled out the nurses' training school at mental institutions.

T: I think you mentioned earlier you did part of your training at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth?

L: Yes.

T: And at Gillette Hospital in St. Paul.

L: That's right.

T: Then you finished nurses training in what year?

L: 1942. In May.

T: It was a while between '42 and when you went in the service, which was January of '44. Where did you work in that period of time?

L: I worked in Mankato at the Emmanuel Hospital, in surgery.

T: That was a full time position there?

L: Yes.

T: When you were living in Mankato, were you living with your folks or were you living on your own?

L: I was living on my own.

T: So by this time, 1942 even, the United States was already at war. Do you remember what you were doing when you first heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor?

L: I'll never forget it. I was working nights and was asleep. My uncle and aunt lived in St. Louis Park. My uncle called me and asked me if I wanted to come over. Usually on the weekend they invited me over to their house. Then he told me that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

T: How did you react to that news?

L: I couldn't believe it of course. I was half awake. Then when they picked me up, we were all wondering what in the world happened and how it happened.

T: Did you see your folks pretty regularly still at this time?

L: Oh, yes because my folks lived on a farm near St. Peter. I would go out there and get a good meal once in a while.

T: Your folks, by this time they had been here almost twenty years, had they both become American citizens?

L: Oh, yes.

T: How did they react to the news that the US was at war with Japan, but also with Germany now?

L: I don't think they said anything. My father got in a few bar brawls... he probably got into some arguments because he still had quite an accent.

T: An identifiable German accent.

L: Yes. But outside that I don't remember discussing it at all.

T: Was it your impression it was something your folks chose not to discuss or just, it didn't come up?

L: Probably didn't come up, because I wasn't home at that time.

(1, A, 118)

T: After this, when the US entered the war, did your job or the hospital itself change at all because of the fact that the US was at war?

L: You mean at the job I had?

T: Yes, that's right.

L: No. We did have blackouts and at night we had to pull the curtains and things in the hospital.

T: Really? Did that go on for a while, or was that something that happened just a few times?

L: Just a few times, but we had to get the curtains and things to do it.

T: Install the dark curtains?

L: Yes.

T: Did people leave the hospital in order to go into the service? Did you notice a turnover in personnel?

L: No, I didn't.

T: This was a large hospital in Mankato?

L: No. I can't even tell you it was a small hospital. We probably had three major surgicals a day because there were just two of us, and then one girl would come in and help.

T: So it was a pretty small staff as well?

L: Yes.

T: Can you, in a couple sentences, describe your job? What you actually did at the hospital?

L: I was a scrub nurse and I also put all the packs together for the next day's surgeries and saw to it that they were sterilized. When we had deliveries we had to take care of those. If it wasn't the clinic doctor, then we were asked to do the anesthetic for the out-of-clinic doctors.

T: It's a pretty broad range of responsibilities.

L: Yes.

(1, A, 148)

T: Did you live in Mankato while you were working in Mankato?

L: Yes.

T: Did you rent a room or an apartment?

L: Three of us nurses had an apartment, but then we all went different directions. Then I got a room.

T: Was it a room in a private house?

L: In an apartment. We were good friends.

T: Do you remember about living in your own place? Were you shopping and cooking a lot of your own meals?

L: No, I ate at the hospital.

T: You weren't bothered with having to prepare food and cook or anything like that?

L: No.

T: How about the rent for your apartment? Did you notice an increase in rent because of the war or was it hard to find a place?

L: I don't remember that, but I think I paid something like ten dollars a month.

T: Did you feel at the time that that was a lot or was that pretty reasonable?

L: I think it was very reasonable. We were good friends. The mother and daughter lived there. They had the extra bedroom. The mother worked at the hospital. I don't remember whether she was a nurse or not.

T: During the war as well, certain things were in short supply. There was rationing of food and some other goods. How did these shortages, the rationing of certain goods, affect you in your life?

L: I don't remember any of that before we went overseas. I have always maintained and most of the people who were in the service with me felt that we had very good meals.

T: I mean while you were in the States before you left.

L: Oh. The hospital had good food, as far as I can remember.

T: In your private life, how were you affected by rationing of certain goods and other things being in short supply?

L: Not having a car. I think gas was one of the big ones. I don't remember any comments about it at all.

T: Did you own a car yourself?

L: No. No, those things that were rationed, like gasoline, didn't bother me because I could walk to work.

T: So in a place where, for you, you were able to get your meals at the hospital and you had a rented room and you didn't own a car, some of those big ration things weren't really impacting you.

L: No. Not at all.

T: The neighborhood that you lived in, in Mankato there before you went overseas, how was the neighborhood impacted by war? People coming and going? Any impact to the place you actually lived?

(1, A, 189)

L: I don't think there was any. As long as I didn't have any brothers or sisters that had to go and this girl that I stayed with and her mother, she was an only daughter, so it didn't. Some of the fellas were probably leaving but we were busy and I didn't know a thing about it really.

T: Were you attending a church at all at this time when you lived in Mankato?

L: No.

T: Did you recall any things that the city of Mankato did? Food or clothing drives, metal drives?

L: No, not at that time. They might have later on. I think they were just all adjusting more or less. The people that I graduated from high school with, some of the men had gone.

T: You graduated in 1938 from high school, so those guys were of draft age.

L: Yes. A lot of them went.

T: St. Peter is how far from Mankato?

L: About eleven miles.

T: So they're real close together.

L: Yes.

T: Were you still in contact with people that you went to high school with?

L: No. Not while I was in the service.

T: I mean while you were in Mankato?

L: No.

T: Lottie, you waited until 1944 to go into the service. I'm wondering what finally convinced you to make that decision to join the service?

L: My father was wondering why I didn't go into the service. He tried and he couldn't get in. I don't know, he was too old, I think. He was in World War I in Germany for a short time.

T: You mentioned your dad had been in World War I?

L: Yes. In the German Army, though.

T: So he was probably born around the turn of the century?

L: He was born in 1900, I think.

T: So he just made the tail end of World War I.

L: Yes.

T: So, as an American citizen now, he was trying to get into the US military?

L: Yes, he wanted to get into, not any front line duty or anything like that, in like the Seabees.

T: Construction.

L: Yes. But he wasn't successful.

T: Did that bother him as you recall?

L: I'm sure it [bothered him] because he really pushed to get me in. So I finally thought, oh well. There was some talk, rumors about drafting nurses. I wouldn't have had to go. So I decided, okay, I'm going. That's it.

T: Would you say that you felt that your folks and your father kind of encouraged or more pushed?

L: Pushed. Definitely pushed.

T: So you had more than one discussion about this.

L: Oh, yes.

T: When you finally told your folks, your father, that you had joined the service, do you remember how he reacted to that news?

L: No, I don't. Because I got my stuff packed, what I was going to take and left one morning. Got on the train and took off.

T: Okay. Did you write to them and tell them the news?

L: Oh, yes.

T: You selected the Army. What made you pick the Army and not the Marine Corps or the Navy?

L: I don't know. Probably deep down all of the people I knew around the area that had gone in the service were Army.

T: So you knew folks that had already, friends of yours or acquaintances, that had already gone off to the service?

L: Not females, no.

T: But male friends or male acquaintances?

L: Yes. My classmates had gone. Quite a few of them had gone by that time.

T: But no nursing colleagues of yours?

L: No, not that I knew of.

(1, A, 240)

T: So you were kind of the first to take this step?

L: Afterwards. I think we all went in about the same time but none of us met. We were all European [theater of operations].

T: So January of '44 you had Basic Training at what is now Fort Carson, Colorado. What do you remember about Basic Training in Colorado?

L: It was dusty and cold and we got kind of dirty out there in the area. We were in foxholes and had to crawl under barbed wire and a lot of that type of thing.

T: Real soldier kind of stuff?

L: Oh, yes.

T: Now was it just women in your Basic Training group?

L: Yes.

T: How about the drill instructor or drill instructors? Men or women?

L: Men.

T: You were doing calisthenics and actual weapons practice, too?

L: No, no. None of that.

T: Did you get calls or letters from your folks?

L: My mother was very good about it, and I did get several, one I know, from my dad. He probably wrote about two letters and that was it. He's very, very poor at writing English, and I think that was the whole thing.

T: That's hard because that was his second language. Did you meet people in Basic Training that you sort of jelled with or got along with pretty well?

L: Yes.

T: People you're still in contact with?

L: Right.

T: That you stayed in contact with since Basic Training?

L: Yes.

T: Was that overall a pretty positive experience for you?

L: Yes. Because we were all doing the same thing, and we knew what the end result would be. We were glad when we were grouped and sent to different outfits that some of us got together, because there were about sixteen Minnesota girls in our unit.

T: That's a pretty fair amount. Had you known any of them before you went in the service?

(1, A, 272)

L: Two of them. One was an Asbury student that came to St. Peter and took her psych down there. Irene from St. Mary's, who was a student there.

T: It was a surprise for you all to see each other?

L: Yes, right.

T: Colorado was a new part of the country for you?

L: Yes.

T: What about that? What was it like being in a new place like that?

L: I like Colorado. Colorado Springs is a beautiful town. Pike's Peak and a few of those. We went skating at the Broadmoor, and the hotel in Colorado Springs was a good place to eat.

T: Did you have a chance to get off base sometimes?

L: Yes.

T: When you went off base, were you in uniform?

L: Yes.

T: How did you observe relations between women in uniform and men in uniform now? You were an officer, a second lieutenant, right? Or not yet?

L: Not yet.

T: How were women in uniform treated?

L: Very nicely. With respect. There weren't any snide remarks or anything like that. It was really good.

T: So it was a positive experience for you?

L: Oh, yes.

T: What's your most positive memory from the Basic Training time?

L: That's a good question. I remember going to Colorado Springs and having meals and hiking up to Pike's Peak, but the friends that I made when we were put in our unit are the ones that I remember. I don't remember the other ones.

T: How was it being really far away from home for the first time?

L: That didn't bother me. I had made up my mind I was not going to go back on the farm. Period. Amen.

T: Was it tough growing up on the farm, or just not your thing?

L: Well, my father wanted boys and got girls, so we had to be boys and do the work.

T: How many of you were there?

L: There were just my sister and I. We were the two oldest. Then my youngest sister came along afterward.

T: So three girls total?

L: I have a brother, too, but I'd already left home when he was born.

T: He was much, much younger?

L: Yes.

T: Were some other people bothered by being far away from home for the first time?

L: No, I don't think so. We didn't talk about it too much, but you could tell when we got packages from home. We were all on cloud nine, so we were glad to get little goodies sent to us.

T: What kind of stuff came in the mail?

L: We got candy and cookies and things of that kind. Sometimes they were crumbs, but they were still good. Cheese.

T: Were you a person who even in Basic Training was a pretty regular letter writer?

L: Yes, I wrote home every week.

T: What kind of stuff did you share with your folks when you were writing home?

L: What we did.

T: Were they keen to hear, to have an idea of what your life was like?

L: I don't know really. My mom would write, but it took me a while to get her letters figured out. But it worked.

T: What do you mean, "get her letters figured out"?

L: Because German people translate words the way they sound, and that's the way she writes English. About the second or third time I got the entire drift of it.

T: It was not many months after you joined and went through Basic Training that you boarded a ship to go to England. Did you know while you were in Colorado where you were going when you left?

L: No.

T: But you were sent to certain units? Is that how that worked?

L: A few of us were sent to Schick General and we were told not to unpack, and then we went down to, I think there were twenty of us, to Longview, Texas. We just kind of waited around, and pretty soon everybody else came down there, too. We had classes.

T: This is in Longview, Texas?

L: Yes.

T: Now Schick General is in Clinton, Iowa, you mentioned. So you went from Colorado to Iowa. And on the train down to Texas.

L: Yes.

T: How long did you stay in Texas?

L: Not very long. Until everybody got there, and then we were just packed up and shipped out to Camp Kilmer, to go overseas.

T: Where is Camp Kilmer?

L: New Jersey.

T: On the train again?

L: Yes.

T: These train rides, the one to Texas and the one to Jersey. Do you remember anything about them?

L: Not especially. It was the only way to travel.

T: Mostly service folks on the trains?

L: Right.

T: Was it from Camp Kilmer that you were then actually sent overseas?

L: Yes.

T: You mentioned earlier you were on a rather large ship to go over to England.

L: I don't know whether that's a pun or not, but several thousand of us. As a luxury liner, they only had a hundred to two hundred people on there.

T: And how many were on here as military personnel?

L: A couple thousand, I think.

T: That sounds a little cramped.

L: Yes, we were stacked. Definitely [cramped]. It was a smaller room, but there were bunks. I don't know whether we were two or three high.

T: How were things organized on the ship? Did the women travel and have a separate area or compartment on the ship?

L: Yes. We went over with a glider pilot unit, and our [unit's] enlisted men were on the boat. There were eighty-seven of us women.

T: All the rest of the people being transported were men.

L: Yes.

T: What do you remember about this ship going over to England?

L: We had blackouts at night. You could go up on deck, but you didn't dare smoke because, I don't know how many miles they can see the cigarette lit. It was kind of scary to watch the destroyers checking. We often wondered. Rumor had it that they did chase a submarine. Some say they just thought that. I don't know.

(1, A, 358)

T: Were you part of a larger group or convoy of ships?

L: Yes, we were [part of a convoy of ships].

T: So you could see other ships.

L: They were just black spots at night.

T: How long did this trip take?

L: Nine days.

T: How did you pass time on board ship?

L: That I can't tell you. I don't know. We were so busy trying to keep our clothes in order, I guess. We just had, like the backpacks they have now. We had everything in there. We had footlockers, but those we could not get at. Those were stored.

The food [on board ship] was nothing to write home about. It just seemed like we got lamb or mutton three times a day.

T: By now the training is behind you, and you are clearly heading to something that was part of the war effort. What kind of thoughts were going through your mind?

L: We looked at it, I'm sure, that this was going to be a big adventure.

T: In a positive sense?

L: Yes. I didn't get seasick. A lot of them did.

T: Was anybody seasick in your compartment?

L: I don't think so. I missed one meal because I thought I was getting seasick. So I just went up on deck and that was the end of that. I didn't get seasick.

T: You mentioned some other folks...

L: Some of them. I don't remember any of them being sick in the compartment that I happened to be in, but some of the others were, and some of them were really sick.

T: That must have made for a miserable trip across the ocean.

L: It was in March, so the sea was pretty rough.

End of Side A. Side B begins at counter 380.

T: If that was March, you were inducted, trained, and on a ship pretty quickly.

L: Yes, right. We didn't have too much time to worry about anything.

T: From what you were saying a moment ago, it doesn't sound like you were worrying or concerned a whole lot about it.

L: We weren't.

T: Did that, do you think, describe the general mood among other people too?

L: Yes.

T: How about the guys on the ship? It sounds like they were everywhere. Did you interact much with the men traveling on the ship?

L: No, I don't think so.

T: So you could kind of check the pulse in a sense of the women traveling though, and it doesn't sound like they were worried or concerned.

L: No.

T: When you landed in England, it was at Liverpool, I think you mentioned. Did you spend some time there, or were you immediately dispatched to Tidworth?

L: No. We went to Swindon. We were billeted. That's when it hit us, when we saw Liverpool. When you go in the country and you see an old barn, dilapidated—that's what Liverpool looked like when we docked. The whole mood changed.

T: How would you describe that mood change?

L: We were worried about, wondering about what we were getting into. You could tell.

T: Was Liverpool showing signs of war damage? Is that what it was?

L: Yes.

T: What kind of damage?

L: All along where we docked the buildings were almost demolished. They had big holes in them and everything like you see sometimes. That was when it hit me. But we were young, and you can put up with that.

T: You were about twenty-four years old.

L: Yes.

T: When we're twenty-four we put up with a little more.

L: Yes.

T: Were some people really growing concerned by this time, about being scared?

L: I don't think so. I don't think so. We were busy getting our stuff together there and were put on busses. We were billeted, two nurses in a home, in Swindon, which was a nice experience. We had a very good family.

T: Did you stay in Swindon for a while?

L: No. I would say the most was two weeks, if we stayed there that long, but we just slept there. Then we took our eating gear and went to our unit and had our meals there.

(1, B, 428)

T: So it was really just a place to sleep?

L: Yes.

T: Did you interact with the people that lived there at all?

L: Yes. We were never there long enough to visit with them, but they all had steel tables in their kitchens, and that's where we went when the air raids went off.

T: So you did have air raids that went off?

L: Yes.

T: Do you remember the first time that you heard an air raid siren there?

L: I don't even remember hearing one while we were billeted there. Maybe we were in the right place. Nice town.

T: Swindon?

L: Yes.

T: What was your impression of that? Did you encounter any people in Swindon itself? You were in uniform now too, right?

L: Yes. We were in uniform, and we were kept busy training, marching. That's about it.

T: Was it sort of until they figured out what to do with you or what was the purpose?

L: I think they just wanted to keep us busy.

T: And from Swindon you were then sent to...?

L: Tidworth.

T: To Tidworth. From talking to you earlier, that would be the only place you were stationed when you were in England.

L: That's right.

T: That was until 1945?

L: Right.

T: Just to check, were you at Tidworth when the war against Germany ended?

L: Yes.

T: We'll get back to that then. This is the 187th General Hospital at Tidworth. Can you describe that place for us? I mean, as a visitor, when you come for the first time, what would you encounter?

L: You came in the gate and all you saw were these huts.

T: As opposed to a large hospital building? These were smaller huts.

L: Yes. And the surgery was in one hut. They had patients divided. We had wards for different people.

T: Were these buildings pretty recent construction? To serve as a war hospital?

L: I think so.

T: The staff here was all American, you mentioned earlier.

L: Right.

T: Doctors, nurses—how many staff typically were there at this time?

L: We had eighty-seven nurses, that included physiotherapists, anesthesiologists, and the Red Cross. I don't know how many enlisted men there were.

(1, B, 481)

T: How about the doctors? How many of those were on the staff?

L: I couldn't tell you that. I'd have to go through the book and count them all. But we had quite a few from Texas, I know that. Then a lot from the East.

T: How would describe the living conditions here at Tidworth, for you yourself?

L: In the hut?

T: Yes.

L: We just each had our cot and had our little corner on the wall where we could hang our clothes up. We just made do. I mean, like I say, when you're young those things don't seem to bother you at all. They didn't bother us.

T: How many to a hut?

L: Seven or eight. We had seven beds, but we had an eighth bed in case. We had a plaster group come in and the nurse stayed with us. She was from Ohio. There was a doctor and two corpsmen and a nurse. They stayed just a couple of weeks. Jeanne didn't say too much. She was very nice. After about five days she left with her unit.

T: With that particular unit that she came with. You had some space that was yours in this hut. How did you organize your own space?

L: It's just like organizing the cupboards here. We had to keep them tidy.

T: Was there inspection?

L: Oh, yes. We were told what to do, and most of us did it. When we were off duty that's where we were, unless we had a certain number of hours that we could drive in the country, or walk in the country rather. One of my friends, I had never learned how to ride a bike, one of the doctors taught me how to ride a bike. I gave that up. The bike always beat me down the hill. *(laughs)*

T: When you were off duty, what did you do to pass the time? You mentioned being in your quarters a lot. Was that kind of a social gathering place?

L: Oh, it was for us. A couple of us got together with some of the fellas from the 229th and we had an officer's club. We had some good singers so we used to do a lot of singing. We went to the officer's club and had a little drink and did some dancing. I think it was recorded music.

T: So there were social activities, too?

L: Oh, yes.

T: In uniform as an officer here, how did you observe the interactions between men and women in England? Enlisted or officers.

L: We weren't supposed to associate with the enlisted men. They showed us a lot of respect. We did the same.

T: You said you weren't supposed to interact with enlisted men. Does that mean that there was a certain amount of interaction anyway?

L: Some of the girls got back here, and they met afterwards and got married.

T: So people were making friends over there.

L: Oh, yes.

(1, B, 537)

T: Was it easy to meet people, to meet men over there, as a woman in uniform?

L: Yes, I guess so. I really don't know. When the Air Corps—we were pretty close to one field—were having a party, then they would send a truck, and if there were any girls that wanted to go why we could go. And they would bring us back, too.

T: There was an air base close to your hospital unit?

L: There was one, yes.

T: What other things did you do during your spare time? Was there a town to go into or something like that?

L: No. If we wanted to go to a movie there was a truck that went in certain nights a week. They would announce it special. If we weren't too busy, we could go. If we had a day off or something we could get a train to London, but we had to be picked up and bussed there, too.

T: Did you get to town or get to London with any frequency?

L: We did get there a few times, we did. But at first when we got there we had a lot of work to do to get the place set. We took over from a station hospital and we had more things to handle than they did.

T: The times that you came into contact with the locals, how would you describe the people over there?

L: Different. But we were foreigners to them.

T: What does that mean if you're foreigners? Does that mean they were respectful, or suspicious?

L: Some of them were. We got along fine. Like the people we were billeted with in Swindon, they were very, very nice. In the country where we were, we didn't run into very many British people. They were a busy lot. They'd been in this war much longer than we had been.

T: Five years by the time you got there. Lottie, what were your impressions of London?

L: I don't know. We'd go to movies. We walked around in the parks. We always stayed at the Red Cross. The first time my hut-mate and I went down to London on pass we stayed at one of their fancy hotels just for the fun of it because we hadn't been able to spend any money.

T: So you were getting paid but had nothing to do with the money.

L: Right.

T: So this was a way to unload some of that cash.

L: Right.

T: What is it like to stay in a really nice hotel?

L: I don't know. We had a good time. We didn't do anything out of the way. We didn't. The food was excellent. Of course the accommodations were excellent, too.

T: Little different than staying in a hut with seven other people.

L: Oh, yes. But we all got along real well.

T: Was that typical, do you think, that the people in your hut got along well, or atypical?

L: It was typical. We all had to give a little and take a little.

T: So folks were pretty flexible.

L: Yes.

T: Were some people homesick?

L: Not in our hut. I don't know about the other huts. We got along real well.

T: Most folks were okay.

L: Yes. On mail day we always had a big celebration. Everybody would get packages and we'd exchange food and just pig out for a day or two. We watched for the mailman the next time.

T: How often did you get mail?

L: I don't know. It was as regular as you could expect, I guess. But packages usually came in groups, maybe once every two weeks, maybe once a month. It depended.

T: You yourself, how did you stay in touch? Were you a regular letter writer overseas?

L: Yes. I had my mother and father of course. That was about it.

T: So you wrote to them pretty regularly?

L: Yes.

T: What kind of stuff did you or could you say in the letters that you wrote home?

L: Just told them what we were doing. They had an idea what we were doing but I don't think that I ever wrote that I could sit and see the buzz bombs go over at night, or anything like that.

T: But you could see them go over at night?

L: Yes.

(1, B, 607)

T: Did you feel you were a part of the war, stationed here at Tidworth, or were you so far behind the lines that it was really an abstract thing?

L: I would say it was an abstract thing, because we were told we could be hit. We had our blackout curtains and they better be closed at night if we had a light in the place. That's the way it was.

T: So, in a sense, the war was pretty distant from where you were?

L: Yes.

T: You mentioned the buzz bombs going over at night. Was that something you saw more than once?

L: Oh, yes. We were right in that line when they went to London.

T: Can you describe what they looked or sounded like on the ground where you were?

L: We just saw the light. It's like a missile going over.

T: Was there a sound it made too?

L: Not that I noticed, no.

T: Were they pretty high up there?

L: Yes.

T: But you could see the little flame on them?

L: Yes.

T: Was there ever a time that you saw airplanes, German airplanes?

L: No. Saw plenty of American planes, though. We could hear them, and they were just specks going over to the continent to bomb. Then when they came home late in the afternoon then they kind of limped in. You could just see, and you thought, "Are you going to make it or aren't you?"

T: Was there a time you saw a plane or planes that didn't make it?

L: No.

T: Now you call yourself a pretty regular letter writer.

L: Yes.

T: How about mail as a general rule. How important was mail or news from home to people overseas?

L: Very important.

T: People looked forward to mail day?

L: Yes. A lot of times you felt you didn't get the amount of mail that you would like to get or letters as often, but then afterwards you think about it. The people you wanted to write to you too had their own loved ones that they were busy writing to.

T: When you got mail sometimes you mentioned that it came several at a time. Letters come too several at a time?

L: Yes. Sometimes.

T: How about news? Were newspapers or was radio news available?

L: No. Ernie Pyle, and [the military newspaper] *Stars and Stripes*. We got those.

T: Did you read *Stars and Stripes*?

L: Oh, yes.

T: What kind of things could you find out in there?

L: Now you're asking me something that's been long forgotten. I tell you, there's a man over at our VFW in Hopkins who has every *Stars and Stripes* that was ever published.

T: Would you call yourself someone who kept up with what was going on as far as the war went?

L: We were a lot more interested in it when we were considered part of it than back home. We were very protected over here. Not so much now, but in those days we were.

T: How do you think that's changed?

L: All you have to do is think about September 11 [2001].

T: Watch it on TV?

L: Oh, yes. I was watching when it happened.

T: That's very different now. Let me ask in an abstract sense about the enemy here, because you were part of the war effort against Germany. When you thought about the enemy, in this case the Germans, or if you thought about the Japanese, how did you perceive or think about those people?

(1, B, 660)

L: I don't know, because I never came in contact with any of them. But when I went over afterwards to Germany to visit my relatives, then we talked about things. My aunt would always translate for me. It seemed like the older people didn't believe half of what was going on. They couldn't believe the concentration camps and all those things. We just let it go there.

T: When did you visit Germany after the war? When was that?

L: Not until 1973.

T: It was really a lot of years after the war had ended.

L: Yes.

T: But you still had relatives over there?

L: Yes.

T: What was that like, visiting the land where you were born, that your parents came from? What's that like to visit after those years, and really as someone who helped defeat Germany in the war?

L: My husband was still living, and my uncle and aunt. The four of us went together. My aunt speaks German fluently. She and her husband had been there before. I think they had gone over almost every two years. So they wanted to show us the whole country when we were there. That was quite a chore.

T: It wears you out traveling around.

L: Oh, my. That was about it, but then afterwards I went over once with my aunt and uncle and we went on trips when he was able to still drive. I enjoyed it. It's a beautiful country. It is.

T: Let me ask about your job. Can you describe your duties at the hospital there at Tidworth?

L: I started in surgery. I worked there a couple of months and then I went to one of the wards.

T: So the surgery there, you were present during a variety of surgeries?

L: Yes. The corpsmen that were in surgery, and every place for that matter, I was totally amazed at them. The Army really did a job there.

T: As far as good training?

L: Yes. Very good. My roommate and I went into surgery to begin with, and then I guess there were some nurses that had more experience than we did, so after about two months I went to the wards. I worked on the officers' ward. We always said that was the punishment ward. *(laughs)*

T: Really? Why is that?

L: Nobody wanted to go there. I don't know why.

T: Now the wards, the base the way you described it earlier, had specialized in a couple of different kinds of cases. One of those was the colostomy ward, and you had an amputee ward. Were there other wards?

L: Oh, yes. And then some of them were just the fractured ones. You know, where they had the broken bones and things. We had everything on the officers' ward, so it was a good place to work.

T: Most of these people, colostomy ward, amputee ward, sounds like these were people who were ultimately destined to be shipped home. Not be shipped back to the war.

L: Right.

T: Did that make a difference as far as the atmosphere or the mood around the place?

L: Well, some of the fellas that were wounded and had been at the front lines were just on cloud nine to think they were going back to the States. Of course, the amputees, and we had a couple of blind patients, they weren't too gung ho about going home. They didn't know how their friends or relatives would accept them. That was pretty tough for them. We could tell they'd just as soon stay there.

T: At the hospital?

L: Yes.

T: As a nurse, did guys, did they talk a lot? You did physical care in a technical sense, but did they talk a lot to you, too?

L: Sometimes. Sometimes they would, and sometimes we just kind of threw it back and forth. Just kidded one another.

T: Like a banter?

L: Yes. Nothing real serious.

(1, B, 714)

T: Were there people who wanted to, or seemed to want to share more personal problems, or concerns that they had?

L: I don't think so. Because there weren't that many, I mean we didn't just have two or three people to take care of. So that made a difference.

T: Was there psychiatric staff at your hospital too?

L: No, I don't think so. Not that I know of.

T: Basically just the medical attention they were going to receive. When you worked in the wards, what kind of care were you doing actually? What do you do as a nurse?

L: You pass pills. See if they're comfortable, treat what's wrong with them. Change dressing and things of this kind.

T: Would you call that almost typical nursing duties, or was it different in some way?

L: It was typical for us. When we got wounded patients, of course they were all wounded, but if there were any dressings or casts or anything like that to be changed—and they were all checked before they came to the wards—and if they needed new casts or whatever, then they went to surgery and got all that done.

T: So it was basically almost convalescent care.

L: Right. We had two critical wards, too. I just did private duty on one patient. That was it. I couldn't do any more of that.

T: The critical duty was more difficult? Or more stressful or what?

L: Yes. More stressful. Much, much more.

T: In what way?

L: The young man that I had died. He had been wounded abdominally, and if they patched up one thing then something else would go wrong. They thought they had done what they could to keep him comfortable, and they were hoping that maybe what would cause his demise would correct itself and he would go on living, but it didn't work out like that.

T: Was duty in that particular ward more stressful because the injuries were different and more serious?

L: The ward was right behind the surgery, so in case they had to go in to have more surgery done they were right there.

T: It sounds like most of the people that came to the 187th were not critical patients.

L: That's true.

T: Were there other hospitals set up to handle those kind of...?

L: Oh, yes. There was a burn unit. We transferred several there. We did take care of a couple. I don't know whether they had relatives or what. Our colonel was very specific about that. We had a nurse whose husband was in the POW camp, and I know he signed papers to have that man stay longer than what he should have.

T: At your facility?

L: Yes. Things of that kind.

T: How about minorities? Were there any blacks stationed at your unit?

L: No, no blacks. I think we did get some black soldiers that were wounded, but that's all.

T: How did you observe them being treated by other patients or by the staff?

L: I didn't run into any. They were not on the officers' ward. That's the ward I worked at.

T: Did you work at the officers' ward the longest?

L: Yes.

End of Tape 1. Tape 2, Side A begins at counter 000.

T: During your time at the hospital, what would have caused the most stress for someone like yourself, if you think about the job you had?

L: I don't know, unless it would be if you got involved with a patient.

T: Did you observe that happening at the facility where you were stationed? That people became attached or involved?

L: A lot of those things were very secretive.

T: People wouldn't want that to be... even to friends or people in their own hut?

L: No.

T: Was that against the rules, or just not done?

L: We had a very strict colonel. He was very GI, and that was just a rule. I know after the service, I know of two nurses who married enlisted men.

T: So clearly there was some kind of friendships being developed.

L: Yes.

T: The commanding officer of your base, was he also a doctor?

L: I think so. But he was strictly GI.

T: What was his name?

L: Strode. Colonel Strode. I couldn't tell you his first name.

T: What were your impressions of him?

L: He's the kind that if you answered the phone on the ward and he was on the other end, you stood at attention and talked to him.

T: So he was completely military. Was he a career officer?

L: Evidently.

T: Sure sounds like it.

L: Yes. I know it happened to me. Once I was standing on a stool doing something up here, and I looked down and I saw two feet. I never will forget that. Then I came up and looked at him and said, "Oh, my God! The colonel!" Standing right there.

T: Easy guy to work for?

L: If you followed rules and regulations. I think that's why we were the type of unit we were, because of his leadership. We knew that he was strictly GI and so that's the way we worked.

T: Did you enjoy your time at the base?

L: I think it was the best years of my life. I really do. I've made friends that have stayed. We get together and some of us just, we just have a real good time.

T: People you've been friends with almost sixty years now. Was there a turnover of people in the unit?

L: No.

T: Pretty steady core of people.

L: Yes.

(2, A, 54)

T: So you really got to know folks pretty well.

L: Yes.

T: Why do you think it is that you made friends that you kept forever?

L: I really don't know. They're from Minnesota.

T: So they're close. Geographically close.

L: The only one that is, well, since they've gotten married they've all moved out, but we do get together.

T: And you have gotten together regularly since the war?

L: Well, sometime or other. Or we use the phone. Our unit has had, we started in 1982, somebody got us started, to have reunions. After that time you're married and your family's started and you have time to do something on your own if you want to.

T: So it was a number of decades before you began to actually get together as a group again.

L: Right.

T: So these unit reunions are annual, you say?

L: No, they started out every two years. We started in 1982 and then I went to most of them. After my husband died I didn't go because I didn't want to travel by myself. There's a nurse here that lives in Hopkins and the two of us would go together.

T: She was also stationed at the same...

L: Yes. She ran the service supply.

T: That's Helen Tataka?

L: Yes.

T: These unit reunions. Why do you think people like to attend the reunions?

L: Everybody is kind of interested in what everybody has done with their life. You all have something in common that binds you together. It's like going to a high school reunion. There's a certain group of people that you just feel perfectly at liberty to say anything you want to.

T: Is it that experience that you shared together in England there?

L: Yes. Bonding. Living together for two years almost makes a lot of difference.

T: Did you feel yourself closer to the people from your own hut or people just from the unit?

L: From our own hut.

T: Those didn't change much either?

L: Yes.

T: You were there when the D-Day invasion in France took place. Did you notice times when there were more casualties coming than others?

L: We were ready to go on D-Day, or shortly after that. If we'd have gotten any patients, I'll guarantee you we'd have been a nervous wreck. We didn't get our patients until almost two weeks after they came up and across the Channel. Then we were all set. We were dying to get to work and do something.

(2, A, 107)

T: It had been slow before then, you mean?

L: Yes.

T: So the Battle of the Bulge, the end of 1944, you were also there. Was there another increase in the number...?

L: Oh, yes. [The Battle of the Bulge,] that's when we had tents on the end of all of our units. So we could handle twenty more people in each one of those huts.

T: So a lot of casualties at that time?

L: Yes. Christmas Eve we got our big load. Just one ambulance after another.

T: How did that impact the staff? And yourself personally, having a lot more people?

L: We didn't have any time to get homesick.

T: You were working.

L: Yes.

T: More hours per day or more shifts or?

L: I think we just all worked until everybody got taken care of.

T: Wow. That must have just been nonstop work.

L: It wasn't that bad. We were so wound up by the time. I had never seen so many people come in.

T: And you had to find a place for them.

L: Yes. Well, we were told. That's why we moved our people out of the hut part of the ward and put the walking wounded back in the tents.

T: So the more critically wounded people would be actually in the huts?

L: Yes, right.

T: Did you get more staff to handle this or not?

L: No.

T: That must have been stressful.

L: Well, yes. Like I say, we were kind of down before that because of Christmas, and things were going pretty smooth. But that took care of it all.

T: Before Christmas there, and other holidays, was that a time that it was tough being away from home? Being overseas?

L: No. It wasn't for me.

T: Why not?

L: We talked about it. And discussed what we did and things of this kinds. But a lot of times, if you're working as a nurse, somebody's got to work the weekends and the holidays. If you're going to do it, then those things come second, I think.

T: It's one of those jobs that doesn't take a holiday.

L: That's right.

T: You were also at Tidworth when President Roosevelt died in April of 1945. How did you and those around you react to that news?

L: I was on pass in London when I heard it. We talked about it, but that's as far as that went. We didn't have TV over there so we don't know.

T: Was there any kind of a ceremony at your base at all?

L: Not that I can remember.

T: By this time, by April 1945, had the number of casualties that you were treating at your hospital begun to drop off, or was there still steady business?

L: We still had steady business, but by the time we got them they had traveled further, too, and they didn't need as much care.

T: That's right. American forces were all the way to Germany by that time.

L: Yes.

T: Was there an occasion where your hospital treated people who weren't Americans?

L: I can't remember a one.

T: So basically it was self-contained. American staff, and you dealt with American casualties and then sent them on.

L: Yes. Before the Bulge I understand that there was an alert out. They had several prisoner of war camps in England somewhere. Somebody got wind of it that the Germans were going to break out at a certain time. We were going to have to take care of the Germans and not our Americans, but that never transpired. We were lucky there.

T: The Germans. Did you ever come into contact with a German at all?

L: No.

(2, A, 170)

T: Did it frustrate you in a way that you weren't closer to the actual combat situations, or did you feel that what you were doing was equally part of the war effort?

L: I don't think I gave it too much thought. One of my classmates came over later than I did, and she went to Europe. She worked in a German prisoner of war hospital, because she could speak German.

T: So she was much closer to the front.

L: Yes.

T: You were also at Tidworth when the war against Germany ended on May the 8th. What do you remember about that?

L: The sky was lit up with fireworks and things. It was my friend in Texas, it was her birthday so we celebrated her birthday that night.

T: On May the 8th?

L: Right.

T: Was there a formal celebration at your unit there, at the hospital?

L: No. Everybody was making a lot of noise, but outside of that I don't think there was anything. We could see the lights and things going over.

T: From other cities or bases.

L: Yes.

T: You still had patients, didn't you?

L: Yes.

T: So in a sense life had to go on.

L: Yes. Right.

T: How about among the patients? How did this news hit the patient wards?

L: The patients were happy I'm sure, but I wasn't on duty that night. They celebrated on the wards, I'm sure.

T: Now as you mentioned earlier, these guys were all going home anyway. So it didn't really save them in a sense from going back, because they weren't going back anyway. That must have made a difference with how they saw themselves and the war. They knew that they were going home.

L: Right.

T: Lottie, when was it that you were moved from Tidworth back to the US?

L: That was in August 1945, when we came home. We came home on the *Queen Elizabeth*. Three and a third days, we came across that ocean.

T: Were you flying or floating?

L: We floated home. That ship passed up everything on the ocean.

T: Smooth ride?

L: Oh, you didn't even know you were on a boat.

T: A little better than the way over.

L: Yes.

T: If you came back in August, then what about May, June and July? You still had patients coming in to the 187th?

L: Yes.

T: So in a sense there was still business, even though the war had stopped.

L: I don't remember too much of that because I know in May, after V-E Day, my friend whose birthday is that day, she had applied for a transfer and she was transferred out. Just about that time. She wanted to go to China or Japan or someplace. She was on her way. My husband-to-be was in France at that time.

T: He was in the Army?

L: Yes. She happened to run into him. He said that she was on her way to either one of those countries, but she never made it either. They just turned the boat around and went the other way.

T: By this time were you thinking about where you might be headed? When the war ended in Europe, the war against Japan was still going on. Did you begin to think that you could be headed to the Pacific as well?

L: Yes. I don't remember when we got the orders, Carol and I, because we were in the 117th at that time. We had been transferred into there.

T: This is the 117th, also a General Hospital unit?

L: Yes. We were going to go to Camp Sibert after our pass, thirty days, and take rifle training, so we knew we were headed for the Pacific then.

T: The rifle training was the clue?

L: Yes, definitely. [Rifle training was the clue] that we were going to be going there. Otherwise we didn't [have rifle training]. But anyone that was transferred in another General Hospital unit just automatically, I think, thought they were going.

T: When you figured out you were going to the Pacific, how did that make you feel?

L: I don't know. Kind of uncertain, if I remember correctly. I wasn't really that anxious to go. And then when we met, Carol and I went back to Camp Sibert. There wasn't anybody down there to tell us anything. Nobody knew anything, so we just marked time.

T: Where is Camp Sibert?

L: Alabama.

T: This was after Japan had surrendered then?

L: Yes. This was after our thirty day leave.

T: So by that time, with Japan having surrendered, did you figure it would mean you have to go or that you might still have to?

L: We didn't know, but then we were told we were discharged from Camp Sibert.

T: So you were just killing time there.

L: Yes.

T: When the war with Japan was still on and the prospect of going to the Pacific was pretty real, increasingly real, you said you weren't really anxious to go? Or would you say you were anxious to go over there?

L: I wanted to go to the Pacific in the first place, but then my orders came, I had no choice in that at all.

T: Why would you have wanted to go to the Pacific?

L: I have no idea. It was new. Different.

T: Getting away from... that's far away, that's for sure. So when the chance, the opportunity was going to present itself to go to the Pacific then after the war in Europe was over, that didn't bother you really? Or did it?

L: It probably did. I just don't think about it. Like I say, I knew I was in the 117th, but the 187th was my home, so I don't ever remember even seeing anybody else.

T: Your identification was with that first unit you spent time with.

L: Yes. Carol felt the same way. The other nurse from the 187th.

(2, A, 264)

T: One of the reasons the war against Japan ended and you didn't end up in the Pacific was the sudden end of the war due to use of atomic weapons. At the time, did you feel the US Government was correct to use atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

L: I really don't know. I hadn't talked to anybody from the south Pacific. From what I'd heard, I guess we'd killed just as many people, probably not quite as many, over in Europe and Africa, but not all in one lump.

T: How have your feelings changed on the use of atomic weapons since the end of the war?

L: I think you can do well without them.

T: Does that mean we did or didn't do the right thing to use them in 1945?

L: I just really don't know. I'm afraid to say yes or no to that one.

T: You were discharged. Suddenly, instead of going to the Pacific, you're a civilian. It sounds like it was pretty quick, in September. You had some back leave, but basically you were out of the service by September 1945.

L: Yes.

T: You were married in late 1945, right?

L: November 2nd.

T: When did your husband to be come home from Europe?

L: Probably when I was on my thirty-day leave.

T: Was he scheduled for the Pacific as well?

L: He never said, come to think of it.

T: But he was back here?

L: Yes.

T: What was your initial reaction to being out of the military, the place you'd been now for almost two years?

L: I missed it for a while. Then I didn't work as a nurse in Pennsylvania, but I had a youngster. I don't know. My life began again when I came back to Minnesota and went to work. Let's put it that way.

T: And that was 1949, I think you said.

L: Yes.

T: When you said you missed it, what did you miss?

L: The camaraderie with everybody. I was on my own. There was nobody around to take care of me. (laughs)

T: Did you like that?

L: Back in the back of my mind, I think I did.

T: You were really on your own with a bunch of other people who were also on their own. That's not to say the work wasn't demanding because it sounds like it was. You worked hard and in difficult conditions sometimes. You say your life really picked up again when you moved back to Minnesota. Were those years in Pennsylvania between '45 and '49, how would you characterize those?

L: Hard. My husband went to work, of course. I didn't. Then we built a home out there. That was a struggle. I got along well with his relatives.

T: Is he from that part of the country?

L: Yes.

T: Whose decision was it to move back to Minnesota?

L: His.

T: What prompted him?

L: I don't know. I think the Korean War broke out, and he was a member of the National Guard and they had been alerted and he didn't really want to go. I don't know what made him think that he wouldn't be called back here. Then he cancelled out on the National Guard there and wanted to get into an infantry outfit here and there wasn't any in Mankato.

T: He came back to Mankato then?

L: Yes. We were in St. Peter for a little while and stayed there with my folks. He got a job and they looked into that, but they had a tank unit and he wasn't interested in tanks.

T: What was the first time you saw your family when you came back to the States? Did you see them right away?

L: Yes. They didn't know and I didn't let them know. I didn't know how I was coming home. But then I came back to Mankato, and then my friend, she used up her last gas ration and took me home.

T: To your folks' place.

L: Yes.

T: Were they expecting you or not?

L: My mother says, "I hadn't heard for a while, and I had a hunch you were on your way." I guess I had mentioned it in the last letter.

T: That you might be coming?

L: Yes.

T: How was it when you saw them for the first time?

L: Pretty neat. Pretty neat.

T: Do you remember when you actually arrived there? Do you still have an image of that in your head?

L: I got back to the farm. It's the first time that I can remember that my father gave me the biggest hug he'd ever given me. (*emotionally*)

T: He wasn't a hugging type of person?

L: No. *(pauses three seconds)* Never.

T: Was he anxious to talk to you about what you had done?

L: I don't know. I can't remember whether he was [anxious to talk to me about what I had done] or not. We had some good talks, so evidently either I told my story or he asked questions, or something.

T: Do you remember him saying he was anxious for you to...

L: Go. Practically pushed me out the door.

T: You were the only child of your siblings that served, right? None of your other ones, you had a sister, was she younger?

L: Yes, but she worked in a defense plant in Chicago.

T: So she was part of the home front.

L: Yes.

T: What did you find hard about readjusting to life out of uniform again?

L: Oh, dear, that's a good question. I don't know. I really don't know. I just did it.

T: Do you sometimes wish you had stayed in the service?

L: No, that never occurred to me. I enjoyed my work after I got out of the service when I got back here. I still had a license that I could use.

T: You worked at Asbury Hospital in Minneapolis you mentioned for a number of years, then moved to St. Louis Park. Did you like working as a nurse?

L: Yes, I did.

T: What did you find easy about moving back to civilian life? You were out of uniform. Some things you mentioned were a little hard, but were there some things that were easy about being a civilian again, not in the military?

L: I don't know. Start from scratch adjusting to everything again, I think. *(pauses five seconds)* Coming back to Minnesota, I think, was the best thing we did.

T: For both of you?

L: Yes.

T: Did you have children by that time?

L: It was going to be three.

T: You had two children all together. The second one was born here in Minnesota?

L: Yes.

T: While you were in the service and you were in England for quite a while, what did the war mean for you personally at that time? What was it all about for you?

L: I tell you, things were really slow around the country. I think I was ready for a new adventure myself. That's why I joined the service. I made some friends for life. That's a lot.

T: Your joining, how much of it was the sense of doing the patriotic thing or being part of the war effort? Or did that play a minor role for you?

L: I was getting a little dissatisfied with my job I think, too, and so that helped. I heard they were going to draft nurses, and I thought, I'll get away from it all and get a new perspective or something.

T: It sounds like it provided that for you, too.

L: Yes.

T: When you reflect on it now, on the war now, it's been fifty-some years since your part of the war, what did the war mean for you?

L: I don't know. I wouldn't trade those two years I spent in the service for all the tea in China. [I think it was the best years of my life. I really do. I've made friends that have stayed. We get together and some of us just, we just have a real good time.— from p.31]

T: Really?

L: Yes.

T: You mentioned the personal really close friendships. The experience was really a good thing for you.

L: Yes.

T: Do you think that the experience was so positive that civilian life was a letdown at first?

L: It was. But right now I've lived here almost thirty years and my husband's been gone twelve years, but I've got some real good neighbors.

End of Tape 2 Side A. Side B begins at counter 378.

T: Bridge is one of those game that's easy to play but hard to play well.

L: Yes.

T: All in all, in what ways do you think the war changed you, or your life?

L: I really can't say.

T: Would you say, on the whole, that your military experience changed you for the better?

L: I think so. I certainly learned to accept people for what they are and not what they should be. And I think I'm much more tolerant. I don't know if I was before or not.

T: How did the military help do that?

L: Probably being a routine type person. You were definitely a routine type person in the military.

T: Did the sense of routine appeal to your personality?

L: Yes. You ask my kids and they'll tell you. *(laughs)*

T: Anything else you want to add before we conclude? A story you forgot to tell or a question I forgot to ask?

L: It's like when I talk to my people on the telephone before I gave that talk in front of the women. I said, "What in the world happened?" And I'll ask them some questions. And when I got through talking to them, I talked to three of them. I said, "I think we were all in different units." It's because they worked on different wards than I did. Took care of a different type of patient.

T: So this thing that you wrote up here, that you read, is kind of the memories of several different people that informed what you wrote. Let me thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW