

PATRICIA YOUNG BERRI
Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Interview

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PREFACE

This transcript is the product of an interview conducted on 29 May, 1986, for the Women's Overseas Service League.

Signed, dated agreements of release and biographical information accompany the original cassette.

Transcribed by Patricia Siggers
Lansing, Michigan

1 June, 1989

WOMEN'S OVERSEAS SERVICE LEAGUE

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Oral History Project

PATRICIA YOUNG BERRI

Denver, Colorado Unit

NOTE: Interviewer is Marjorie Brown of
the Denver Unit.

MB: What is your name?

PY: Patricia Young Berri.

MB: When did you join the Denver Unit of WOSL?

PY: In the fall of 1948, I think. It could have been
1949.

MB: Were you in the Service?

PY: I was in American Red Cross Hospital Branch, as a
replacement late in the war.

MB: About what time did you come into the Service?

PY: February, 1944.

MB: Before you came into the Red Cross, what did you do?

PY: I was a secretary for Shell and was doing USO work
for the British because I had a British friend who
would come for me, and we would go where the tankers
came in. I was living in Houston, Texas, then.
Tankers would come for oil and the boys would have a
night at the British USO and leave the next day.

MB: What were your duties in the Service?

WOMEN'S OVERSEAS SERVICE LEAGUE
PATRICIA YOUNG, Denver Unit

PY: My title was secretary, at the unit of Red Cross at
32 117th Station Hospital, Leyte, Philippine Islands.
In that, I had turns at going on the wards as the
34 recreation and social worker; and also sitting in
the recreation rooms just like the other people. It
36 was quite a change from secretarial work in an
office.

38 MB: How long were you in the Red Cross?

PY: Until March, 1945.

40 MB: While you were in the Red Cross, where did you
serve?

42 PY: I was first assigned to the 117th Station Hospital
in Leyte, and then I was assigned to go into a field
44 hospital unit to Japan: But after the atomic bomb,
there was no need for hospitals as there would have
46 been in case of invasion of Japan. I was a floater
until I was sent to Talwon, where there was no one
48 in Red Cross and a very small Navy unit. I stayed
there until there was a chance to be in line to go
50 home. Then I went to Samar to wait for
transportation back to the States.

52 MB: While you were in the Red Cross, what kind of
medical care was available to you?

54 PY: The hospital staff; for anything, mostly fungus.
[Laughter]

WOMEN'S OVERSEAS SERVICE LEAGUE
PATRICIA YOUNG, Denver Unit

56 MB: Tell me about the uniforms that you wore?

PY: All the Red Cross gear was unnecessary. We had to
58 purchase suntans, boots (ankle-high boots), and
suntan shirts. That was it. It was hot.

60 MB: Can you tell me a funny, sad, touching, or any
special experience that was really very memorable to
62 you?

PY: My first experience was leaving Washington after
64 being in West Virginia, briefly, while waiting for
assignment. The transcontinental trip on a train to
66 San Francisco, and the people who cut cards: The
highest card could go into San Francisco that night,
68 and I cut the two of clubs right off. [Laughter]
I've never been to San Francisco!

70 Then when we arrived in Leyte on the Lurlene,
which was a large transport at that time. It was
72 the first time the Lurlene had gone into Manila; and
without escort vessels. Mine was one of three
74 footlockers lost out of the whole shipload. I felt
very persecuted. Then I had to leave everything
76 else I owned on the airfield, because there was no
way to get it to Leyte. Again, I felt at the bottom
78 of the heap!

I had a very good friend who now lives in
80 Texas, and I have been able to see her all through

WOMEN'S OVERSEAS SERVICE LEAGUE
PATRICIA YOUNG, Denver Unit

82 the years. She was in Red Cross and left before I
84 did. Of course, I was a replacement. She is still
86 a vivid person, and I wish she were living here and
88 could be a member of the unit here.

82 MB: What was the biggest adjustment that you had to make
84 when you came into the Red Cross?

86 PY: The latrine! I didn't mind the cold shower; I
88 didn't mind the tent life; but I did mind sitting on
90 the latrines. The little Philipinos would come and
92 go with a great disregard of sex. [Laughter] But
94 it was great.

96 MB: Thank you.

98 End of Interview

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Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

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Locations

Leyte, Philippine Islands, 2

Samar, 2

Stateside

Washington, 3

West Virginia, 3

Talwon, 2

Medical care, 2

Service, 1

Stateside

Washington, 3

West Virginia, 3

Transportation

Lurlene, 3

Train, 3

Uniforms, 3