

HAZEL PERCIVAL

Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Interview

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Hazel Percival

PREFACE

This transcript is the product of a tape-recorded 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

6 July, 1988

HAZEL PERCIVAL

2 Denver Unit

MB: What is your name?

4 HP: Hazel Percival.

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

6 HP: Roughly, about 1970,--along in there. I'm not sure.

MB: What branch of the service did you serve?

8 HP: Army Nurse Corps.

MB: Why did you join the Army Nurse Corps?

10 HP: Well, at that time it was the thing to do, and they were talking about drafting nurses.

12 MB: Around what date did you join?

HP: In 1963 [sic] 1943.

14 MB: Before you came into the Army Nurse Corps, what did you do?

16 HP: I worked at St. Luke's Hospital, just general duty.

MB: What did you do in the service?

18 HP: I did a little bit of everything from teaching to
training and caring for patients.

20 MB: How long were you in the Army Nurse Corps?

HP: Twenty three years.

22 MB: What were your overseas assignments?

HP: My first one was to Europe. I went over there in 1943,
24 and was there for two years--came home '45, assigned to
Fitzsimmons. I thought they lost me. I stayed there for
26 seven years. (Laughter)

Pretty soon I got orders, and where did I go? Panama!
28 What a delightful place--once you get used to the heat
and the bugs and the animals. From Panama, back to
30 Colorado again. I stayed in Colorado till I went to
Alabama.

32 Then I went to Korea; a delightful tour in Korea. I do
say "delightful" because war was over, and it was
34 pleasant over there--once you got used to the smell:
From Korea back to Texas, and from Texas to Alabama:
36 From Alabama back to Fitzsimmons, and then I was retired
here.

38 MB: Tell me about the kind of housing you had when you were
in the service.

40 HP: Well, that housing varied from tent to semi-permanent
type buildings; quonset huts, old apartment buildings
42 that had been taken over, but overall--I don't think we
were lacking in adequate housing. It wasn't really what
44 we had been accustomed to where we grew up. Warm but
comfortable, and lacked many of the niceties of life.
46 (Laughter)

MB: How did you feel about the medical care that you got
48 while you were in the service?

HP: Well, I was so disgustingly healthy, I didn't have any
50 medical care other than annual physicals.

MB: Can you tell me about a couple of your memorable
52 experiences; funny, sad, or whatever?

HP: Off hand, I just can't think of anything in particular
54 that would be interesting--because you've all had so many
funny experiences. I guess going over aboard ship was
56 the most exciting because the war was on in Europe then.
We went in convoy out of New York; two days later picked
58 up more convoy out of Boston, and then went clear up to
Iceland. Then Iceland--made the big bend across the top
60 of the world down into Scotland. We debarked in
Scotland; Greenock, one of the towns on the west side of
62 the island there.

MB: What date was this?

64 HP: That had to be 1943--toward the end of '43. I came in in
the summer. It was in December.

66 MB: What was your first assignment over there during the war?

HP: Well, I went over with the station hospital, and my first
68 assignment was housekeeper for the nurses. (Laughter)

MB: Where was that hospital located?

70 HP: Our hospital was between Barnstaple and Bideford in
Southwest England.

72 MB: In those days, a nurse was a housekeeper--right?

HP: Yes, we did, and the only reason I got the job was the
74 fact that I had such a cold they wouldn't let me go on
the wards to work. I thought I was never going to get
76 rid of this housekeeping job; which I did, finally, and
got to be a nurse.

78 MB: When you first went in the service, what was the greatest
adjustment you ever had to make?

80 HP: Getting used to so many people around you. I had grown
up in a small town with no brothers and sisters, so I was
82 pretty much a loner. Then, to be thrust in with a whole

84 mob; literally, that was my big adjustment. But, oh! it
was wonderful.

86 MB: When you went in the Army Nurse Corps, did you plan to
make it a career?

HP: I sort of did, yes.

88 MB: When did you finally decide that you were going to stay
in?

90 HP: On board ship, coming back from Europe. In 1945, I
92 decided this is as good a place as any for me. I ended
up here at Fitzsimmons and went regular army.

MB: After you retired, what did you do?

94 HP: Absolutely nothing!

MB: You really retired!

96 HP: That's what retirement is, isn't it?

MB: What does being a member of WOSL mean to you?

98 HP: Well, I think it's some of the finest group of people I
100 have known in my life. We're not all nurses, but we've
all served our country in some way, shape, or form in
years past.

102 Socially, I think it's a fine organization; and they do
wonderful work, too.

104 MB: O.K. Thank you very much.

106 Transcribed by Patricia Siggers
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