

MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS

Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Interview

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Margaret Patricia Phillips

PREFACE

This transcript is the product of a tape-recorded interview conducted on 1 March, 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 May, 1988

MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS

2 Denver Unit

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

4 MP: I believe I joined in about 1969.

MB: What branch of the service did you serve in?

6 MP: I served in the Army Nurse Corps.

MB: What influenced you to go into the Army Nurse Corps?

8 MP: I graduated from nurses training in 1944, and I joined
for patriotic reasons.

10 MB: What did you do prior to enlisting in the Army Nurse
Corps?

12 MP: I graduated in '43, and then I worked on staff duty at
Grace Hospital, Northwestern Branch, in
14 Detroit, Michigan, prior to coming into service.

MB: What did you do in the Army Nurse Corps?

16 MP: I had varied positions. I came in a second lieutenant
and did staff duty and later worked in the 91-C courses,
18 and after that became chief nurse at various hospitals.

MB: What do you mean by the 91-C courses?

20 MP: A 91-C course is very similar to a licensed practical
nurse course. When students graduate from this Army
22 training school, they're eligible to take a licensure in
the state.

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

MP: I was in the Army Nurse Corps thirty-two years, ten
26 months, and seven days.

MB: How many hours? (Laughter) Where did your travels take
28 you?

MP: My travels took me to Hawaii, Europe for seven years and
30 two different assignments, Korea, Vietnam, and various
stateside assignments. I think I had about seventeen
32 different assignments within the USA.

MB: What kind of housing did you have when you were in the
34 Army Nurse Corps?

MP: My housing varied. When we started out, it was barracks
36 with many people in one room. Then, we graduated to two
in a room. Then, later, it was share-a-bath; then we
38 were able to live out on the economy.

MB: What was your uniform dress?

40 MP: That, too, varied. I've worn fatigues, the brown
seersucker uniform (wrap-around): Then we had the

42 starch-white uniform and up to the present day uniform,
which is more of a polyester drip-dry, along with the
44 slacks.

MB: What was the nature of the medical care that was
46 available to you?

MP: I always had very adequate care from the Army, and I
48 still appreciate anything that I get from Fitzsimmons.

MB: What were your memorable experiences?

50 MP: Memorable experiences were numerous. The one that comes
to mind is when I was in Vietnam. We were supposed to
52 leave early in the evening from Bien Hoe, and at that
time we were being bombed. We didn't get out till about
54 five o'clock in the morning, and I always remember when
the plane went up, everybody started clapping. They put
56 off the lights on the plane; we knew we were on our way
home.

58 MB: Can you compare service careers then with the present
time?

60 MP: Yes, there have been many, many changes in the medical
profession--including nursing. I think the nurses of
62 today are very technical-minded, and are certainly very
proficient in monitoring and doing a lot of technical work
64 that wasn't even available in our time. However, I do

66 think there is good and bad. I do think that the nurses
of our time were more patient oriented.

68 MB: What required the greatest adjustment for you when you
came into the Army Nurse Corps?

70 MP: Probably community living, but I can't say that was a
great problem because I didn't have that much trouble
72 adjusting; but I'm sure it was very difficult for some
people.

74 MB: When you came into the Army Nurse Corps, did you plan on
staying in the Army Nurse Corps? or did it just sort of
grow into a career?

76 MP: It actually grew into a career. I had no intentions of
joining the Army Nurse Corps. I knew very little about
78 it. I'm sure when I came in, in 1944; if the war hadn't
been on, I never would have made a career of it. I came
80 in, and then in 1946, everybody was left out of service
because they didn't realize how large the nurse corps
82 would be; nor did they have the funds.

I had no sooner got out of the service than I got all
84 kinds of information in the mail, asking me to come back
in. Although I hadn't seen much of the world with the
86 exception of Okinawa and Japan, I thought: Well, I'll
come in for another two years, and perhaps be fortunate
88 enough to go to Europe.

MB: What did you do after you retired from the service?

90 MP: Actually, after I retired from the service I really
enjoyed my civilian life as much as I enjoyed my military
92 life. I've been involved with all kinds of
organizations, most of them patriotic and I have enjoyed
94 that time very much.

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

96 MP: I've enjoyed being with WOSL because I think it's a
patriotic organization, and it's very interested in doing
98 activities to help society.

MB: Thank you very much.

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Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

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