

MARJORIE VARNER

Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Reminiscence

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Marjorie Varner

PREFACE

This transcript is the product of a tape-recorded reminiscence conducted on 17 June, 1983, 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

1987

MARJORIE VARNER

2 Denver Unit

MV: This is Tape No. 2 from the Denver Unit. My name is
4 Marjorie Varner, and I joined the Denver Unit of WOSL in
1971. I was president from 1974 until 1976, and I've
6 been president since 1982. I was a member of the Army
Nurse Corps. I joined in 1949, and retired in 1971.
8 During my nurse's training, I was a member of the Cadet
Nurse Corps, and decided when I graduated that I would
10 pay back the Army for the money they gave me for my
nurse's training; and of course, I joined also for the
12 adventure of it.
Prior to enlistment, I went to junior college one year,
14 and worked at various jobs such as grocery store, drug
store--that type of thing.
16 During the service, I did general duty and then the Army
sent me to finish my bachelor's degree and I went into
18 teaching; and did mostly surgical-type nursing in my
general duty. I was supervisor at a couple of hospitals,
20 and then went back into teaching; and then I was Director
of the Critical Nurse Corps, which is equivalent to the
22 Civilian Practical Nurse Corps. My last duty assignment
prior to retirement--I was Assistant Chief Nurse at
24 Fitzsimmons when Rita Geis, who did Tape No. 1, was Chief
Nurse.

26 During my twenty-two years in the Nurse Corps, I had
many, varied assignments; although stateside I was only
28 stationed at Brook General Hospital, and later, Brook
Army Medical Center and Fitzsimmons in Colorado. Then
30 the Army sent me to complete my bachelor's degree; and
then sent me for my master's degree in nursing.

32 My overseas assignments were Germany, Puerto Rico for two
years (I enjoyed that--great climate), and during war
34 time: Well, I guess I shouldn't say war time, either.
During the "conflicts," I was stationed in Korea and in
36 Vietnam.

During my length of service, I lived in various types of
38 housing; nurses' quarters, quonset huts, and also of
course, lived off post. Our uniform dress varied from
40 pinks and greens, fatigues, and probably the poorest--in
which most people looked not very well--was the uniform
42 designed by Hattie Carnegie.

During my Army Nurse Corps career, (of course many, many
44 memorable experiences), I think probably one I remember
most, (vividly, anyway, and not a particularly memorable
46 except that--well, it was memorable, too) was that during
our intake of casualties, I was going to take a young
48 man's blood pressure and reached under the covers for one
arm, and the young man had no arm. So I reached for the
50 other arm, under the covers, and the young man had no
extremity on that side. I think that probably was a very

52 shocking experience to me, and I still remember it.
During Vietnam, we took the M.U.S.C. Hospital (the
54 Medical Unit, Self-Contained) down to the Delta, and of
course, that was an interesting experience.
56 Comparing service careers then with the present: That's
kind of difficult to do because I've been away from it
58 for so long now that I'm really not that knowledgeable on
the service; except that back then I think there was a
60 little more togetherness. But I think some of this could
be attributed to the fact that back then, most of us
62 lived on post, and now personnel can live off post.
Probably more men now than we had serving.
64 As far as adjustment is concerned, I don't think I really
had any adjustment. Nurses training was a rather
66 disciplined area, and we lived with different peoples,
regulations; so I don't think we had any kind of
68 adjustment, particularly.
As I stated, I retired in 1971, and shortly after that I
70 took a real estate course and found out that really
wasn't my thing. I did some volunteer work, golfing,
72 that type of thing. I have enjoyed being a member of
WOSL, I think basically because of the association with
74 friends and acquaintances. I've met many new people, not
only in our own unit, but at our conventions, so it has
76 been very worth while for me.

This concludes Tape No. 2 from the Denver Unit.

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Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

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Lansing, Michigan