RITA GEIS

Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Reminiscence

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PREFACE

This transcript is the product of a tape-recorded reminiscence conducted 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

RITA GEIS

2 Denver Chapter

RG: I was a conscription nurse; I ’d serve one year, and then

4 be through. Instead, Pearl Harbor came along in December, so I remained in the service. Most of my time

**6** in the service mas done in the surgical nursing depart­ ment; I also did supervision and ended up as chief nurse

B of a general hospital. In this time, Cit mas three-and- a-half years) my experiences were in World War II; in

10 Europe and Korea; in Japan; and all over the USA, moving approximately every three years.

12 □ur living conditions weren’t always the best. I moved from tents to barracks; to apartments; to my own house,

14 eventually. Our uniforms varied in this time. We proba­ bly had about five or six changes in my three-and-a-half

16 years.

Many interesting experiences; one that was a great chal­

IB lenge to me was to take the hospital unit overseas during wartime. I got my chance in 1965, going to El Paso,

20 Texas, taking the 106th General Hospital which had 40 nurses, and some of these Cabout five or six) were male

22 nurses. We arrived in Yokohama, Japan, on the 15th of December, and we were ready to take patients by the 31st.

24 We had four huge, concrete buildings. We set up a thou­ sand beds in this area. I really should say, we took

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E6 over a recreation center which had a gymnasium, church, mess hall. The buildings were there, but it took a lot

EB of hard work to get it in shape to see patients. Almost

From the day we opened up the hospital and all the while

30 I was there for two years, every week we received a bou­ quet of Flowers From an unknown donator. To this day, I

3E don’t know who it was. U)e never knew.

MB: How many patients did you average a day while you were

34 there?

RG: Well, most oF the time we had about seven or eight hun­

36 dred, but during the TET oFFensive we were Filled up— and we had only the GIs; the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines

30 and Coast Guard.

□ne amusing thing happened one day. I went through the

40 wards, and there was quite an uproar going on. We asked who it was, and some GI put up his cast and said, ’Look,

1. **who did this?” There was "Navy” written across all the casts in the ward! CLaughterD Many other unusual things**
2. **happened since that time.**

I retired in 1671, and since that time I have done quite

46 a bit oF volunteer work including with the Red Cross, the church, and various clubs. I am now Commander oF the

48 Women’s Metropolitan Post E06, oF Denver, which is the only women’s post in Colorado.

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50 I enjoy traveling quite often to various places I haven’t seen. I ’ve enjoyed the UiOSL groups, and especially their

52 friendship. I uias President in 1S76 till 1S7B, and had to be retired. This concludes tape 1 of the Denver Unit.

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Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

56 Lansing, Michigan