

Lancaster County Historical Society
Veterans History Project

Interviewer: Miles Shugar

Interviewee: Arlene Huss

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[] indicates uncertainty of what was spoken

Miles Shugar (S): I'm here with Arlene Huss at the Lancaster County Historical Society, today is March 11, 2009, and we're talking about the WAC experience in World War II. And you said you went to High School in Hummelstown.

Arlene Huss (H): That's correct.

S: And what was the high school again? I don't think I asked you the first time.

H: Hummelstown High School.

S: Just Hummelstown High School? Okay. And on your 21st birthday, you rushed over to the WAC recruiting office in Harrisburg.

H: Correct.

S: Because there were fliers everywhere, and you wanted to join the service. Why exactly did you want to join the service, just to—?

H: To see something else in the world besides what I had seen.

S: Okay.

H: I'd been out of Pennsylvania one time to that point.

S: Was it pretty common for people in Hummelstown at that time to want to get out of the area?

H: No.

S: You're one of a kind, huh?

H: I guess so.

S: Haha.

H: I think there were a total of five girls that went into the service from Hummelstown.

S: Wow, around your age group at the same time.

H: Yeah, all from the little town.

S: Wow, and you were 21 then, we already went over that. What did your family think of you joining the WACs?

H: My father wasn't much in favor, but my mother would have gone in a minute if it was the same circumstances.

S: Oh man. Did, well your mother wasn't in World War I, was she?

H: No, no.

S: Women didn't really have as big a role in that war. Okay. And you were sent to Camp Oglethorpe for training.

H: Right.

S: What was the trip down there like? What was the trip down to Georgia like?

H: Great, a good train. They had two of us to a berth. We actually had berths in those days, which was kind of unusual because the trains were jammed of course.

S: Right, well I've talked to people who were trying to get places during the war.

H: You stood in the aisles of trains. Yeah.

S: Yeah. Wow. And that was the first time you left the state again after, you know, the first time you did. Was that the first you'd ever went down south?

H: Yes.

S: What did you think of the south?

H: It was a shock.

S: Haha, yeah.

H: It was a shock. We didn't know anything about the segregated south, and it was a real shock when you saw black and white water fountains, and black and white bathrooms.

S: Yeah.

H: Yes.

S: And I hear from what I read that the military was still segregated.

H: They were at that point, yes.

S: What did you think of that?

H: You didn't think of that.

S: You didn't really experience it that much?

H: No, I was only down there for training, you know, so you didn't, you were in an army camp so you didn't get out much anyway, it didn't really make that much of a difference.

S: Right, that's something else you say in this attachment here. It seemed like you had to have a certificate to do anything.

H: That's correct.

S: And this was during training too, you had to have a certificate with you wherever you went.

H: Yes.

S: I just transcribed an interview with Ms. Ruby Wilkerson, who was a female WAC around the same time you were, and I'm talking to Mr. Biddle on Wednesday. Now he said you had to have a pass to go more than 50 miles outside of base.

H: That's right.

S: Did you ever go outside of 50 miles from the camp?

H: One time, I had friends from Hummelstown that lived up in Orlando, Florida, and I had to get to go up there for a three day pass I had to have a special permit and say that they were relatives, otherwise you couldn't go to visit them.

S: Oh. But they didn't check up on that then?

H: No, no.

S: Ahh.

H: There was no enforcement of that.

S: Yeah I guess they had to take your word for that.

H: There was a lot of Mickey Mouse stuff.

S: Haha.

H: Haha.

S: Did you keep in touch with your family during that point?

H: Oh indeed.

S: Yeah.

H: I still have the letters, boxes of them, that I writ home and they wrote to me.

S: Ah that's really neat. Was there censorship of your letters at that point?

H: Not in the States, there was overseas.

S: Right so in the States, they were still—

H: I don't think so. I don't think there was censorship.

S: No I think you're right, I don't think they did that, and the WACs, for one part, I think they were some of the people who censored the letters.

H: Officers censored the letters.

S: Oh, officers, okay, I'm sorry.

H: It was like a detail for officers.

S: I see.

H: Because I had officers as friends who absolutely hated it, the idea that they had to do this.

S: Oh I bet. It's a depressing job.

H: Well it's not only depressing, you're reading everyone's letters to their Mom, you know, and some of it is again Mickey Mouse stuff, you know. But there might be a spy, you know. Haha.

S: Haha. Ahh. Okay is that what they were trying to weed out there, yeah, because I remember that when you get overseas, you can't write home about where you were.

H: Right, my brother's letters were like confetti sometimes because he tried to tell, he was on a Navy ship in the Pacific.

S: Haha.

H: And he tried to tell you where it was.

S: Yeah.

H: And so his letters came through with a lot of pits—lines cut out.

S: That's unfortunate. And your brother was overseas too. I didn't know that.

H: Yeah, he was in the Navy.

S: Oh, did he go over before you then?

H: No, he's younger.

S: He's younger, okay. Do you think he went over influenced by your decision?

H: No, no. Not at all. He went over so he could make sure he would graduate from high school. Haha.

S: That's a very good reason to go over.

H: Haha.

S: Let's see here, and you went through training in Camp Oglethorpe, which was quite taxing I suppose. What did you think of the uniforms that you were issued, what kind of clothing did you have to wear?

H: I loved the uniform and still do.

S: Oh yeah?

H: I didn't have to decide every morning what I was going to have to wear.

S: Oh that must have been a welcome departure to you.

H: Yeah.

S: I heard mixed things about the uniforms on the internet, which is just one source, you know.

H: Well any gal that was interested in fashion and dressing up, but I never was, so it was fine for me.

S: So it was a good utilitarian—

H: Right.

S: Type of uniform, that's good. And in Oglethorpe, Georgia, we've talked a little bit about how the public sentiment wasn't always so high for the WAC program.

H: Terrible.

S: Did you experience any of that while you were training in Georgia with the surrounding community or—?

H: Well see you didn't get out.

S: You didn't get out much.

H: You might have gone into town to dinner on an evening pass or something, but that was it. For basic training especially, you had very little association with the general public.

S: Mmhm.

H: And you'd go out maybe four or five of you together, you know.

S: So you were safe.

H: Yeah.

S: And how long were you in that training camp in Georgia?

H: I think just about four or five weeks, I think.

S: Okay, and from there, this was about a month of marching, classes, gas mask drills, push ups, and inspections.

H: Yeah.

S: And you were offered to go to Cooks and Bakers School.

H: That's what she suggested she might send me there.

S: And you were not sent there.

H: No.

S: Were you quite happy that you were not going to be—?

H: Well I told her, even as scared to death as I was of a lieutenant at that point, I told her I'd go back to Pennsylvania if I was sent to Cooks and Bakers School.

S: You'd just leave.

H: Hahahaha.

S: Haha. You couldn't quit the WAC program though, could you?

H: No, no.

S: So it was more of an empty threat.

H: Right, and she knew it was too.

S: Haha.

H: She just said, "Don't worry, you're not going to Cooks and Bakers School."

S: I was surprised that they actually assigned you to where you wanted to go, because I've talked to people who—

H: Well it wasn't where you wanted to go, I mean, they decided that I was going to administration school because my background of being a secretary, a clerk.

S: Mmhm.

H: So you just—

S: Was there an aptitude test that you had to take?

H: Yeah, oh yeah. You had all kinds of aptitude tests.

S: Was that like a weekly thing?

H: No. When you first went in the army.

S: Okay.

H: You got that. And then it sorta followed your record.

S: Oooh, okay. Kind of like the SATs in college.

H: One of them was adapted to, you know, the mechanical versus the artistic and that kind of thing, and the other one of was like an IQ test.

S: Oh, okay.

H: HECT they called. It's on your discharge, as a matter of fact, the score that you got.

S: Wow.

H: And that followed your record, it was in your personnel record.

S: When you get your honourable discharge, is that the first time you see your HECT score?

H: I think that, I don't know if they told me.

S: Because that wasn't a big deal was it?

H: Oh yes it was.

S: Oh really.

H: And especially if you wanted to apply to OCS, or if you wanted to apply to some special schooling.

S: Okay, and OCS was Officer...

H: Officer Candidate School.

S: Okay. Now at that point before, was college another option, before you were with the WACs?

H: No. Because I had no money. I got a \$25 scholarship to Elizabethtown College.

S: And that doesn't really cover much.

H: \$25, keep that in mind. The tuition was \$225 a year and I couldn't scare up the other \$200.

S: No. \$225 will pay for a little of it but.

H: Right.

S: So yeah, I guess at that point you—

H: I wanted to go to college, I really did.

S: And you eventually did get to college, and we'll get to that.

H: Yeah, thank you, yes.

S: Yeah, haha. That's one good thing that came out of it.

H: You betcha.

S: Okay, so we're out of Georgia, the next place you went to was—

H: Arkansas.

S: Oh, I'm sorry, Arkansas. I must have missed that on here.

H: It may not be in there.

S: That's okay. So—

H: The army sent us to administration school, six weeks to learn how to write a letter in the army style.

S: What kind of regulations on style did they have?

H: It was in a school, it was in, I don't remember the name of the school but it was Russellville, Arkansas.

S: What was that?

H: Russellville.

S: Russellville, okay. Sometimes I hear you say it now, but when I transcribe it—

H: Right, I probably have it at home but I don't have the name of it.

S: I'll look it up on google too if I need to.

H: And there were navy cadets too and it was schooling for us and them too—different schools, the navy had one school, we had another.

S: You were, I'm sorry, army again?

H: Pardon? Oh yes. And it really was to learn military correspondence and how you did it, which is different from civilian correspondence.

S: Oh.

H: Different only in the sense that I write a letter to you, and you endorse it and send it back to me, you don't send me another letter. A letter can have 10 endorsements going through the channels.

S: And that just means that they read it—

H: And put first endorsements from command so and so and command so and so, and then they write what they want to say—second endorsement, third endorsement, until you have the whole five on one place.

S: Yeah, it's almost like the equivalent of—do you ever go on the internet at all?—like a message thread on a discussion board.

H: That's exactly right. You have some sense in it that it kept the whole story all in one place.

S: Yeah. That's actually kind of more useful.

H: But when you were doing it with carbon copies—

S: Oh, carbon copies...

H: —And the old carbon copies, you had to make as many as six carbon copies on the old type writers.

S: Oh boy.

H: It was no particular fun.

S: Oh my goodness. I've only dealt with carbon copies for what would be only a couple times in my life, but I can imagine that would be frustrating if something didn't get to the bottom copy. Would you have to start all over again?

H: Well you had pretty good supply.

S: Mmhm. Did you have to put any periods and stuff after different dates or stuff like that?

H: Oh there were all kinds of abbreviations you had to learn.

S: Oh no!

H: And when things were sent by teletype, it was even more complicated, especially when we got overseas, because then, for security reasons, or para-security reasons, you wrote in four letter words. So well IOUW is one word, ROTE is another word, and you write your whole anything you want to write in that manner.

S: So if a word is less than four letters, does it still have to be bumped up?

H: You would add it to the next word.

S: Oooh wow.

H: And as a clerk or a secretary, it took a bit of doin to get used to that but after a bit it became second nature. You just looked at this and started to look at it as four letter words.

S: And did you ever when you came back and you weren't doing that anymore did you ever accidentally slip back into it?

H: No, not that I can remember. Haha.

S: Haha. I could imagine myself starting to think like that in four letter words.

H: You only did that on teletypes, you didn't do that on anything else.

S: Oh okay, I was confused, I thought all letters were like that.

H: No, no.

S: Teletype was...I'm sorry, I don't know what teletype is.

H: Uh, I guess you'd liken it to fax today.

S: Oh, okay.

H: It was a particular machine that sent these news messages.

S: Over telephone lines?

H: Yeah.

S: Okay. I'm sure people listening to this in the future could look up what teletype is.

H: Hahaha.

S: That is just for my own purposes. So you went to Arkansas, Russellville, Arkansas for how long was it?

H: Six weeks.

S: Six weeks. And then from there you went to...?

H: Drew Field, Florida.

S: Drew Field, Florida. To the Base Intelligence Office. Excuse me. And then you had your furlough. What was that like?

H: That was kinda fun. Hahaha.

S: I'd say!

H: Yep, yep.

S: So you went back to Hummelstown now.

H: Yes.

S: Was it easy to get back to Hummelstown from Florida?

H: Yeah, well it was pretty good because it was a one day train ride.

S: Oh really? Wow.

H: Yeah, yeah, into Washington and then up to Harrisburg on the train. Silver Meteor. I think it still runs from Florida.

S: Did you wear your uniform back?

H: Oh yeah, you had to.

S: Did you feel--?

H: We couldn't wear "civvies."

S: Oooh.

H: We weren't allowed to wear "civvies."

S: What about when you got home on your furlough and no one was really...?

H: No, you wanted to show off your uniform.

S: Yeah?

H: Everybody did.

S: That's really cool.

H: Well the guys were all in uniform, you know—

S: Haha.

H: —Sure. And again, clothes weren't that important to me.

S: Very true.

H: Some girls wanted to and they'd sneak civilian clothes. If you got caught with them in your footlocker or anything, you'd get demerits.

S: Right.

H: So most of us just didn't even bother. It was too much trouble. You couldn't have enough of civilian clothes to look like anything you know, so it just didn't matter.

S: Frankly I wish I had some type of uniform provided for me everyday so I wouldn't have to—

H: That's right!

S: I mean, I barely devote time to it now, but anyway this isn't about me, so—

H: Hahaha.

S: So do you remember anything that you did in Hummelstown over those two weeks? I mean, there must not have been much to do, but I'm sure you spent time with you family.

H: Oh yeah. That's what I did most of the evenings. You visited relatives, you know all the relatives wanted to see you, and...

S: Do you think you seemed like a changed person to them or anything like that?

H: I didn't at that point, but later on, every time I went home I thought they'd changed, and suddenly I realized they hadn't changed a bit. Haha.

S: Haha. That's when you become truly wise. So two week furlough pretty much, and from there where did you go next?

H: Back to overseas training.

S: Okay. And that was back in Florida again?

H: No, that was back in Georgia.

S: Oh, so you went to Florida back to Georgia again.

H: Yeah.

S: Oglethorpe again?

H: Yeah.

S: Yeah, I've talked to a few people who went through Oglethorpe.

H: My Dad was there in World War I.

S: Oh really?

H: I lost a bet to him, because there were three places that WAACs could go to for training—Des Moines, Florida, or Fort Oglethorpe. And he bet me ten dollars, which was more, that was a lot of money at that time.

S: I bet! Well if college was \$225.

H: And when I got my orders and it said Fort Oglethorpe, I bet I wouldn't go there. I didn't want to go to Georgia, I wanted to go to Des Moines.

S: Well the one that's closer is Des Moines.

H: Yeah. Haha. And I lost and he didn't want to take the ten dollars, and I said, "You gotta take it. I made a bet."

S: Haha.

H: Haha.

S: Yeah, I can imagine why he didn't want to take ten dollars from a new WAAC. So let's see here, it kind of transitions in your story here, you were back in Georgia, it doesn't really say much about that, but all of a sudden it's August of '43 and you were given the choice of discharge or being re-sworn in. And that wasn't a hard decision.

H: Well that was when I was still in Florida. That was when I was still in Florida.

S: Oh, okay.

H: When the WAACs became a part of the Army. A part of the regular Army. We could have gotten out at that point if we didn't want to go into the regular Army.

S: Alright, yeah because it says you started in March of '43, I didn't quite—

H: Right, right.

S: Oh wow, this month is March. That's very odd. Okay. Haha. Alright, so it wasn't a hard decision for you at all.

H: Not really, it seemed necessary, you know, that you were there, that you were doing a job.

S: Did you get off of, you didn't get off of the grounds too much in Florida either?

H: Oh we had passes once a week.

S: So you got off the grounds more in Florida than you did in Oglethorpe.

H: Monday was my day off and Sunday night we'd head for the beach down at Clearwater, Florida.

S: Clearwater. Is Drew--?

H: It's close to Tampa, Drew Field is very close to Tampa and it was close to Tampa.

S: Oh, okay. Towards the north part of the state then.

H: Yeah, and we'd head down and get a hotel room just to stay overnight and walk from the beach.

S: That must have been so much fun.

H: And go back the next day.

S: You must have been looking forward to Sunday night the whole week.

H: You bet.

S: Wow. And did you have a core group of friends that you went with?

H: Oh sure, oh sure.

S: Yeah? Do you remember any of their names, or what they were like?

H: Kept in touch with them until they died, one of my best friends I went through basic training with, administration school, and overseas we got split up two different places. We are still friends, she now lives in Florida.

S: Wow. Do you ever go see her at all?

H: Oh yeah, we see each other at least once a year.

S: That is very cool.

H: I have many lifetime friends from the service, except I was one of the youngest and almost all of them are gone at this point.

S: Do you remember anything particularly exciting or funny that happened while you were on these trips to the beach on Sunday nights?

H: One time I remember that we were out on the beach, and you were not supposed to be on the beach after dark.

S: Oh yeah, that's still a rule.

H: Is that right?

S: Oh any beach, yeah, they don't like that.

H: Well we were out walking on the beach, it was a moonlit night, and this friend and I, the one that now lives in Florida, were out walking on the beach and here came the beach patrol.

S: Oh yeah.

H: And when he saw that we were in uniform, he said, "You know you gals aren't supposed to be out here." And he said, "I know you're not spies or anything but you

know you're not supposed to be out here." And he said, "But I didn't see you." And he went on his way.

S: That is very nice of him, wow. He said "I know you're not spies" huh?

H: Yeah, haha.

S: I guess the thought of spies being among us was a bigger thing than I realize.

H: Oh, oh my gosh yes. And especially on the shores, because the Germans were going to get us with their submarines, you know.

S: Well they did get close sometimes.

H: Yeah. Closer than the public knew, I guess.

S: Yeah.

H: Only recently I read some things about that.

S: Yeah, I'm taking a World War II class over at Millersville—

H: Oh okay.

S: —And that's come up quite a bit. So, Georgia was the last place you went for training, is that correct?

H: Yes, yes.

S: And that was back at Oglethorpe.

H: The worst thing that happened there was it was overseas training, and we were marching back and forth. We had to pass this prisoner of war compound over at Oglethorpe, and they would boo us every time we went by.

S: Aw. Was this mostly Germans that were held?

H: Mmhm. And nobody stopped it.

S: And you think there was a male company going by and they were booing someone would stop them?

H: We never knew.

S: Wow, that's...how close were you to them?

H: Oh, from here, you know, we'd march on the road and there was the camp right there.

S: Wow.

H: We could see them, you know. They were standing beside their perimeter fence.

S: I didn't know that they stationed prisoner of war camps so close to where they were training the actual soldiers.

H: Yeah.

S: I guess that makes sense though. Yeah, it does say that there. From Oglethorpe, Georgia it was off to Camp Shanks, New York for the relaxed part of the training.

H: Oh yeah, you know, when they ask how you want your steak at dinner and they ask how you want your eggs in the morning, then you know that something bad is coming up!

S: I guess that's a good point. You were smart!

H: Haha.

S: You knew what was coming. And then, in '44, on the SS Argentina second of May '44, you sailed out for you knew not where. What was that like?

H: Yep. Again, you know, you knew you weren't going to find out until you got there so there was no use thinking about it. You had an idea.

S: Like you were heading across the Atlantic.

H: That's right, you had an idea that you weren't going to the Pacific if you'd have gone out of California. You weren't sure, and there were people going to Africa, you could have gone that direction.

S: But you didn't know exactly where?

H: No.

S: And then the trip across was not fun. Haha.

H: Oh, I was seasick the whole way.

S: The whole way. Now was this your first time on a major cross ocean boat, well of course it was.

H: Yes, oh sure, sure. A rowboat on the Susquehanna was the biggest thing I'd been on. I can tell you that there were, we were on the SS Argentina, which was a South American liner, a commercial liner, in peace time. There were 36 of us in a state room for 2.

S: Oh my goodness.

H: With one bathroom, no fresh water after the first day until the last day.

S: So you couldn't drink salt water though, could you?

H: No, well they had water otherwise to drink.

S: Okay, but for showering and stuff like that.

H: Forget showers. You didn't get one from the day you left New York, the day we landed in Scotland, two of us went to a shower and had six minutes, two people at once in the shower, six minutes for the two of you.

S: Wow. I'd still go I think.

H: That was after we landed.

S: Wow.

H: We were in those same clothes the whole way across, and then after we showered had to put on Class A Uniforms. Here we are in this state room with 36 of us racked five deep, our duffel bags are on the end of our bunks all of this time, fortunately I was short. The tall girls, I don't know they did, how they even slept on them. We had to unpack those clothes, take these dirty clothes and put them in our duffel bags.

S: Oh, and you had to line up for inspection and all that sort of thing.

H: Not on the boat.

S: No, I was thinking more of...wow, so no laundry service or anything.

H: Oh gosh, no way. The fellas on the boat, this was about three weeks before D-Day, the fellas on the boat were two to a bunk. They were twelve hours on deck and twelve hours down below. We at least had our own bunk.

S: Wow. I couldn't imagine doing that.

H: There were people that were close all over this boat, it didn't matter where you went. In your bunk, up on deck, people were this close just sitting on the deck.

S: Mmhm. So you got used to having someone within two feet across from you all the time.

H: That's right.

S: Were you afraid of, I know in '44 the threat of U-Boats was still—

H: You were young, it wasn't going to get you.

S: Haha.

H: It was going to get someone else but not you. I don't think, I don't know, I don't think I ever thought about it.

S: Well some people that I've talked to, they've had incidents going across, but that was across the Pacific. I guess that was more of a thing at that point. So you landed in Scotland.

H: Yeah, well that's where almost all the boats going to Europe did.

S: And, I'm trying to figure out if it says what town in Scotland.

H: Gourock.

S: Gourock? Whoa, I don't think I can spell that.

H: G-U-R-O-C-K.

S: Haha. Okay. I love Scottish names. So you arrived, the first time you'd even been out of the country. What were you thinking there?

H: I was never so happy to see land in my life!

S: Hahaha.

H: I swear, I wasn't going home until they built a bridge.

S: Oh my goodness, which of course wasn't true, but okay, you get off the boat in Scotland, you get—

H: On a train.

S: You didn't get a shower then.

H: No, we got to shower on the boat.

S: Oh, that was the six minute shower then.

H: Yeah. And then we go on train to a replacement depot where they sent all the WACs for reassignment to wherever they were going to send you.

S: So at this point, any friends you had made were split.

H: Well that's right, the friends I had made in Florida now were split. Four of us came from Florida together to this point and we'd gone to four different places.

S: Right at that moment just gone.

H: And like you in college, you know, you make friends that you're awful close to awful quick and then all of a sudden, now you're over there and you're split from your friends, but you make new ones very quickly. It's amazing.

S: Yeah. And you were assigned to—?

H: Headquarters Eighth Air Force in England.

S: Okay. Let me just write that down. I've totally gone off of my questions, I'm just too wrapped in the story! Plus, these were all questions I'd come up with before I actually knew more about you. So you're assigned to the Eighth Headquarters in London—

H: No, not London.

S: Oh I'm sorry.

H: It was outside of about halfway between Oxford and London.

S: Okay, a small town pretty much.

H: Yeah, High Wycombe.

S: Now this, okay, I was going to say it says here about something being straw filled, being in Nissen huts.

H: Well they were our, yeah, there were about 14 of us in this Nissen hut that was about twice as big as this room.

S: Fourteen people, oh my goodness. Well of course after being on a liner for—

H: That's right. Our bunks were about a yard apart.

S: That was still bigger than the ship though.

H: Oh indeed, indeed. Now we had this, we had three, we called them "biscuits."

S: Yeah, I saw biscuits, now what does it mean?

H: There were three straw filled cushions really.

S: Oh, I bet they looked like biscuits probably.

H: And that was your mattress. And they slipped and slid, and you were on the springs half the time.

S: Oh there were springs underneath them?

H: There was spring on the cot, and then you had these biscuits on the top of it.

S: And they weren't even fastened to it at all.

H: No, and safety pins were scarce. If you could find some safety pins that helped. And the height of courtship was if you knew some guy in supply and he could get you a G.I. comforter so then you could wrap it around all three of the pieces and sew in together and you had a good mattress.

S: Yeah, you didn't get one though?

H: Oh I think I did! Hahaha.

S: Oh! Hahaha. Would you like to say about how you got this comforter, or?

H: I met this guy, he didn't even happen to be in supply but he knew somebody that was. Haha.

S: Haha. I bet he was a popular man.

H: Haha. You know it's amazing in the Army, there was a good barter system in those days.

S: Yeah, that's something else I've picked up on from talking to people.

H: Yeah. And everybody helped everybody. If you had something you could give to somebody else, fine, you know. I was so lucky with the group that I was with at this station. We called ourselves "hut-sisters" and they were like my sisters. There are only three of us left. Two are in Florida, as a matter of fact, and both are in pretty bad shape at this point.

S: I'm sorry.

H: They were both older than I was. But the fourteen of us kept together our whole lives.

S: Really? So how long were you guys living in that hut together?

H: Almost two years.

S: Oh, I assumed when you live in a hut like that with someone for two years.

H: Yeah, yeah. And some of those huts got on terribly. I mean, they were just moving people in and out all the time, and we had just a wonderful group. We had people as old as my mother down to my age, and all kinds of people. We had a gal that was a nursemaid, and a couple of teachers, it would have been teachers, just all kinds of occupations, some where mothers themselves.

S: What about culturally or ethnically, was it about the same?

H: Well no, it was such a mix of people. One gal was a finishing school type, you know, and this other gal was a nursemaid that hadn't even finished high school.

S: Yeah, everyone had their own character.

H: And if we had a problem, we worked three shifts, there was somebody always in bed and somebody always at work, and you learn to be considerate or you had a heck of a time.

S: Just like living in a dorm with a couple people.

H: That's right.

S: And we've had our problem dorms too.

H: That's right. But we'd have a meeting. If we had a problem, we would have a meeting, everybody would have their say, that would be it, and we would never talk about it again.

S: That's the way to do everything.

H: Yep.

S: Get it out in the open.

H: Yep, wonderful, wonderful group of people.

S: The "Ablution Hut" I see here.

H: Oh that was where you went to the john and to the shower.

S: So showering got better a little bit.

H: Well, it got better except that there were a few G.I.s that they really couldn't assign anywhere. And they'd make like firemen out of them or something like that, and they were supposed to keep the fires going to keep hot water in these ablution huts. That was fine at the end of the month, because they'd wanted to, we'd always have a tip box so on payday for these guys because they never made above private because they were getting busted all the time because they were drunk, or something. And so we'd have hot water

at the end of the month, at the beginning of the month they'd get their tips and they'd be gone for the next week, and we'd have cold water.

S: Hahaha. Oh my goodness.

H: Oh it was wild. And that was like quite a distance from our hut, like four huts away.

S: Yeah.

H: We washed out of our helmets a lot of times in our hut, we just heated water in our little pot bellied stove and—

S: And you bathed at home a lot of times.

H: Yeah, haha.

S: Haha. Well I would assume modesty, as you said here, modesty aside you probably got quite comfortably with each other.

H: You bet. And a helmet makes a wonderful basin.

S: I assume it would.

H: Haha.

S: So you were mentioning helmets, did you have helmets before in training?

H: Oh, we got them in overseas training.

S: Oh. What else did you get in overseas training?

H: Gasmasks, we had to carry a gas mask with us the whole way going overseas. I don't know if they expected the Germans to gas us in the middle of the ocean.

S: Haha. That'd be quite a funny thing. They probably just didn't want to ship them over.

H: So much of it was so stupid.

S: Yeah, well it's war you know, haha. So you were there when D-Day was almost going to happen very soon.

H: Yes.

S: Which as you said here was exciting and scary.

H: Yes.

S: I can only imagine what that was like.

H: Yeah. And they wouldn't let us off the coast to celebrate on D-Day.

S: What was it like hearing about the victory back on D-Day?

H: Well we heard about it, two of the gals in my hut were radio operators.

S: Oh.

H: So they saw the message coming through and when they came off their ship they came running up to the hut and they said, "The war's over! The war's over!" And the next thing, it was a classified message, which means I guess you understand you're not supposed to tell or anything.g

S: No, haha.

H: Haha. We all found out about it officially a couple hours later.

S: Oh okay, I assume they would tell you right away.

H: But they were so excited about that.

S: That must have been really reassuring too.

H: Yeah. Well had one gal in the hut whose husband, you know, was over on the front line.

S: Did you meet any romantic interests over there?

H: Oh, I had one for a time.

S: This wasn't the same guy?

H: Yeah. A really nice guy.

S: Oh, it was the same guy that got you the mattress cover?

H: Right! Haha.

S: Some guys get girls because of cars, some guys get girls because they give you a comforter.

H: Hahaha.

S: How long were you guys together, if you don't mind talking about it?

H: The whole time I was over there, and the strange part is I didn't know it, nor did he know it, I went back to Europe, re-enlisted and went back to Europe.

S: '46 that was.

H: In '46. I was in [Biespaten], Germany and here was Jim all over again. I saw him at the casino there, and so we dated over there for a time again until he left again. Haha.

S: So when you went home, it didn't work out.

H: No, no.

S: Did he come—

H: We had a wonderful time.

S: He was probably pretty, he wasn't from around the same area as you.

H: He was from Connecticut.

S: Yeah, that's pretty far away.

H: Yeah, yeah.

S: I don't know if I could date someone from Connecticut. Well that is very interesting. I guess moving on here because it talks a little bit about what we've already talked about, the "hut-sisters" and stuff. And then the war ended in '45. Well that was quick.

H: Yeah.

S: Well let's not go there quite yet, if you don't mind.

H: Well I was sent to, even after that, see you had to have so many points to come home.

S: Yeah.

H: And I didn't have enough so I was sent into London to this U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey Office and worked there until I got enough points to come home.

S: So you went from High Wycombe to London. What was that like? Did you like it there?

H: Well you know it was wartime, and as a city it was great but I mean it was really, everything was rationed, and we spent our time in the WAC lacrosse club and going to the theatre. The theatre went for full blast even during the war, and even in our days off at High Wycombe we'd take our day off and go to London to see the theatre. During the air raids, the curtain would come down and they'd hear the sirens and they'd say, "Anyone that wants leave can leave now." Everybody stayed in their seats, the curtain went up and the play went on. Very rarely did anybody leave. Of course I was there after the blitz.

S: Right, right.

H: The blitz had already happened. When I got over there, the B-1s and the B-2s—the buzz bombs.

S: Oh really, I've heard of those.

H: Okay. The first ones, the B-1s, you heard them and you heard the boom and you knew it was over, and if it didn't get you, you know, you were safe.

S: You were safe until the next time.

H: The B-2s were very, very scary because there was no noise.

S: Oh gosh.

H: The B-1s were like a tick, tick, boom, almost like an old Model T Ford engine or something, and there was a split second and then the boom. But the B-2s were quiet, but then you heard the boom. And that was always scarier, psychologically, than the other one.

S: Well yeah because then every time you had a moment of silence you're listening.

H: You didn't know it was coming. All you heard was the boom, but it was just the psychology of it.

S: You wouldn't know it. Yeah I talked to a guy named Bill Mehler, he visited a French family when he was in Europe a lot and he was stationed in France, and their whole house was destroyed by it. He just went there one day, took a trolley up the mountain, and then it was gone, buzz bomb.

H: Yeah.

S: It was a terrifying invention. So air raids were still a big thing.

H: Yeah, when I first went there.

S: And this was '45, or '44, I'm sorry, when you first went to London?

H: '44, it was '44. Well '45 by the time I went into London, yeah.

S: Okay, so you were there—

H: Well I wasn't in London very long, I had forgotten how long.

S: That's okay. Did you make friends in London at all?

H: Well again, several of us from the hut went together.

S: Okay.

H: Three of us from the hut went, in four of us I guess, went into the same outfit in London.

S: Where did you guys stay in London?

H: We lived in a big house across right from the Grovenor, the famous Grovenor House Hotel. The Americans had that whole area around the Grovenor House right off Hyde Park corner.

S: Okay. That must have been really fun.

H: It was a big, beautiful, today it would probably be a beautiful, like we say the brownstones on Park Avenue were something, it was a beautiful house in its time. There were five of us to a room, but, haha.

S: So it wasn't so beautiful inside there, but yeah. Was it a little less cramped than the hut?

H: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

S: So as the war went on, you got less and less cramped.

H: Oh yeah, you got a little better as you went along.

S: That's neat. Maybe that figured into why you were re-enlisted in '46.

H: No I re-enlisted because I went to Washington to work and that was a disaster.

S: Oh. Where did you work in Washington? I mean, we'll just skip ahead to that part for a little bit.

H: Veterans administration.

S: Oh okay, you told me that, but the tape didn't hear that part.

H: Yeah.

S: Oh, and it says that right there too, actually. You didn't like it there.

H: No.

S: Was this maybe in part because the transition from military to civilian life wasn't one of your most favourite things?

H: I didn't fit in anymore! Haha.

S: Haha. You probably had to worry about picking what clothes to wear too. Haha. Which probably wasn't fun. What kind of position did you have there at the Veteran's Administration?

H: Secretarial.

S: Secretarial. Okay. So fun.

H: Boring. Haha. The only good thing that happened there is that I got to go to a White House garden party.

S: Oh!

H: Yeah, when President Truman was in. He reinstated a garden party for veterans, and I represented Pennsylvania at this garden party. They wanted ex-service women to represent every state.

S: So you were the one, or how many were chosen?

H: One from each state.

S: Wow.

H: And I represented it. My job, guess what my job was? Had a tray of cigarettes around on the White House lawn.

S: Ah!

H: Camel cigarettes.

S: You didn't get to enjoy yourself?

H: Well I did that to, you didn't think about it. But you knew it was everybody, and the guys were all smoking.

S: Oh no, I meant, was your job to hand out cigarettes or...?

H: Yeah, at the White House Garden Party. That was my job.

S: Okay, but I was just thinking you didn't have—

H: Oh not my VA job.

S: Oh I know. But I was just thinking, you probably didn't have much time to enjoy yourself and do what you wanted to.

H: Oh, we went there as hostesses for this party That was our job. No, we went there as hostesses.

S: My fault.

H: Yeah, and the guys there, it was very sad because they were from Walter Reed and Bethesda, no arms, no legs, blind fellas.

S: Aw. Yeah I'm no one to judge people smoking or anything like that.

H: Yeah, that was sad. It was, you know, fun to be asked to go, and you went through the receiving line, the heads of the military and all the Cabinet and the President and his wife, it was really neat.

S: What was it like meeting Truman, did you—?

H: I liked him. I always liked him, still do. Yep.

S: When did you hear about the war in Japan being over?

H: I guess I was home, no I was still in Europe.

S: Yeah.

H: I was working in London.

S: Was there a big celebration?

H: Oh yeah, but not as much as because they celebrated, London celebrated, when V-E Day.

S: Were you in London then too?

H: They wouldn't let us go in.

S: Oh. You were still in—

H: We were confined to the base. We were in High Wycombe, we were confined to the base.

S: Yeah.

H: I think they figured we'd raise too much Kane. But we were there for V-J Day in London, there were big bonfires, that sort of thing.

S: Because that was it, the war was over.

H: Yeah it was over. But to them, it was over really. They still had troops in Japan and all that stuff but to them the danger was over with V-E day.

S: Exactly. Yeah. So I bet you still had an internal camp celebration on V-E Day.

H: Oh yeah, well see we lived in the middle of the city, we didn't have a camp as such. We were just in this house the middle of London.

S: Oh yes, I'm sorry.

H: It wasn't the same thing as being in a camp where you could have a big celebration. But around the corner there were some Marines that were posted with the embassy and that kind of stuff and I can remember two of us did take a joy ride with some guys all around the city to see these bonfires and stuff, and you didn't know who these people were but when they asked if you wanted to take a ride you said, "Sure." Haha.

S: Haha. You guys were all celebrating the same thing, so—

H: That's right, that's right.

S: Well that's amazing.

H: I could've brought you some pictures of that.

S: Aw, maybe some other time.

H: There are some interesting pictures. Haha.

S: You know the unfortunate thing is that I wish the camera wouldn't have been out today because we could have shown some of the pictures too.

H: This is one of my favourite moments, when we had a party for the, this is after I went back the second time, we had a party for German kids who had never seen a ball, never seen an orange.

S: Aww...

H: We had a party for 1200 kids.

S: Aw they're so cute.

H: It was wonderful.

S: And that's you in all three of those pictures there, wow. And what's this, the St. Nicholas and the Grampus, the Grampas?

H: Well in Germany they this, St. Nicholas comes around on the 7th of December, okay?

S: Yeah, not the 25th.

H: Right, right, and he gives little treats to the kids if they're good. If they're bad, the Grampas take them away!

S: And don't they put their shoes out too?

H: Uh huh.

S: Yeah, I took German in high school and they taught us a little bit about that. Haha.

H: Haha.

S: It says in the caption under that picture that it was illegal to do that, it says.

H: It was what?

S: Illegal. He illegally visited the—

H: The WAC village.

S: Yeah.

H: Yeah well, because we were segregated and we weren't supposed to, when I first went to Germany we weren't supposed to associate with the Germans at all. And then all of a sudden in one day they decided we should be friends again. Now we're supposed to play ball with the kids and do everything. But when I first went to Germany, that was the rule, that you weren't supposed to associate with the Germans at all or vice versa.

S: There was still a little bit of sore sentiment.

H: Right, right. It was part of the rules, somebody's rules.

S: The silliness.

H: Haha, yeah.

S: Wow. Those pictures are really neat, someday, somehow we'll have to get copies of some of these for this place. But okay—

H: Are we holding somebody up?

S: No, I don't think so, I think if we were, Barry said nothing until 3:30. Let me just check what time it is here. Oh, it's only 2 o'clock, so.

H: Okay.

S: Hopefully, well the tape might stop soon, I'll have to flip it over, but anyway, I hope you're not getting too tired of talking to me, I'm having a goodtime.

H: Haha.

S: You were home in Washington D.C., well backtrack a little bit, after being out of the service in, when did you leave, '45? Because it said you were in the Veterans Administration.

H: Yes, in early '46. Yeah.

S: So you, oh those are your discharge papers, very cool. You went to Hummelstown again, right?

H: Yes.

S: What was that like?

H: Unhappy days.

S: Aw!

H: Well you know again, I just felt like I didn't fit. I blamed it on everybody else, everybody else changed until I realized that they didn't change a bit.

S: Were your parents happy to see you come home?

H: Oh sure!

S: Yeah.

H: Sure, sure, I was happy to see them, but there was other things in the world.

S: You'd got a taste of freedom, and you wanted more.

H: Haha, right, right.

S: When you, one more question about the D.C., when you worked in D.C. did you live down there or did you commute everyday?

H: No, no, no, I lived.

S: You lived down there. I guess commuting every day to D.C. wouldn't have been fair from Hummelstown.

H: No it wouldn't, haha.

S: Okay, well we'll skip over D.C., we've talked about that. They called for a re-enlistment of WAC veterans in '46, and you were excited about that.

H: Yes, yes. Because you could re-enlist to go to Europe and if for any reason you didn't pass the tests, you didn't have to go in. And I thought, "The Army never does anything like this." But I went down to the recruiting station, a friend of mine had done it a couple of months before, but I went down to the recruiting station and sure enough that's the way it was.

S: Wow, yeah because I've heard people, horror stories of people like in the V-12 program where you flunk out you're in boot camp, you know, haha.

H: That's right. That's right. And luckily that's when I landed in Oberammergau, Germany.

S: Oh.

H: Which was wonderful compared to the bombed out cities. You know Munich and Frankfurt and places like that were just in heaps of rubble at this point, and Oberammergau had not been physically touched by the war. Of course there was still rationing and that sort of thing, but it had not been touched, and I was at the intelligence school there, which was also a good assignment.

S: Now, I'm trying to think of how you say it, Oberammergau—

H: Oberammergau.

S: Yes.

H: It's the home of the famous passion play in Germany.

S: Oh really?

H: Yeah, every ten years they give this passion play, it's been done since 1684.

S: Yeah, that's a medieval tradition. Well I guess the 1600s is not so much.

H: Yeah, a little later.

S: A little later. You know your history.

H: Haha.

S: You arrived in Germany. What were your first impressions of Germany?

H: Loved it.

S: Loved it better than England you think?

H: Well going down to the Bavarian Alps, it's just beautiful, just beautiful.

S: Mmm.

H: Is that how you, well backtrack, did you take a plane over to Europe, or?

S: Nope, boat again.

S: Oh boy!

H: Boat again. Yeah, yeah.

S: Oh my goodness.

H: Little better than the first time. Not much, but a little better. Haha.

S: Was it as cramped?

H: 700 WACs on it.

S: Wow.

H: And a smaller boat.

S: Wow. So the re-enlistment program was popular, huh?

H: Yeah. That's why you said when you didn't know about the women, there were thousands. I don't know the number of women in the service.

S: My knowledge of World War II is lacking actually.

H: It's okay! Well that's right, I didn't know World War I when I was your age.

S: Which is sad, it shouldn't be that way.

H: Yeah.

S: Then you arrived, before you got to Germany you must have arrived somewhere off the coast of Europe.

H: Oh we landed in Bremen, Germany.

S: Oh. So you went up there to the North Sea.

H: Right, right.

S: And the train?

H: Train again down, yeah,

S: Oh that must have been a cool train ride.

H: Down to Frankfurt and had to stay there about ten days, I think. Yeah to be interviewed to see if we were worthy to be trained at the Intelligence School.

S: Were you nervous, anxious?

H: No, not at this point, I'd been with the service for this long.

S: Yeah, you were a seasoned veteran.

H: You felt like you knew everything at this point. Haha.

S: Hahaha. So you passed with flying colors I assume.

H: Yes.

S: And you were off to Ober...Ober...Oberammergau.

H: Oberammergau.

S: I'm going to write this down.

H: Over the Ammer River.

S: Oh, okay. And where did you stay in that town?

H: Lovely little inn.

S: Lovely little inn, okay.

H: Downtown. There was a camp up on the mountain, but we lived in this house down in the village.

S: Okay.

H: And it was a small village, it was lovely.

S: Did you, well you said you couldn't interact with the people in the village.

H: That's right.

S: Well that must have been very strange.

H: But we did anyway.

S: Yeah, well.

H: Well the people that ran our house, for instance, owned this inn. But they were our cook and baker, and handyman and everything else.

S: Oh.

H: And they were lovely people. You know, and so how could you not make friends with them? You know.

S: I couldn't imagine living in a house where someone cooked for you, you know, and not even saying thank you.

H: That's exactly right.

S: That's just horrible, and it says here too, haha, that you had "gung-ho" commanding officers that you had 5 COs in two years and usually you'd convert them before too long. What was that like?

H: Well they didn't live with us, they'd come down. We had some that wanted us to go and out and march through the town every morning, dodging the cow piles because they took the cows to pasture every day. The whole village cows, I mean, we decided we weren't going to do that.

S: Well what was the process of conversion like, how did you—?

H: We'd just tell them we weren't going to do it, and then the CO would threaten. We had two COs that threatened to court marshal us, and we said, "Go ahead." Because there were enough of us that if she wanted to court marshal all of us, good. And we were all at this point re-enlistees. We had all been in. We weren't like a bunch of basic training kids.

S: You weren't afraid.

H: No. Because we knew she wouldn't do it. Haha.

S: No, so eventually they all came around, huh?

H: Yep, we had one that we couldn't wait to get rid of. Hahaha.

S: Oh yeah? You don't have to name any names.

H: Generally the COs were great. They couldn't have cared less. They would come down for a company meeting once in a while, or if there was real trouble, you know if somebody had real problems or something, they were there to help but they didn't want to be commanding officers anymore than we wanted them to be.

S: Right.

H: And we were anywhere from 9 enlisted women to 16, that's as many as we ever were.

S: Wow.

H: So we sort of didn't need a mother.

S: No, you guys could take care of yourselves it seemed like.

H: Right.

S: What were your duties like there in Germany?

H: Well there I had one of two jobs. I was secretary of the Commandant of the base.

S: Mmhm. So more secretary. Ha.

H: That's right, more secretary. That and I was the chief administrative NCO in the school. Which I liked better. But when he didn't like his new secretaries, every time a new batch of WACs would come in he'd say "You may go back to your school job now,"

which I liked, “But if I don’t like the new secretary you’ve got to come back here again.” So I shuttled back and forth between the two. Haha.

S: Wow, so it was in your best interest to have a very good secretary.

H: Right, right. Haha.

S: Haha. I guess that’s kind of a compliment, though, if you were the backup.

H: It was, I loved it, haha. Yeah.

S: Yeah, you were the good one. Oh look, you do spell it there, good—the Oberammergau. So let’s talk about more when you were actually allowed to interact with the local German people.

H: It was great. I made lifetime friends again. I have a young man, and I learned to know him when he was five, he’s now a retired doctor. Those poor kids, I visited them almost every other year since I left Germany.

S: He’s probably in his fifties now.

H: Yeah, he’s in his sixties. And he’s like a son to me, his parents both died while I was over there. Quite young, as a matter of fact, he was orphaned.

S: So you took care of him?

H: Yep, yep.

S: Aw.

H: And just living in this town we got to know a lot of the townspeople. It was really neat.

S: Did you find yourself starting to adopt any of their customs or anything like that?

H: Oh I loved Germany, I have German background and I love Germany.

S: You speak it good?

H: I did, I don't anymore, it's so bad because I don't use it.

S: Oh, it's like any language.

H: Use it or lose it.

S: Exactly.

H: So it's too bad, I started to write to Peter in German, we made a deal. He'd write in English and I'd write in German.

S: Haha.

H: I've long since dropped out.

S: Ah. So that was the little boy's name, Peter.

H: Yeah, yeah.

S: Do you remember how you met him, like what day it was?

H: Yeah, his mother did our laundry, and that was permissible, even when we couldn't speak to the Germans. They could work for us. So we used the laundry as an excuse to go back and forth, that's how we learned to know that family.

S: Okay, and then you saw the little boy.

H: Right. They lived right next door to us as a matter of fact.

S: Did you play with him and stuff?

H: Oh sure. A ball, you know, throwing a ball back and forth. The usual.

S: That's so cool, um, and of course the economy of Germany was in shambles.

H: It was, it was. You traded in cigarettes and stuff, that was the economy. American cigarettes.

S: Oberammergau woodcarvings and services. Getting film developed.

H: Getting what?

S: It says something here about getting film developed. Did you take pictures?

H: Yeah, everything was rationed for us as well in the WACs. Candy, cigarettes. And in Oberammergau, one [Lika] camera came to the base every month, and two Kodak cameras.

S: Oh. Which one was better?

H: The [Lika]. Everybody wanted the [Lika] camera. They were sold on the black market like everything else, but the funny part was that the first week that my friend and I were there, she won the camera, and what you did was you put your name in a lottery just to buy it. We could have all had the money at that time because you couldn't spend your money any place else, you know, but we put our names in and she won the [Lika] and I won the Kodak. The first week we were there. And we were almost hated, because there had been GIs and people there for a year, you know, that hadn't got a chance to buy one.

S: Charges of conspiracies, haha.

H: Oh well they'd offer you all kinds of money for your camera, it was just amazing.

S: Probably at least twice as much as they'd pay for them.

H: Well because people sold them on the black market.

S: Mmhm. Yeah you said here about how a lot of goods by the time they got down the chain to your it was—

H: Yeah, that's right. We never saw green salad.

S: We're back, this is side two of the tape. You went to University of Pitt.

H: Yes.

S: And what did you study there?

H: Business Administration.

S: Oh cool.

H: No it wasn't. I wish I would have taken journalism.

S: Haha.

H: But I was already 30 years old by the time I went to Pitt, and I had been in office work and administrations so long at that point that it just seemed like the logical thing to do.

S: So there was no, so you chose the practical major over the—

H: Not only that, women were not accepted in many places. As a matter of fact at Pitt, I was told in my senior year, you know, a CPA is what I was headed for.

S: Certified Public Accountant, yeah.

H: Right, and I was told there were going to be no CPA women in Pennsylvania, how many do you know?

S: Well I guess, back in the day I didn't know any, but I guess today it's not really—women don't go into that field too much.

H: That's exactly right. They're not passed, even today.

S: Yeah, you know that's funny how people don't appreciate the bias that still exists.

H: Yeah. Yes. And here you are your senior year of college and someone tells you you shouldn't have majored in accounting in college.

S: And you wish that someone would have told you that four years ago. Did you go the four?

H: Yeah, I got my degree.

S: Four years?

H: Sure.

S: Well I just say that because I know some people with the G.I. Bill, I don't know why but they knocked out college in 2, 3 years.

H: Yeah. Yeah.

S: Just to get out of there.

H: Well I didn't go four years.

S: Oh.

H: I went three years and I went two summers.

S: You got through fast.

H: You bet, fast as I could go.

S: You wanted to get out of there. Now, did you live on campus there?

H: I lived in a sorority house as a boarder in a sorority house.

S: Oh cool. Were you part of the sorority?

H: No, just a boarder.

S: Just a boarder. Was that a good experience do you think?

H: Well we were like, my roommate and I were both older. She was there for her nursing degree, and we were like big sisters to these kids in the sorority.

S: Okay. And I assume you were used to living just about anywhere at that point.

H: That's right.

S: Were you a little upset at that point that you weren't overseas or anything like that?

H: No, I knew I wanted this degree badly.

S: So the wanderlust, I assume, you quenched that already.

H: Right, right. No I didn't. Haha. I went back overseas again.

S: Oh.

H: I had a job all lined up with the University of Pittsburgh with one of the professors, and it fell through.

S: I know what that's like.

H: Yeah. It fell through and I happened to have gone back to Europe that summer and I thought, "This is my last fling after college." Went back that summer to visit my German friends and go to the passion play and it all fell through and so my friend said, "Why don't you stay over here and work?" So I did, I got a job with the Air Force and stayed eight years, working as a civilian with the Air Force.

S: Wow, so what year was that, was that forty...

H: '51.

S: '51. So you actually have quite the career with the military.

H: Yeah, yeah. 25 years. I stayed in, then I came back here to the States and worked here in the States.

S: Did you ever think when you were going in back when you were 21 that you would be in the service, well not the service officially but with the military for 25 years?

H: Never, never.

S: No?

H: No.

S: That's just sort of one of those things that happens, huh?

H: Again, you know being a civilian overseas was wonderful at that time in the 50s.

S: Yeah, the pressures of the military gone.

H: Yeah, well I worked with the military but it was a different situation, yeah.

S: Where did live up in the Air Force Headquarters in Germany/

H: Uh, [Veespaden.]

S: What's that?

H: That's the Air Force headquarters up in Germany, not a town, it's not called that anymore. It was the Air Force Headquarters in Europe.

S: Was that kind of similar to your experience in the other German town? I guess Germany had kind of picked up its economy since then.

H: Well, [Veespaden] was a big city, it was a spa city. It's lovely because it had the opera and all the finer things of life, and it was centrally located, which was another plus, that you could get all over Europe from there.

S: I'm very jealous of that, haha.

H: Yeah. It's the thing to do.

S: Yeah, well I can relate to the professor job falling through thing, I had something lined up, I was supposed to be working there now and the past summer and it fell through at the last minute and I hope that it's going to happen again, we'll see. I can appreciate why you would say, "I'm just going to go to Europe." So that didn't work out.

H: Yeah.

S: And then of course you worked at the Department of Defense and so on and so forth.

H: Yep.

S: So I guess that pretty covers your military, I suppose.

H: I think so.

S: Is there anything we didn't get to go over that you wanted to say or anything like that?

H: I'm fine with it.

S: Okay well I guess we've been talking for over an hour, you're probably thirsty and so on and so forth.

H: Haha.

S: Well thanks! I almost think that there's enough material to go over this all over again.

H: Haha.

S: But thank you.

H: No thank you.

S: It's been wonderful talking to you, and this will go to the Library of Congress. Yeah, I guess that's about it.

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