

1  
2  
3  
4Interviewer: [0:00] Well how about that?  
5  
6Barbara: And I, um, I was at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, for 4 months.  
7  
8Interviewer: [0:13] When did you join? When did you go into the service?  
9  
10Barbara: In November of, uh...  
11  
12Interviewer: [0:20] '42?  
13  
14Barbara: ...1942 on Armistice Day.  
15  
16Interviewer: [0:25] Isn't that interesting?  
17  
18Barbara: I wondered what was wrong when I got to [chuckle] Fort Belvoir. There was  
19 nobody around. It was a holiday.  
20  
21Interviewer: Oh.  
22  
23Barbara: So, um, I was there 4 months. Then I was sent overseas to Morocco, South  
24 Africa, with the – I was assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> Evac Hospital, which was semi-  
25 mobile. Um, the hospital had been operating without nurses, so it was an  
26 interesting experience.  
27  
28Interviewer: [1:04] Did you – When you were assigned to this – to the evac hospital, did you  
29 go over, um, independently alone? Did a group of nurses go from Fort Belvoir?  
30 How did the cadre of nurses get assembled for that particular unit?  
31  
32Barbara: We were from different areas all over the country. I think there were 4 of us from  
33 Belvoir, and we, um, [there we finally 1:30]...  
34  
35Interviewer: [1:30] Then you joined the other nurses?  
36  
37Barbara: Yes.  
38  
39Interviewer: [1:32] You joined the other groups and then you became the, uh...  
40  
41Barbara: We became the, uh...  
42  
43Interviewer: The...  
44

1Barbara: There were 40 nurses.  
2  
3Interviewer: Yes.  
4  
5Barbara: And, um, then we b-, We were attached to that hospital.  
6  
7Interviewer: To that hospital. [1:44] Well, Barbara, now here you were in Mor-, in, uh,  
8Morocco attached to the station hospital, so what developed when the nurses  
9became a part of this unit?  
10  
11Barbara: Well the, uh – It was interesting to learn how the, uh, hospital was functioning.  
12The doctors would tell the boys to give so many so many pills. The urinals were  
13passed down the line in the ward, [laughter] and the – I – I was kidded about  
14airing all the blankets on – on the fence. But, other than that, it was a, uh, we  
15were operating as a station hospital, and, of course, the casualties were, uh,  
16minimum, you know?  
17  
18Interviewer: [2:32] Did you have a, uh, operating room as part of the evac hospital or...?  
19  
20Barbara: Oh, yes, a very active operating room in the front lines. Um, even neurosurgery.  
21Where – when we started out for the, um, the Tunisian campaign, which was at,  
22uh, not at Morocco but at, um...  
23  
24Interviewer: Northern Africa. [2:55] Was this part of the Northern Africa campaign?  
25  
26Barbara: Um, it was at Tunis.  
27  
28Interviewer: Oh, uh-huh.  
29  
30Barbara: We were at Morocco and...  
31  
32Interviewer: Yes.  
33  
34Barbara: ...this – the campaign, you know, was in Tunis.  
35  
36Interviewer: [3:06] Was this – was your evac hospital supportive to a specific, uh, um, army or  
37– or did you serve a number of...?  
38  
39Barbara: Uh, we followed whatever army was in that area.  
40  
41Interviewer: Yeah. All right.  
42

1Barbara: Well when we went – We were transferred then to – and we moved trucks up to  
2 the, um, front line, so we had no protection, uh, as they usually do with the, um,  
3 Geneva cross, you know, on the trucks?  
4

5Interviewer: Yes.  
6

7Barbara: So and so many nurses were assigned to a truck, and the, uh, officers and  
8 corpsmen were moving the trucks. We moved the hospital in the trucks to the  
9 front lines.  
10

11Interviewer: Yes.  
12

13Barbara: And that was a long trip. Um...

14

15Interviewer: [3:43] When you say long, what do you mean by long? How long, like...?  
16

17Barbara: Well [chuckle] hundreds of miles.  
18

19Interviewer: Oh.  
20

21Barbara: Uh, and it was, of course, interesting along the way because we could see how  
22 the, uh, natives were living, and we – we went through the desert, and, um,  
23 bivouacked at night.  
24

25Interviewer: Yes.  
26

27Barbara: The doctors – I shouldn't say this I guess. They thought we'd all have prolapsed  
28 uteruses [laughter] from riding in the trucks [laughter].  
29

30Interviewer: [laughter] That's very interesting.  
31

32Barbara: Anyway, um, so we'd stop along the road, and we'd, um, hold up a blanket, and  
33 that was our latrine.  
34

35Interviewer: [4:23] Oh, just, uh...?  
36

37Barbara: It was very rugged.  
38

39Interviewer: Yes.  
40

41Barbara: But we had a lot of fun.  
42

43Interviewer: Yes.  
44

1Barbara: And, uh, usually we'd stop along the way somewhere and get a bottle wine, and  
2 that was our Dust Cutter in the afternoon, so the, uh – we really enjoyed it. We  
3 had a lot of fun. So when we, um, finally landed at, um, Tunisia, we – we – of  
4 course we got the casualties from, uh, the desert, you know?  
5

6Interviewer: Yes.  
7

8Barbara: They, uh...  
9

10Interviewer: [4:53] The desert battle, that was...  
11

12Barbara: Yeah.  
13

14Interviewer: ...the casualties that you – you [inaudible 4:55].  
15

16Barbara: I don't know how long we were there, but, um, from there, we moved to, um,  
17 Sicily. And, of course, they made a mistake and sent the nurses on ahead of the  
18 hospital and the, uh, the officers and men, and we went across the – I don't know  
19 what ocean it was. Anyway, in this little...  
20

21Interviewer: [5:25] The Mediterranean? Was that the Mediterranean Sea?  
22

23Barbara: I guess it was.  
24

25Interviewer: Uh-huh.  
26

27Barbara: With this little LST boat, and there were no – the toilet facilities were, uh, all  
28 clogged up, and we sat on the – on the deck and the water splashed up on the boat,  
29 and by the time we – before we got to, uh, Sicily, we were all so seasick we didn't  
30 care whether [chuckle] we lived or died. And one of the interesting things I'll  
31 never remember, a bomb floated b-, by the boat.  
32

33Interviewer: [5:54] [Past your...]?  
34

35Barbara: Yes.  
36

37Interviewer: Yes.  
38

39Barbara: And when we got there, the minute we landed, there was an air raid, and, of  
40 course, we did the most stupid thing you could do. We all crawled under a truck.  
41 [laughter]  
42

43Interviewer: Oh.  
44

1Barbara: And, uh, we were – we were actually under an air raid.  
2  
3Interviewer: [6:11] And this was – this was – this was – this was in Sicily? This was in Sicily,  
4 you were...?  
5  
6Barbara: In Sicily, yes.  
7  
8Interviewer: This was, yeah, when you...  
9  
10Barbara: So we went to the staging area, and there was nothing there.  
11  
12Interviewer: Yes.  
13  
14Barbara: But there was a hospital there, and they didn't want us there because they, um,  
15 they didn't like my dog. He was white, and they thought the planes would see the  
16 dog. How stupid can you get?  
17  
18Interviewer: Oh. [6:31] When d-, when did you get this dog? Now this is your first reference.  
19  
20Barbara: Oh, I forgot about the dog. [laughter]  
21  
22Interviewer: Yes, you forgot to tell us about your dog.  
23  
24Barbara: The dog was given to us in Africa by some enlisted men who couldn't keep him.  
25 He was a little pup. And, of course, along the trip, the dog, you know, [laughter]  
26 he wasn't housebroke. We'd say to this one enlisted man, we called him Bull  
27 Moose, Bull Moose walk the dog. Come on, walk the dog. [chuckle]  
28  
29Interviewer: Yes.  
30  
31Barbara: Well anyway.  
32  
33Interviewer: [6:59] So you mean you kept this dog with you from your initial...  
34  
35Barbara: Oh, yes, and [a very good one 7:03].  
36  
37Interviewer: ...staging point in Africa, and you were st-, you still had the dog with you? Yes.  
38  
39Barbara: Still had the dog, yes.  
40  
41Interviewer: Yes. [7:08] What was the dog's – What...  
42  
43Barbara: He grew up in the outfit.  
44

1Interviewer: For Heaven sakes.  
2  
3Barbara: And...  
4  
5Interviewer: [7:11] What did you call him?  
6  
7Barbara: We called him, uh, Eric because we, uh, we went overseas on the – on the  
8 Swedish ship, the John Erickson, and we called the dog Eric.  
9  
10Interviewer: Yes.  
11  
12Barbara: Well anyway, we were there and so were the engineers were around, and they –  
13 we went in to pup tents and we dug foxholes, so that at night if there was an air  
14 raid, we could jump in a foxhole. Well after jumping in about twice, we got tired  
15 of that [chuckle] and we'd let the air raid go. And we were actually in the combat  
16 area. Right in the combat – and we saw planes being shot down.  
17  
18Interviewer: Yes.  
19  
20Barbara: We never experienced that later. So then when the officers came – and we  
21 wondered all over the countryside. When the officers finally came and the  
22 hospital was set up and he said there's no more [pounding] running around in the  
23 field; you stay in the area. So that was, uh, of course, we moved along into Sicily  
24 and different areas with, uh, General Patton.  
25  
26Interviewer: [8:12] Did you, um, eh, uh, well, let's – let's go, uh, to s-, well maybe before we  
27 consider further the nature, you know, some of the other activities that – that, eh,  
28 came about in the, um, [tsk], uh – can you tell us what influenced you to  
29 volunteer?  
30  
31Barbara: Right now I don't know. [laughter]  
32  
33Interviewer: You just don't remember. [8:33] But did any – was – were any other members of  
34 your family in the service at the point that you enlisted or did they go in  
35 subsequently?  
36  
37Barbara: Uh, my brother was in the service and my nephew.  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes.  
40  
41Barbara: And my nephew was...  
42  
43Interviewer: Yes.  
44

1Barbara: ...in the same army as I was, and we – we met overseas, which was very nice for  
2 the family.  
3

4Interviewer: Yes. Well I know that you graduated from St. Francis General Hospital in  
5 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and that particular hospital was a part of a Pittsburgh,  
6 uh, general h-, a military general hospital. [9:03] How is that that you w-, didn't  
7 become a part of that group?  
8

9Barbara: I don't know. I think, um, I think I was probably influenced by a friend who was  
10 in the service, and I didn't, uh – I don't know. I wanted to go in on my own I  
11 think.  
12

13Interviewer: Okay. Okay. And that was interest-, Because I know a large number of people...  
14

15Barbara: Yeah.  
16

17Interviewer: ...from Pittsburgh and a large number of St. Francis graduates...  
18

19Barbara: Yeah.  
20

21Interviewer: ...joined that particular unit.  
22

23Barbara: They went with the Pitt Unit.  
24

25Interviewer: [9:29] Oh, it was the – It was considered the...  
26

27Barbara: [Inaudible 9:30] University of Pitt Unit.  
28

29Interviewer: ...University of Pittsburgh Unit?  
30

31Barbara: Yes.  
32

33Interviewer: Oh. All right. [9:34] W-, What did you do prior to your enlistment?  
34

35Barbara: I was a – I did private duty nursing, and I was a registrar at the Nurses  
36 Professional Registry part time.  
37

38Interviewer: [9:46] And where was that located at, uh?  
39

40Barbara: It was on Fifth Avenue.  
41

42Interviewer: [9:49] In downtown Pittsburgh?  
43

44Barbara: Yeah. No. Over in Oakland.

1  
2Interviewer: Oh, in Oakland.  
3  
4Barbara: Yeah.  
5  
6Interviewer: At the – in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh. So. Um, w-, w-, we'll – we'll ask  
7 some of these other, you know, sort of concrete, uh, related, uh, questions here,  
8 and then we can get back to – to your experience because...  
9  
10Barbara: [Inaudible 10:07].  
11  
12Interviewer: Certainly you're experience, uh, prior to military service was different than what  
13 you, um, became involved with as a member of the evac hospital. [10:23] So – so  
14 Barbara, tell us, uh, what developed then as you – as your unit moved into, you  
15 know, began its, uh, work in Sicily?  
16  
17Barbara: Well the, uh, the conditions there were very, uh, primitive [chuckle] to say the  
18 least. We had, uh, blackout, total blackout because the planes are, uh, flying over  
19 every night. [Inaudible 10:49] we knew, uh, the German planes, they called  
20 [Jerries 10:52] flying over.  
21  
22Interviewer: Yes.  
23  
24Barbara: But, uh, for some reason, uh – they knew we were there, but they did, uh,  
25 apparently respect the hospital. But we did have blackout, and, uh, we – we  
26 working with flashlights, and, uh, we had lanterns. And, of course, the – the, uh,  
27 that whole area, the poverty was so depressing in Africa and in...  
28  
29Interviewer: [11:19] Sicily?  
30  
31Barbara: ...and Sicily. The people, they were so, uh...  
32  
33Interviewer: Yes.  
34  
35Barbara: It was overwhelming, the poverty. But the, um, it was interesting. There were so  
36 many crevices in the [chuckle] in the ground, and we – we – we poured the water,  
37 the washbasins and everything in all these holes, you know. There was no  
38 problem, you know, with the...  
39  
40Interviewer: [11:41] What – What was – What was the basis for those crevices? Was that –  
41 did, uh...  
42  
43Barbara: Uh, I guess volcanic.  
44



1Interviewer: Oh, I see. I see. [11:49] That was just – It just happened to be the way the  
2 terrain?  
3  
4Barbara: And, of course, you could see Mount Etna...  
5  
6Interviewer: Yes.  
7  
8Barbara: ...in the morning.  
9  
10Interviewer: Yes.  
11  
12Barbara: It was, uh...  
13  
14Interviewer: [11:57] What was your specific assignment in the unit? What was your nursing  
15 assignment?  
16  
17Barbara: Eh, the – all the nurses were head nurses really. You had a ward with corpsmen.  
18  
19Interviewer: [12:06] And how – how many patients did you have in the Evac?  
20  
21Barbara: We had 40 in the ward.  
22  
23Interviewer: [12:09] Forty in the ward? And how big was the evac hospital? How many did  
24 you have as your...  
25  
26Barbara: I think, um...  
27  
28Interviewer: ...general census?  
29  
30Barbara: ...we had about 250 patients. It consisted of a, um, a shock ward. The – the  
31 casualties came from...  
32  
33Interviewer: Yes.  
34  
35Barbara: ...the clearing station.  
36  
37Interviewer: Yes.  
38  
39Barbara: [12:23] They just had first aid, see?  
40  
41Interviewer: Yes.  
42

1 Barbara: And, uh, maybe the tetanus and what have you. And then they were, uh, sent to  
2 the shock ward, and then they were, uh, treated and then sent to the various wards.  
3 They had Surgery.  
4  
5 Interviewer: Yes.  
6  
7 Barbara: Um, Neurosurgery. And then, of course, we had a lot of malaria. A lot of  
8 malaria.  
9  
10 Interviewer: [12:45] What w-, What ward – what was your ward assigned [inaudible 12:48]?  
11  
12 Barbara: I had different assignments.  
13  
14 Interviewer: [12:49] Was it...  
15  
16 Barbara: It would vary.  
17  
18 Interviewer: I see.  
19  
20 Barbara: Every time you moved, you maybe you'd get a different assignment.  
21  
22 Interviewer: I see. [12:53] It wasn't nes-...  
23  
24 Barbara: We had a lot of malaria in that area.  
25  
26 Interviewer: Yes.  
27  
28 Barbara: Yeah.  
29  
30 Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32 Barbara: And, uh...  
33  
34 Interviewer: [12:58] Did your work hours, did you work, uh – did you have, uh, the 12 to 12 or  
35 how – what...?  
36  
37 Barbara: We worked 12 hours, and we changed on Monday. We didn't want to be on  
38 longer than a week, and so Monday was a rough day. You – you had no days off.  
39 You worked. And when we moved, half of the hospital moved on and set up, and  
40 the other half followed, and all you did was throw your zip bag in a tent and go on  
41 duty, so you – the days were long. But I don't know, it never...  
42

1 Interviewer: Yeah. [13:32] Did y-, Did you, uh – d-, did – did it alternate, like you said, like  
2 half of the hospital would set up and then would the other half set up the next  
3 time? You alternated with the...  
4

5 Barbara: Yes. Yes, that's right.  
6

7 Interviewer: ...with setting up?  
8

9 Barbara: And then, of course, we had the Active of Surgical Ward. It was mostly  
10 debridement, what they called.  
11

12 Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
13

14 Barbara: And then they put – patients were put in [caths 13:48].  
15

16 Interviewer: Yes.  
17

18 Barbara: And the next day, they were...  
19

20 Interviewer: Yes.  
21

22 Barbara: ...evacuated, you see.  
23

24 Interviewer: Yes.  
25

26 Barbara: We had to watch them for shock.  
27

28 Interviewer: Yes.  
29

30 Barbara: And see that the [caths 13:55] were, um, you know, [they were 13:57].  
31

32 Interviewer: [13:58] How, uh, did – When you were in Sicily, now you mentioned that was a  
33 active war zone area, did – did any – any of the personnel in the unit, were they –  
34 were they injured?  
35

36 Barbara: No. Eh, usually we were 50 miles from the front.  
37

38 Interviewer: I see. I see.  
39

40 Barbara: It's only when we landed we were...  
41

42 Interviewer: Yes. I see.  
43

44 Barbara: ...in the active – they were – the planes were bombing the harbor.

1  
2Interviewer: Yes.  
3  
4Barbara: [14:19] See? And we landed there.  
5  
6Interviewer: Yes.  
7  
8Barbara: And, uh, we were near the har-, we was...  
9  
10Interviewer: [14:22] And you weren't set up? And you weren't really set up as soon as you...?  
11  
12Barbara: And were stationed near the harbor.  
13  
14Interviewer: Yes, [inaudible 14:27].  
15  
16Barbara: And it was – It was funny you'd go to the [chuckle] latrine at night...  
17  
18Interviewer: Yes.  
19  
20Barbara: ...and you'd be on the way, and all the sudden a plane would go over.  
21  
22Interviewer: Oh.  
23  
24Barbara: I mean there you – we were out in the open...  
25  
26Interviewer: Yes.  
27  
28Barbara: ...field, you know.  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: It [would scare 14:40] [laughter].  
33  
34Interviewer: [laughter]  
35  
36Barbara: The latrines were always...  
37  
38Interviewer: [14:43] What did you – talking about the, uh, about that aspect of life, what did  
39 you – what did the nurses do for bathing and so forth?  
40  
41Barbara: We bathed in a helmet.  
42  
43Interviewer: Yes. [14:53] That's all you used throughout your, uh – throughout your...?  
44

1Barbara: Not always. Sometimes they we take you by truck where they had shower areas.  
2  
3Interviewer: Yes.  
4  
5Barbara: But it was so dusty over there...  
6  
7Interviewer: Yes.  
8  
9Barbara: ...you were dirty by [laughter].  
10  
11Interviewer: [15:02] By the time you returned [inaudible 15:04]?  
12  
13Barbara: You were dirtier when you came back.  
14  
15Interviewer: [15:05] How long were – Well how long was the evac hospital stationed at Sicily?  
16 How long did your – your group remain there?  
17  
18Barbara: It was a very quick campaign. I don't think we were there very long. O-, Off  
19 hand, I don't know.  
20  
21Interviewer: [15:18] Then what happened? Where did the unit go [inaudible 15:20]?  
22  
23Barbara: Well, then we – from Sicily, we went to Italy.  
24  
25Interviewer: Yeah.  
26  
27Barbara: And our first station was the Casina area.  
28  
29Interviewer: Yes. [15:29] That was heavily bombed was it not?  
30  
31Barbara: It was heavily bombed, and we were, um, we were beside another evac hospital.  
32 We were side by side, and we were near the town there. Casina was – and we  
33 could  
34  
35Interviewer: Yes.  
36  
37Barbara: ...hear the raids at night, but the casualties were very heavy.  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes.  
40  
41Barbara: And the, uh – One day we'd take the casualties. The next day, they would take  
42 them. It was a, um, an evac hospital from Chicago, I think.  
43  
44Interviewer: Yes.

1  
2Barbara: [throat clearing] It's, um – and then from Casina, we went by boat, and this time  
3 we went by hospital ship, and that was kinda nice. It was little up, you know, and  
4 the food was good.  
5  
6Interviewer: Yes.  
7  
8Barbara: And, um, we went from there to Casina area.  
9  
10Interviewer: Yes.  
11  
12Barbara: And that, of course, was very, um, the Casina area – we had – we placed a  
13 hospital where 2 nurses were killed.  
14  
15Interviewer: Oh. [16:28] They weren't a part of your group were they?  
16  
17Barbara: No.  
18  
19Interviewer: [16:30] There was another?  
20  
21Barbara: They, um – we were in a high elevation, and the beach was down below us.  
22  
23Interviewer: Yes.  
24  
25Barbara: And, of course, that's where the planes were...  
26  
27Interviewer: [16:43] bombing?  
28  
29Barbara: ...bombing the beach [end 16:44].  
30  
31Interviewer: [16:44] They were bombing the areas?  
32  
33Barbara: And they flew over the hospital.  
34  
35Interviewer: Yes.  
36  
37Barbara: And, uh, well it was interesting, the – The patients all little up their cigarettes  
38 when the planes came over, and you would – The flack would come through the  
39 tent, and you could hear it, uh, uh, [tingle 17:03].  
40  
41Interviewer: [17:03] [Tingle 17:03]? Yes.  
42  
43Barbara: Yes.  
44

1Interviewer: [17:04] Well why would they light their cigarettes? Why would the patients  
2light...?  
3  
4Barbara: They were nervous.  
5  
6Interviewer: Oh.  
7  
8Barbara: They were [in bed after all 17:09].  
9  
10Interviewer: I see. I see.  
11  
12Barbara: Yeah.  
13  
14Interviewer: I see. [17:12] That was a part of a nervous response?  
15  
16Barbara: And it, uh, we were dug in there.  
17  
18Interviewer: Yes.  
19  
20Barbara: Our tents were, uh, dug in, you know? They had dirt over the roofs...  
21  
22Interviewer: Yes.  
23  
24Barbara: ...so that the, uh, if the flack came down.  
25  
26Interviewer: Yes.  
27  
28Barbara: You were hit by fragments, not a bomb...  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: ...but by fragments.  
33  
34Interviewer: Yes. Right.  
35  
36Barbara: And most of them – the injured patients were hit by fragments.  
37  
38Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
39  
40Barbara: That's what the injuries were.  
41  
42Interviewer: Yes. Right. Yes. Gen-, Yes. [17:36] Do – where did you go then from, um,  
43from that assignment, where was your next [at 17:40]?  
44

1Barbara: We were there, uh, quite a long time, and, of course, the, uh...  
2  
3Interviewer: [17:43] When you say a long time, how much in terms of, uh, do you know?  
4 Months? Six months?  
5  
6Barbara: We were probably there a month.  
7  
8Interviewer: Oh.  
9  
10Barbara: The casualties were very, very heavy there.  
11  
12Interviewer: Yes.  
13  
14Barbara: It was very...  
15  
16Interviewer: Yes.  
17  
18Barbara: ...very depressing.  
19  
20Interviewer: [17:57] Now you mention a month being a long time? So then, actually, how  
21 long would you – what – how long would your unit have remained in these other  
22 areas? Did you just remain a week or...?  
23  
24Barbara: We moved with the front.  
25  
26Interviewer: I see. [18:08] Like that...  
27  
28Barbara: As the front moved, we moved.  
29  
30Interviewer: [18:10] Like a week, a week or would...?  
31  
32Barbara: Well I don't, eh, off hand, I don't know now.  
33  
34Interviewer: You don't recall but it – but still that was...  
35  
36Barbara: But it seems to me we were there a month...  
37  
38Interviewer: Yes.  
39  
40Barbara: ...and then after that, we moved on, see.  
41  
42Interviewer: Yes. Eh...  
43  
44Barbara: From there we moved on to another area in Sicily.



1  
2Interviewer: Yes.  
3  
4Barbara: Or, n-, E-, Italy. And then we functioned as a station hospital.  
5  
6Interviewer: [18:31] Then you became a station hospital?  
7  
8Barbara: Yeah.  
9  
10Interviewer: So were you permanently then assigned, uh, to that area or did you again move?  
11 Or after you became a station in Italy [inaudible 18:40]?  
12  
13Barbara: We'd only, eh, when we were not in combat, we functioned as a station hospital.  
14  
15Interviewer: Yes.  
16  
17Barbara: [18:49] Sometimes the war was in a lull, you know?  
18  
19Interviewer: Yes.  
20  
21Barbara: Or they weren't...  
22  
23Interviewer: Yes.  
24  
25Barbara: ...moving too fast.  
26  
27Interviewer: Yes.  
28  
29Barbara: See, we – we – we – first it was a field hospital.  
30  
31Interviewer: Oh, I see.  
32  
33Barbara: And then the evac hospital.  
34  
35Interviewer: Yes.  
36  
37Barbara: And we hopped, see?  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes. [19:02] Well then did you become a evac hospital again after your station?  
40  
41Barbara: Oh, yeah, we were evac all the way...  
42  
43Interviewer: [19:07] Oh, you reverted?  
44

1Barbara: ...through the war. Yes.  
2  
3Interviewer: I see. [19:09] You reverted back to evac...  
4  
5Barbara: Yeah.  
6  
7Interviewer: ...whenever the, uh, the, um, the nature of the battles would call for that kind of,  
8 uh, follow up?  
9  
10Barbara: From there on, we, uh...  
11  
12Interviewer: [19:25] Where did you...?  
13  
14Barbara: Well we, uh, we, um – I'm trying to think where we went after that. We went to  
15 Northern Italy.  
16  
17Interviewer: [19:32] So Barbara, you went to Northern Italy, now, um, and where was that a-  
18 approximately where – where was that location?  
19  
20Barbara: I think it was called Salerno. It – We were always near the ocean. It was very  
21 nice. [19:45] Um, we'd, uh, you know, in our free time we went swimming?  
22  
23Interviewer: Yes. Yes. [19:49] I wondered what you...  
24  
25Barbara: Oh, yes. [Inaudible 19:51].  
26  
27Interviewer: ...if you had any – if you were able to do any h-, to do anything for relaxation  
28 [inaudible 19:55].  
29  
30Barbara: Oh, and then, of course, the officers, when they were – when there was a lull, they  
31 had parties.  
32  
33Interviewer: Oh.  
34  
35Barbara: There were a lot of parties...  
36  
37Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
38  
39Barbara: ...at night. [20:01] You know dances and things?  
40  
41Interviewer: Yes.  
42  
43Barbara: We were too popular. You couldn't spread yourself around enough [laughter].  
44

1Interviewer: [laughter]  
2  
3Barbara: From there, we went to Southern France, and, um – I have trouble remembering,  
4 it was so long ago.  
5  
6Interviewer: Yes. Well you s-, You – [20:19] You went to Southern France [inaudible 20:20],  
7 of course, there was, eh, fighting still going on in Italy  
8  
9Barbara: Oh, yes.  
10  
11Interviewer: ...but you joi-, and then you became the support group to which army then? Is,  
12 uh...  
13  
14Barbara: I think that was Seventh Army.  
15  
16Interviewer: Seventh Army.  
17  
18Barbara: We were Fifth Army, and then [we was 2 20:30] Corps, and then this was Seventh  
19 Army.  
20  
21Interviewer: Yes.  
22  
23Barbara: And in Southern France, we went up through France, uh, very quickly...  
24  
25Interviewer: Yes.  
26  
27Barbara: ...uh, to, uh, we went to famous places like where they made the perfume, and we  
28 all bought perfume...  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: ...[inaudible 20:46] [laughter].  
33  
34Interviewer: Yes.  
35  
36Barbara: [20:53] And, uh, and then we went to Grenoble, which is a very, um, interesting  
37 place, you know?  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes.  
40  
41Barbara: Um...  
42  
43Interviewer: [20:59] Now were you assigned there or was this...?  
44

1 Barbara: Eh, well we were stationed there...  
2  
3 Yeah. Yeah. [21:02] As you were moving [inaudible 21:03]?  
4  
5 Barbara: ...more or less as a station hospital.  
6  
7 Interviewer: I see. I see.  
8  
9 Barbara: And it was interesting because the – the – you could see Mont Blanc...  
10  
11 Interviewer: Yes.  
12  
13 Barbara: ...long after the sun went down. [21:11] It was white, you know? It was, uh,  
14 very nice there. And, of course, the people in that countryside were very nice.  
15 They would – Sunday sometimes they'd bring an egg down for every patient on  
16 Sunday. And they wanted to visit all the time, and it got to be, uh, you know, all  
17 these people walking through the...  
18  
19 Interviewer: Yes.  
20  
21 Barbara: ...wards, you know, [it's distracting 21:29].  
22  
23 Interviewer: [21:29] Was this – Was this – Was the, uh, fighting still active at this time or w-,  
24 like was there a lull?  
25  
26 Barbara: Um, no, not a-, in our area.  
27  
28 Interviewer: Yes.  
29  
30 Barbara: It wasn't too active.  
31  
32 Interviewer: Yes.  
33  
34 Barbara: Uh, it was more or less station hospital.  
35  
36 Interviewer: Yes.  
37  
38 Barbara: And on a – They, uh, they were very nice to the nurses too. [21:44] They'd bring  
39 us pastries and things, and, uh, they were a treat, you know?  
40  
41 Interviewer: Yes.  
42  
43 Barbara: And you had C rations.  
44

1Interviewer: Yes.  
2  
3Barbara: From there we went to, uh...  
4  
5Interviewer: [21:53] Now you're still moving through France?  
6  
7Barbara: Went to France.  
8  
9Interviewer: Yes. [21:57] Did you get into Germany?  
10  
11Barbara: Yeah, we went to Germany.  
12  
13Interviewer: Yes.  
14  
15Barbara: [22:00] Where'd we go in though?  
16  
17Interviewer: Yes. [22:06] Your unit proceeded to go through France then [inaudible 22:11]?  
18  
19Barbara: Yes, we – we, uh, made several stops, and in fact, we spent, uh, part of a winter  
20 there, and that's the only time we were in a building. And this was a former, uh, I  
21 guess it was a French psychiatric hospital. And at that time, we did have a lot of  
22 casualties. But, um, it was interesting. It was very, uh, it w-, There was a lot of  
23 snow, and it stayed all winter, but in the spring, the sun came out, and that was it.  
24 Winter was over.  
25  
26Interviewer: [22:52] Do you recall where-, the name of the town?  
27  
28Barbara: It was near Strasbourg [inaudible 22:56].  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: And, uh, from there, we went to, um – We were situated near the, uh, line, and, of  
33 course, there was several ca-, heavy casualties there also. The fighting really  
34 became very, uh, uh, concentrated there, and I think, um. At that time, we were  
35 getting some German prisoners, Russians, and they were in such a pathetic  
36 physical condition. If you tried to give penicillin, there was nothing there but skin  
37 and bones, and none of them could speak a language, and none of the people in  
38 our outfit could. They were so emaciated that their eyes haunted you. But they  
39 didn't stay very long. They were evacuated to another area.  
40  
41Interviewer: Yes.  
42  
43Barbara: But that was one of one of the experiences that, uh...  
44

1Interviewer: Yes. That – That would be one of the sad experiences that you witnessed.  
2

3Barbara: Um...  
4

5Interviewer: [23:59] Did you – When you left Strasbourg then did you get into Germany  
6 because you said this was on the border of France and Germany?  
7

8Barbara: Yeah. We crossed the – We crossed the, uh, Rhine on a pontoon bridge.  
9

10Interviewer: Yes.  
11

12Barbara: And if you think that wasn't cute.  
13

14Interviewer: Yes.  
15

16Barbara: [laughter] It, uh...  
17

18Interviewer: [24:14] He – Well describe a pontoon bridge. I'm not sure exactly what that  
19 [inaudible 24:17].  
20

21Barbara: Well a pontoon bridge is something that's hooked together. I mean it – It sways  
22 as you go over it. Yes. And then Rhine was not a small river.  
23

24Interviewer: Yes.  
25

26Barbara: Of course, I didn't say that in route, all this – through all this area...  
27

28Interviewer: Yes.  
29

30Barbara: ...we didn't miss many points of interest. When we had free-time, we were out  
31 looking at cathedrals...  
32

33Interviewer: Yes.  
34

35Barbara: ...and lots of points of interest.  
36

37Interviewer: Yes.  
38

39Barbara: It was really very fascinating. And, of course, you could hitchhike. It was very  
40 safe. No nurse was ever in any problem.  
41

42Interviewer: Yeah.  
43

44Barbara: You could hitchhike with the GIs...

1  
2Interviewer: That's very interesting.  
3  
4Barbara: ...[inaudible 24:49].  
5  
6Interviewer: Yes.  
7  
8Barbara: And, in fact, I – We – The – One of the most, um, highlights of our trip or our  
9 experience there was an audience with the Pope.  
10  
11Interviewer: [25:04] And which Pope? Was that Pope, uh, Pius the XII?  
12  
13Barbara: Yes.  
14  
15Interviewer: Yes.  
16  
17Barbara: And...  
18  
19Interviewer: [25:09] Was that accidental or was that arranged for you?  
20  
21Barbara: Oh, no, that was arranged. He – He...  
22  
23Interviewer: [25:12] Through your chaplain?  
24  
25Barbara: Oh, yes. Everyone, uh – He had big audiences, and, um, he was so frail, but there  
26 was something about him that, uh, it was very impressive, but he – he didn't seem  
27 to be of this world. Maybe it was his frailty...  
28  
29Interviewer: Yes.  
30  
31Barbara: ...or his beautiful hands, which he used so nicely.  
32  
33Interviewer: Yes.  
34  
35Barbara: And, of course, I got to see the Sistine Chapel.  
36  
37Interviewer: Yes.  
38  
39Barbara: And the Pieta.  
40  
41Interviewer: Yes.  
42  
43Barbara: And a – the beautiful transfiguration of, uh...  
44

1Interviewer: Yes.  
2  
3Barbara: ...Raphael's. [25:44] You know,  
4  
5Interviewer: Yes.  
6  
7Barbara: ...the original.  
8  
9Interviewer: That – That was certainly a contrast to what you were – what the, uh, y-, the work  
10 you were engaged in.  
11  
12Barbara: Oh, yeah.  
13  
14Interviewer: You know, the beauty that was still...  
15  
16Barbara: Oh and the cathedrals in, uh, all the points of interest. In fact, I had a leave in  
17 Rome, and, um – [26:04] We did get leaves, you know?  
18  
19Interviewer: Yes.  
20  
21Barbara: And I went to, uh, Switzerland.  
22  
23Interviewer: Yes.  
24  
25Barbara: And I went to England.  
26  
27Interviewer: Yes.  
28  
29Barbara: So, uh, all in all, I, um, [inaudible 26:13].  
30  
31Interviewer: [26:13] So you saw Europe while you were...?  
32  
33Barbara: I saw 8 countries.  
34  
35Interviewer: Yes. Gee. [26:17] Well where did – To get back to your service. [26:19] And  
36 then where did you – Where did the group – Where was the group when the  
37 fighting ceased in the European theater?  
38  
39Barbara: Well, first of all, we crossed the Rhine, and then we were, um, we were situated  
40 at, um, Heidelberg.  
41  
42Interviewer: Yes.  
43  
44Barbara: The famous Heidelberg.



1  
2Interviewer: Yes.  
3  
4Barbara: That's were, um – I think the war ended when we were in Heidelberg. Yes.  
5  
6Interviewer: [26:47] When you were...  
7  
8Barbara: Yes.  
9  
10Interviewer: [26:47] When you were stationed in Heidelberg?  
11  
12Barbara: Yes. We were stationed in Heidelberg.  
13  
14Interviewer: Yes. This – This – Did – [26:28] When the war ended, well by the time that the  
15 war ended, of course your unit was involved in, certainly involved in a number of  
16 battle areas and probably received, uh, a s-, significant number of awards?  
17  
18Barbara: Yes. We had 7, uh, Battle Stars and we also received a Unit Citation from the, uh,  
19 French government.  
20  
21Interviewer: [27:24] Was that before you left the area, the Unit Citation from the French  
22 government or did that come sub-, subsequently?  
23  
24Barbara: We got it, eh – Yeah. We got it after we left France [**I think** 27:32]...  
25  
26Interviewer: I see after.  
27  
28Barbara: ...or either...  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: ...while we were there.  
33  
34Interviewer: Yes. [27:36] When the, uh, war ended, when the activity, when the battle activity  
35 ended in, uh, in, uh, Germany, did you – did your unit – how long did your unit  
36 continue to function as a – or did you – was it terminated shortly thereafter or?  
37  
38Barbara: Uh, because we had, uh, had so much combat, our – our – our enlisted men had a  
39 lot of points, and most of them went home almost immediately.  
40  
41Interviewer: Yes.  
42  
43Barbara: It was sort of sad...  
44

1Interviewer: Yes.  
2  
3Barbara: ...you know, parting.  
4  
5Interviewer: Yes.  
6  
7Barbara: Eh, every week...  
8  
9Interviewer: Yes.  
10  
11Barbara: ...someone left.  
12  
13Interviewer: More left.  
14  
15Barbara: And, of course, [inaudible 28:10] being a regular army hospital...  
16  
17Interviewer: Yes.  
18  
19Barbara: ...continued on to some other area...  
20  
21Interviewer: Yes.  
22  
23Barbara: ...and we were then assigned to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Station Hospital.  
24  
25Interviewer: [28:21] Yes?  
26  
27Barbara: And, um, of course, I was supposed to – my family tried to get me home on  
28 emergency leave months before that, but they – they wouldn't...  
29  
30Interviewer: [28:31] Why was that? What happened, Barbara?  
31  
32Barbara: Uh, because my father was ill, and uh, eh, they tried everything in the outfit to  
33 send me back on a flight, uh, oh the, uh, the planes that evacuated, uh, casualties,  
34 you know, to the States. And, I mean, we didn't have any success at all in that.  
35 And so, uh, of course, I came home then on emergency leave.  
36  
37Interviewer: [28:56] And when was that?  
38  
39Barbara: That was, um...  
40  
41Interviewer: [28:59] Or approximately when?  
42  
43Barbara: Right after the, uh, after the Armistice or whatever it was.  
44

1Interviewer: Yes.  
2  
3Barbara: And, of course, I, uh, I flew home then...  
4  
5Interviewer: Yes.  
6  
7Barbara: ...with my dog.  
8  
9Interviewer: [29:11] You still had your dog?  
10  
11Barbara: Yeah, I still had my dog [laughter].  
12  
13Interviewer: You still had your dog? [29:15] Then, uh, did you, uh, with the emergency leave,  
14 then how long did you remain on active service, uh?  
15  
16Barbara: I came home for a month and was discharged in the States.  
17  
18Interviewer: I see. [29:25] And that was, uh – What time of the year was that?  
19  
20Barbara: I think it was September.  
21  
22Interviewer: [29:30] September of 1945?  
23  
24Barbara: Yes.  
25  
26Interviewer: [29:32] So that your military service...  
27  
28Barbara: Yeah.  
29  
30Interviewer: ...terminated? Well you s-, You – You certainly were close to the fighting scene,  
31 probably, uh, more so than many of the nurses who, who served in the – in World  
32 War II.  
33  
34Barbara: Uh, yes, we were, and, uh, but we liked it. And there was a – There were times  
35 when they felt that, uh, we should go to the rear because it, um – Well they felt  
36 we needed to change, but none of us would, uh, part with the job. And, uh,  
37 sometimes the, um, nurses and, um, surgeons from the general hospital came to  
38 the front and helped, uh, and a – a lot of them wanted to stay, especially the  
39 nurses, but we wouldn't trade places with them.  
40  
41Interviewer: I see. [30:22] So – So really there was concern for you, but...  
42  
43Barbara: Yes.  
44

1Interviewer: ...y-, y-, th-, the group didn't want to – didn't want to [inaudible 30:30]?  
2  
3Barbara: Well it, uh, it was a rough life. It was, uh...  
4  
5Interviewer: Yes.  
6  
7Barbara: ...um...  
8  
9Interviewer: Well you [inaudible 30:35].  
10  
11Barbara: The work was hard, and the...  
12  
13Interviewer: Yes.  
14  
15Barbara: ...the winters were cold...  
16  
17Interviewer: Yes.  
18  
19Barbara: And our clothing, uh, wasn't adequate sometimes. We knew we...  
20  
21Interviewer: Yeah, talk – Let's talk a little bit about. [30:45] What did you wear while you  
22 were – while you were working.  
23  
24Barbara: Well we wore men's GI shoes.  
25  
26Interviewer: [30:49] Yes?  
27  
28Barbara: For one thing because we were in the mud and we wore...  
29  
30Interviewer: [30:52] Did you wear fatigues?  
31  
32Barbara: Yeah, we wore fatigues. W-...  
33  
34Interviewer: [30:55] Was that essentially your uniform, your – for duty?  
35  
36Barbara: Uh, we wore whatever was comfortable. Nobody cared too much what we wore.  
37 The fatigues were, um, were issued.  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes.  
40  
41Barbara: They were the, um, oh, 2-piece outfits.  
42  
43Interviewer: Yes.  
44

1Barbara: And, of course, in the summer, we wore those, um...  
2  
3Interviewer: [31:13] The seersuckers?  
4  
5Barbara: Seersuckers. Uh, they were very nice, uh...  
6  
7Interviewer: [31:17] The slacks? You wore the s-...  
8  
9Barbara: Going from tent to tent with the wind blowing [laughter].  
10  
11Interviewer: [31:21] Did you were the seersucker slacks or did you wear the seer-...?  
12  
13Barbara: We wore the slacks too.  
14  
15Interviewer: [31:24] The slacks?  
16  
17Barbara: And they were plenty baggy.  
18  
19Interviewer: Yeah.  
20  
21Barbara: None of the outfits were very...  
22  
23Interviewer: Yes.  
24  
25Barbara: ...flattering.  
26  
27Interviewer: Yes.  
28  
29Barbara: But we did – We did, uh – We didn't wear those clothes all the time.  
30  
31Interviewer: Yes.  
32  
33Barbara: We did have social events...  
34  
35Interviewer: Yes.  
36  
37Barbara: ...and we wore [inaudible 31:38].  
38  
39Interviewer: And you got dressed up, yes, and you wore your. [31:39] Well how much were  
40 you allowed to – How much baggage were you allowed to have, uh, for each  
41 nurse considering that you moved so often? So you probably were restricted?  
42 Did you have a...  
43  
44Barbara: There – There was no restriction. You had a bedroll.

1  
2Interviewer: Yes, right.  
3  
4Barbara: [Inaudible 31:54] in the bedroll.  
5  
6Interviewer: [31:56] Whatever you could put in a bedroll?  
7  
8Barbara: Yes.  
9  
10Interviewer: Yes.  
11  
12Barbara: And you usually had a suitcase, but mine was – After they threw it around for a  
13 while, it was – was no more.  
14  
15Interviewer: [32:03] It – It fell apart? Yeah. [laughter]  
16  
17Barbara: [laughter]  
18  
19Interviewer: You lost your suitcase. [32:08] Did... ...[32:09] of the officers about your,  
20 apparently your safety and whether or not they should continue to have nurses in  
21 the unit. [32:15] Were there – Were there any attempts to alter your assignments,  
22 say to protect you, you know, while you functioned as nurses, eh, or maybe have  
23 GIs assigned to certain – certain things?  
24  
25Barbara: Oh, no. Their – Their c-, Uh, their concern I think, it wasn't the, um – The  
26 officers weren't concerned. I think it was headquarters thought that perhaps the  
27 nurses on the front line should be relieved because of the stress, and, uh, and  
28 the...  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: ...work, uh, but other than that, uh...  
33  
34Interviewer: [32:46] But the difference in the sexes never...  
35  
36Barbara: Oh, no.  
37  
38Interviewer: ...never made any...  
39  
40Barbara: No.  
41  
42Interviewer: ...any, uh, ef-, or never had any effect on the nature of your assignment?  
43  
44Barbara: No. We would – Oh, no. That – That wasn't the problem at all.

1  
2Interviewer: Yes.  
3  
4Barbara: No.  
5  
6Interviewer: You – You – You talked about, uh, of course, uh, eh, living in – in pup tents.  
7 [33:05] Were – Did each nurse have a pup tent or how was – how was?  
8  
9Barbara: No. We only were – We were in pup tents at one time. Uh, and I think they were  
10 given to us by the engineers. [33:14] We went there with nothing, see? But we  
11 had to have some shelter.  
12  
13Interviewer: Yes.  
14  
15Barbara: So, uh, no. Otherwise we had what they call a wall tent, 2 nurses to a tent, and  
16 that's what we lived in most of the time, and of course...  
17  
18Interviewer: [33:26] Did you sleep on cots in those tents?  
19  
20Barbara: We had cots...  
21  
22Interviewer: Yes.  
23  
24Barbara: ...with, uh, bedrolls.  
25  
26Interviewer: Yes.  
27  
28Barbara: They weren't, uh – they weren't Beautyrest mattresses...  
29  
30Interviewer: No.  
31  
32Barbara: ...but we had no trouble sleeping I can assure you. [laughter]  
33  
34Interviewer: Yes, not with your long hours of duty.  
35  
36Barbara: The, um – of course in France, we – it was cold in the winter. Eh, the only one  
37 time we were in a building. The other time we was still in the outdoors. So we  
38 had a – a larger tents, and I think there were 6 maybe, sometimes 8 nurses in a  
39 tent with a potbellied stove. Well most of the nurses didn't know how to build a  
40 fire. They'd throw kerosene in it and then the lids would fly off [laughter] and  
41 you'd hear the – the popping.  
42  
43Interviewer: Yes.  
44

1Barbara: Uh, I didn't have any trouble. Coming from a farm, I knew how to build a fire.  
2 But, um, it was interesting, uh. And, of course, we, uh – in parts of France, after  
3 the winter, everything gets inundated, and it's like a big lake, and a couple times  
4 we just got out in time. Yes, the water was in the tent.  
5  
6Interviewer: [34:37] Is that because the terrain is flat?  
7  
8Barbara: Yeah. It was something due – I guess it happens every winter.  
9  
10Interviewer: Yes.  
11  
12Barbara: The [lower it 34:43] is they become lakes, and then when, uh, s-, spring comes  
13 along, they, uh...  
14  
15Interviewer: [34:47] Then the water recedes?  
16  
17Barbara: But we were in a couple areas we just made it out in time.  
18  
19Interviewer: In time. That's – eh, eh, you – You – You made reference to – to what I think  
20 were a number of memorable experiences. [34:59] Were there others that you'd  
21 like to bring to our, uh, attention? You talked about seeing, uh, did you s-, did  
22 you, eh, um, s-, s-, I think you earlier or – or at least privately you mentioned  
23 seeing Mount – was that Mount Vesuvius in action or?  
24  
25Barbara: Oh, yes, we, um, we saw Mount Vesuvius. In fact, I was on a leave at, um,  
26 Sorrento. I think it was Sorrento. We were supposed to, uh, to cross the, um, the  
27 Bay of Naples to see that – oh, that famous resort there, and we were under the,  
28 uh, Vesuvius, and it was a very, um...  
29  
30Interviewer: When...  
31  
32Barbara: ...touchy situation.  
33  
34Interviewer: [35:49] When it was active?  
35  
36Barbara: Yeah, when it was active. And the ash on the street was 4-inches tall, 4-inches  
37 high, and, of course, the, uh, volcanoes do explode you know?  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes.  
40  
41Barbara: And we were practically under it, so it was, uh, it spoiled our leave.  
42  
43Interviewer: Yes.  
44



1 Barbara: We didn't get to go anywhere.  
2  
3 Interviewer: Yes. [36:07] Were there – Are there any other, uh, experiences that you – that  
4 you can think?  
5  
6 Barbara: Oh, I was in an earthquake too!  
7  
8 Interviewer: [36:13] Where was that?  
9  
10 Barbara: In, uh, Italy.  
11  
12 Interviewer: A-...  
13  
14 Barbara: Before su-, Vesuvius erupted.  
15  
16 Interviewer: [36:18] Oh, there was an earthquake...  
17  
18 Barbara: Yes, there was an earthquake.  
19  
20 Interviewer: ...that preceded the, uh, the m-, the Mount Vesuvius eruption. Eh – did you  
21 witness any, um, damage from the earthquake or?  
22  
23 Barbara: No, it, uh, everything moved, that's all.  
24  
25 Interviewer: [36:33] You felt the sensation?  
26  
27 Barbara: Yeah. The – [36:34] Your chair rocked, see?  
28  
29 Interviewer: Yes.  
30  
31 Barbara: And it was over in a second [inaudible 36:38].  
32  
33 Interviewer: [36:38] Were you aware that it was an earthquake or did a-?  
34  
35 Barbara: Well, yes. We had...  
36  
37 Interviewer: Yes.  
38  
39 Barbara: Of course. [36:41] What else would it be?  
40  
41 Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
42  
43 Barbara: Uh, and the, of course, in, uh, Naples, the people were frightened...  
44

1Interviewer: Yes.  
2  
3Barbara: ...but they were closer to...  
4  
5Interviewer: Yes.  
6  
7Barbara: ...Vesuvius.  
8  
9Interviewer: Yes.  
10  
11Barbara: And, uh – While we were stationed there, we were also able to, uh, we went to a  
12 couple operas in, uh, Naples.  
13  
14Interviewer: That was interesting.  
15  
16Barbara: Yeah.  
17  
18Interviewer: Yes. [37:04] Did you have any p-, interesting personal experience? Now you  
19 mentioned, of course, some of your traveling and having access...  
20  
21Barbara: I didn't find a husband, I can tell you that. [laughter]  
22  
23Interviewer: [laughter] [37:15] That didn't develop?  
24  
25Barbara: No, that didn't develop.  
26  
27Interviewer: [337:17] That didn't develop with all – with all your exposure? Um, but did you  
28 – did you have any other experiences that you?  
29  
30Barbara: Yeah, we all had amebic dysentery. That was...  
31  
32Interviewer: Oh.  
33  
34Barbara: ...part of the experience.  
35  
36Interviewer: That was quite – Well you mentioned being seasick and amebic dysentery...  
37  
38Barbara: Yeah.  
39  
40Interviewer: ...and, of course, a lot of exposure to malaria and, uh. [37:34] But, uh,  
41 mentioning your health were – did you – were you relatively well throughout your  
42 experience?  
43

1Barbara: Yes, surprisingly, we were well. Uh, oh, we got colds and things, but, uh, and we  
2 had physicals.  
3  
4Interviewer: Yes. [37:47] But you didn't develop...  
5  
6Barbara: [Inaudible 37:47].  
7  
8Interviewer: ...any s-, any, uh, serious illnesses or that would have...  
9  
10Barbara: No.  
11  
12Interviewer: ...that would have put you on sick leave?  
13  
14Barbara: No. Uh, most of us were pr-pr-pr – quite healthy.  
15  
16Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
17  
18Barbara: I guess living outdoors helped.  
19  
20Interviewer: Yes. [37:59] Did – did you lose any of your nurses, you know, within the unit,  
21 uh, to, uh?  
22  
23Barbara: Not there, no.  
24  
25Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
26  
27Barbara: No.  
28  
29Interviewer: So. Well – and we talked about your – the housing and, of course, the medical  
30 care and your – your dress, and, uh, now y-, uh, in retrospect – [38:21] Well, eh,  
31 let me, uh, what your – your experience in the service versus what followed, how  
32 – how did – did that influence you in your choice of, uh, uh, work after you  
33 returned home and was and, uh, were discharged from the service?  
34  
35Barbara: Yes, I – I decided to, um, to go to veterans.  
36  
37Interviewer: Yes.  
38  
39Barbara: To work in the veterans hospital.  
40  
41Interviewer: [38:45] Because of your association...  
42  
43Barbara: Yes, I think so.  
44

1 Interviewer: ...with the military...  
2  
3 Barbara: Yeah.  
4  
5 Interviewer: ...you wanted to continue?  
6  
7 Barbara: Yeah.  
8  
9 Interviewer: [38:51] And, uh, did – did, uh, eh, did that have any direct bearing on the kind of  
10 assignment you received. You work – you worked for a – a veterans  
11 administration hospital? Was this a – did you went – did you go to work for a  
12 veterans administration hospital?  
13  
14 Barbara: Yes.  
15  
16 Interviewer: [39:07] A general hospital?  
17  
18 Barbara: Yeah.  
19  
20 Interviewer: [39:09] Did you have any choice of assignment or did?  
21  
22 Barbara: Oh, no, you didn't have any choice.  
23  
24 Interviewer: You just – yes. You – you – did you...  
25  
26 Barbara: [Inaudible 39:14].  
27  
28 Interviewer: [39:15] Did you retur-, did you – now you mentioned that in the service you were  
29 head nurse of a ward. Now what happened when you came to the Veterans  
30 Administration Hospital?  
31  
32 Barbara: I was a staff nurse.  
33  
34 Interviewer: [39:24] You were a staff nurse?  
35  
36 Barbara: Yeah.  
37  
38 Interviewer: Yes.  
39  
40 Barbara: Yeah.  
41  
42 Interviewer: [tsk] [39:27] What – What was your rank in the service? What rank did you  
43 achieve?  
44

1Barbara: [They called me 39:30], uh, first lieutenant.  
2  
3Interviewer: [39:34] First lieuten-, You left the service as a first lieutenant?  
4  
5Barbara: As a first lieutenant. Yeah.  
6  
7Interviewer: [39:37] Did your – did you consider joining the Reserves?  
8  
9Barbara: No, I wasn't interested in the Reserves at all.  
10  
11Interviewer: I see. [39:43] Because you mentioned being interested in working with the – with  
12 the, uh, veterans, and, uh, but you...  
13  
14Barbara: Yeah, but the – I had enough of the war. [laughter]  
15  
16Interviewer: I see. [39:51] You didn't want any further...  
17  
18Barbara: No.  
19  
20Interviewer: ...further military act-, type activity? [39:57] D-, um, did you, um – did you think  
21 that – eh, and again we're talking about, you know, prior experience versus  
22 military. When you went into the war, did you think that your experience helped  
23 you prior to going into the service? Were y-, were you, um?  
24  
25Barbara: Well I guess I did. You know, I had a good many years of nursing experience.  
26  
27Interviewer: I see. [40:25] Before...  
28  
29Barbara: I hope it helped.  
30  
31Interviewer: Yes.  
32  
33Barbara: I hope helped.  
34  
35Interviewer: Oh, yes, actual-, Yes. [40:28] So you – you were an – you had...  
36  
37Barbara: And, of course, you learned on the job.  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes. Well, yes, the different aspects that they...  
40  
41Barbara: The different aspects [inaudible 40:34]. Yeah.  
42

1 Interviewer: Yeah, the different aspects you learn. [40:36] But in terms of your nursing  
2 service, the – the, uh, you felt that you were a very well prepared for what you  
3 were called upon to do in as a, um, Army Nurse?  
4

5 Barbara: I think so.  
6

7 Interviewer: Yes. [40:51] When you, um – eh, eh, did you – When you – When you went into  
8 the service, did you have any conflict being a woman and being a part of this  
9 scene which was generally male, you know overall male? Did you – Did you  
10 feel?  
11

12 Barbara: I don't -, no, none at all. But I think it's because I was a nurse.  
13

14 Interviewer: Yes. I think that's true. I think nurses – Yes.  
15

16 Barbara: I was no threat to anybody [inaudible 41:16].  
17

18 Interviewer: [41:17] [Or 41:17] even to yourself?  
19

20 Barbara: [Inaudible 41:18].  
21

22 Interviewer: Yeah. You – [41:18] 'cause you had already been taking care of patients...  
23

24 Barbara: Yeah, [right 41:20].  
25

26 Interviewer: ...in the past, and you had – had that kind of exposure, so some of that wasn't, uh,  
27 um, wasn't necessarily a change, just obviously the – the situation was more  
28 threatening?  
29

30 Barbara: I don't think anyone would have thought of that [inaudible 41:33].  
31

32 Interviewer: Yes. [41:36] When you came home, did you, uh, use your G-, did you use the,  
33 um, the benefits from the G-, available through the GI bill?  
34

35 Barbara: Yes, I – I went to college and, uh, earned my, uh, Bachelor of Science in Nursing.  
36

37 Interviewer: [41:50] A-, And, uh, eh, did you use any other aspects of your – the GI bill for  
38 housing or?  
39

40 Barbara: No.  
41

42 Interviewer: [41:57] No?  
43

44 Barbara: No.

1  
2Interviewer: [41:57] It was just – just the educa-? Did you use up all your educational  
3 benefits?  
4  
5Barbara: I didn't use of all of them [inaudible 42:01]...  
6  
7Interviewer: I see. [42:02] But you – you got...  
8  
9Barbara: I have a [inaudible 42:02]. [laughter]  
10  
11Interviewer: [42:03] You got your degree and you – and you – you, uh. [42:07] When you –  
12 when you think back now about your military service or even earlier, had you  
13 ever, uh, considered what – what required the most adjustment, you know? Uh,  
14 of course, obviously you were in a very stressful, um, situation, a considerable  
15 portion of your military experience, you know, with the, eh, being so close to the  
16 battle areas and so forth.  
17  
18Barbara: I don't think we felt that.  
19  
20Interviewer: I see. N-  
21  
22Barbara: No. It – I'll tell you, it was, uh...  
23  
24Interviewer: [42:38] Do you think you felt it or just never gave it any thought?  
25  
26Barbara: No, it was, uh – I tell you we had a close-knit group. We were there to do a job,  
27 and the GIs were so wonderful.  
28  
29Interviewer: Yes.  
30  
31Barbara: You couldn't a-, You didn't, uh – it was a labor of love, really it was.  
32  
33Interviewer: Yes. Yes.  
34  
35Barbara: Because they were so nice. [42:54] And, of course, they loved the nurses, you  
36 know?  
37  
38Interviewer: Yes.  
39  
40Barbara: After all, we were women.  
41  
42Interviewer: Yes.  
43  
44Barbara: They didn't see many women. [laughter].

1  
2Interviewer: [43:00] Did – did you – did you at all ever consider like the, um, the restriction,  
3 the regulations or dress or a-?  
4  
5Barbara: No. Uh, I'll tell you, in the field you didn't have that.  
6  
7Interviewer: Yeah.  
8  
9Barbara: We – We lived very freely. We didn't even salute. [43:14] And if you went to  
10 [town, these whacks 43:15], they gave you those sharp salutes, you know?  
11  
12Interviewer: Yes.  
13  
14Barbara: And you really [inaudible 43:19]. [laughter] [You're not] [inaudible 43:21].  
15  
16Interviewer: Uh, yes. Well you mentioned, uh, earlier that – n-. [43:26] You didn't mention  
17 this in – in – in the part that was recorded, but you made some reference when we  
18 were talking before the, uh, recording session, uh, one of the nurses did some  
19 writing to the chief nurse?  
20  
21Barbara: Yes.  
22  
23Interviewer: [43:39] What was that about?  
24  
25Barbara: She, uh – well different things that we needed, and I think some of the things were  
26 toilet articles, and, uh, even our clothing, um, and I think maybe that's when we  
27 got the bedrolls. [We were cold 43:53]. She knew Colonel Blanchfield 43:55],  
28 and she...  
29  
30Interviewer: Yes.  
31  
32Barbara: ...wrote to her. And, of course, she was a very anxious to, uh...  
33  
34Interviewer: [44:00] To accommodate?  
35  
36Barbara: ...to help the nurses, yeah.  
37  
38Interviewer: Yeah. So y-...  
39  
40Barbara: And it the congresswoman from Ohio. [44:04] What was her name?  
41  
42Interviewer: I don't recall.  
43  
44Barbara: She had been a nurse [inaudible 44:07]. She was very interested in the nurses.



1  
2Interviewer: Yes.  
3  
4Barbara: In fact, I think the visited the, uh, area.  
5  
6Interviewer: Yes. [44:13] Well you were saying that you – you – you felt like you needed  
7 some supplies that were not, that you were not receiving, but you – but you felt  
8 that you could've...  
9  
10Barbara: Yeah.  
11  
12Interviewer: ...you could use, and then subsequently, eh, it did come about after this contact  
13 with the Chie-, with the, uh, Chief Nurse...  
14  
15Barbara: Yeah.  
16  
17Interviewer: ...of the Army Nurse Corps.  
18  
19Barbara: Well we were mostly not – [44:34] Our, um, our jackets and things, they were GI  
20 issued, you know?  
21  
22Interviewer: Yes. Yes. [44:39] Well did – did the nurses make an attempt to get these items  
23 first through the, uh, through your, um, director of the hospital or?  
24  
25Barbara: No, I think she [worked 44:49] directly [inaudible 44:49]. Yeah.  
26  
27Interviewer: To the – I see. I see. [44:51] So you really – you did try to get it through the...  
28  
29Barbara: Oh, yeah.  
30  
31Interviewer: ...through the unit here, so? [44:56] Was there any part of the, um, of your  
32 experience that you – that you really had the most dislike for or a regulation that,  
33 as you said, though, you – you really weren't held too much to regulations, was  
34 there any-, anything in your experience that you?  
35  
36Barbara: Not necessarily. There were some [inaudible 45:19] some conflict there is in  
37 every outfit.  
38  
39Interviewer: Yes. [45:24] Oh, you mean just...  
40  
41Barbara: Yeah, nothing else.  
42  
43Interviewer: ...between people? You mean s-,  
44

1Barbara: [Inaudible 45:26].  
2  
3Interviewer: Yeah, some interaction conflicts?  
4  
5Barbara: Yeah.  
6  
7Interviewer: Yes. [45:48] But not in terms of, uh, the structure or the nature of the set up or  
8 something of that sort?  
9  
10Barbara: Not really. Uh, I think we ironed out a lot of things as we went along.  
11  
12Interviewer: Yes. [45:43] Well, I'm – I'm sure you learned?  
13  
14Barbara: Yeah.  
15  
16Interviewer: You learn from past...  
17  
18Barbara: Yeah.  
19  
20Interviewer: ...experience, and so you were probably able to avoid certain things or to.  
21 [45:53] Well after you came home from the service, then you mentioned you went  
22 to work for the Veterans Administration Hospital, and, uh, are you still working?  
23  
24Barbara: No, I'm retired.  
25  
26Interviewer: [46:03] And – And when – you retired in the a-, a-, and how long have you been  
27 retired?  
28  
29Barbara: I've been retired a long time. I retired when I was age 60. [laughter]  
30  
31Interviewer: Oh, so – oh, so you – [46:15] so you're enjoying retirement?  
32  
33Barbara: Very much so.  
34  
35Interviewer: Yes. [46:18] [They 46:18] want to, um, since – since we're doing this tape as a  
36 part of the Pittsburgh Unit Women's Overseas service, like when did you join the  
37 Women's Overseas service League in this area?  
38  
39Barbara: I don't remember off hand.  
40  
41Interviewer: [46:33] Did you join do you think right after the service?  
42  
43Barbara: Oh, no. No.  
44

1Interviewer: Oh, you – you – uh-huh.  
2  
3Barbara: No, I was pressured into it by [Member Dunmore 46:38]. [laughter]  
4  
5Interviewer: [laughter]  
6  
7Barbara: I'm not a joiner.  
8  
9Interviewer: [46:43] You're not a joiner?  
10  
11Barbara: No. [chuckle]  
12  
13Interviewer: But – and, uh, and, uh, have you, eh, h-, and I know you have been involved in  
14 many activities with the unit, uh, I – particularly at the bazaars, of course, you're  
15 flower lady.  
16  
17Barbara: Yeah.  
18  
19Interviewer: [46:57] Do you want to, uh, make some reference to that?  
20  
21Barbara: Well, of course, I'm a gardener. That's my hobby. I'm an organic gardener. And,  
22 of course, flowers are part of that.  
23  
24Interviewer: Yes.  
25  
26Barbara: So usually these flowers are something that I can't bring into the house. You can  
27 only bring...  
28  
29Interviewer: Yes.  
30  
31Barbara: ...so many in.  
32  
33Interviewer: Yes.  
34  
35Barbara: So the bazaar gets 'em, so really it's, uh...  
36  
37Interviewer: Yes. And you certainly...  
38  
39Barbara: It's no big deal.  
40  
41Interviewer: You certainly supply us with a – with a large number of flowers and plants for the  
42 bazaar, and it's truly – everybody looks forward to that, and you know they – they  
43 usually – they – they disappear quickly.  
44

1Barbara: Oh, [thank you 47:30] [chuckle].  
2  
3Interviewer: So, yeah, everyone – everyone is anxious to – to get their flowers. I think they  
4 sort of wait for that time of the year. So. [47:38] Were you – did the – eh, the  
5 Women's Overseas service League, have you served – have you been an officer  
6 of the unit?  
7  
8Barbara: No.  
9  
10Interviewer: [47:44] You have not?  
11  
12Barbara: No.  
13  
14Interviewer: [47:45] You haven't moved in any of those roles?  
15  
16Barbara: No.  
17  
18Interviewer: [47:47] You were – you were involved very actively with the, uh, with the, uh,  
19 sewing of those, um, well with the crafts. You – you – I – I know you and your  
20 sister...  
21  
22Barbara: Oh, yeah.  
23  
24Interviewer: ...supplied a large number of crafts, also for the bazaar. [48:00] And were you  
25 involved with the making of the Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls?  
26  
27Barbara: Well I helped with those.  
28  
29Interviewer: Yes.  
30  
31Barbara: We made the crazy cushions.  
32  
33Interviewer: Yes.  
34  
35Barbara: And, of course, my sister and I once we had this project for the people in  
36 Appalachia and the Indians, and my sister and I made a lot of, um, um, [comfort  
37 48:21].  
38  
39Interviewer: [48:23] You mean, uh, this was a project by the unit?  
40  
41Barbara: Oh, yes. My sister and I did the...  
42  
43Interviewer: Yes.  
44

1 Barbara: And, of course, the unit also, uh, donated clothing, a lot of clothing, which..  
2

3 Interviewer: Yes, well that's...  
4

5 Barbara: ..I was responsible of shipping [inaudible 48:34].  
6

7 Interviewer: Oh, that's right. Yes.  
8

9 Barbara: Yeah.  
10

11 Interviewer: You were the person involved. That was when we were sponsoring the children  
12 through the, um – I can't recall the name of the group. [48:43] The – the Save a  
13 Child Federation?  
14

15 Barbara: No, that – this was a different, uh, uh, thing.  
16

17 Interviewer: Oh.  
18

19 Barbara: This was, uh, clothing for the Indians and the people...  
20

21 Interviewer: Yes.  
22

23 Barbara: ...in Appalachia.  
24

25 Interviewer: Yes. And a-...  
26

27 Barbara: And we still [inaudible 48:55] sending seeds there.  
28

29 Interviewer: Yes, right, yeah, but I, eh, eh, our activity otherwise has sort of ceased in that  
30 area...  
31

32 Barbara: Yeah.  
33

34 Interviewer: ...since they seemed to have – yeah, that's right. This is – For a good a many  
35 years, yeah, you were involved in collecting all these clothes and – and making,  
36 uh, certain that they get shipped Appalachia so. [49:11] Well is there anything  
37 else you want to comment on that we may have overlooked before we...?  
38

39 Barbara: No, there's nothing I – it's all – it – all this happened so long ago, I, uh...  
40 [laughter]  
41

42 Interviewer: I think you did very well though. You remembered the names of some of the  
43 names of towns and things, which in r-, and it's true. It's a long time, and, uh, but  
44 I think you did very well in describing...

1  
2Barbara: [Inaudible 49:32].  
3  
4Interviewer: ...some of your experiences.  
5  
6Barbara: And, of course, I brought my dog home, and he lived here. Uh, I think he was 8  
7 years old when he died.  
8  
9Interviewer: Yes. [49:40] Well you received considerable publicity after you came home?  
10 You showed me some newspaper clippings.  
11  
12Barbara: Really, uh, they were – the ANA was setting up a, um, a – some kind of a  
13 placement bureau to place nurses who were coming out of service, so the – they  
14 wanted me to provide the publicity, and, of course, the dog was an added  
15 attraction.  
16  
17Interviewer: See.  
18  
19Barbara: So I, uh, I went down to the w-, I didn't want to do it, but Sister [Laurentine  
20 50:11] said oh, well now you have to do that...  
21  
22Interviewer: Yeah.  
23  
24Barbara: ...for the nurses.  
25  
26Interviewer: Sister [Laurentine 50:14] was with St. Francis General Hospital.  
27  
28Barbara: Yes. Um, and, um, so I – Anyway we went down to the William Penn and, uh,  
29 we went to the 17<sup>th</sup> floor, and, of course, the h-...  
30  
31Interviewer: [50:27] Photographer?  
32  
33Barbara: Photographers took, uh, our pictures and, uh...  
34  
35Interviewer: [50:32] And there were large write ups in both – in...  
36  
37Barbara: Yeah, there were a lot of write ups in both the papers. And the interesting thing  
38 was, I, uh, they didn't want to let me in the elevator. You can't take a dog in here.  
39 I said well I got up here, how am I'm gonna get down? [laughter]  
40  
41Interviewer: [laughter] [50:48] So did – so – so you had a – then you served, you know, that  
42 you helped to promote this, uh...  
43  
44Barbara: Yeah, the, uh...

1  
2Interviewer: ...this activ-...  
3  
4Barbara: ...the placement service [inaudible 50:56].  
5  
6Interviewer: Yeah, the placement service. That's real – that's really great. [50:58] Were the –  
7 were you involved in any other publicity?  
8  
9Barbara: Yeah, there was one article, um, that was, um – A reporter from the *Washington*  
10 *Post*, uh, interviewed me in, um, Africa – no, I think it was France. My dog and I.  
11 And it was a write up in the *Washington Post*, and I don't know how I heard about  
12 it, but I wrote and the editor sent me a photostatic copy...  
13  
14Interviewer: Oh.  
15  
16Barbara: ...which I thought was very nice.  
17  
18Interviewer: Oh, very good. [51:23] Was – was that because of this dog? Was there this  
19 interest...  
20  
21Barbara: The dog [inaudible 51:27].  
22  
23Interviewer: ...of, yes, the dog interest. That was really – that was really – well that was  
24 unique. That was unique. So. Well thank you very much, Barbara.  
25  
26Barbara: [Inaudible 51:35].  
27  
28Interviewer: And I appreciate you...  
29  
30Barbara: Thank you.  
31  
32Interviewer: ...you participating in this, uh, oral history.  
33  
34Barbara: [Inaudible 51:43]...  
35  
36  
37/lo