

Interview of Patricia Young Berri on her service in the American Red Cross during WWII

Interviewer: What is your name?

Patricia Young Berri: Patricia Young Berri.

Interviewer: When did you join the Denver unit of WOSL?

Patricia Young Berri: In the fall of nineteen hundred forty eight, I think, or it could be nineteen forty nine.

Interviewer: Were you were in the service?

Patricia Young Berri: I was in an American Red Cross Hospital branch.
And. As a replacement late in the war.

Interviewer: About what time did you come in the service?

Patricia Young Berri: February nineteen forty four.

Interviewer: Before you came into the Red Cross, uh, what did you do?

Patricia Young Berri: I was a secretary for Shell. And, was doing, um, USO work for the British because I had a British [...] come for me. Tankers came in to Houston; I was living in Houston Texas. And tankers would come for oil and the boys would have a night at the British USO and leave the next day.

Interviewer: What were your duties in the service?

Patricia Young Berri: My title was secretary and a unit of the Red Cross 117 station hospital, Leyte, Philippine Islands. And, I had turns going on the wards as the recreation and social workers also did. And also sitting in the recreation room. Just like the other people so it was quite a change from secretarial work in an office.

Interviewer: How long were you in the Red Cross?

Patricia Young Berri: Until March nineteen forty five.

Interviewer: While you were in the Red Cross, where did you serve?

Patricia Young Berri: I was first assigned to the one seventeen station Hospital in Leyte. And then I was assigned to go in a field hospital unit to Japan, but after the atomic bomb there was no need for hospitals as it would have been in case of invasion of Japan. So I was a floater until I was sent to [Powawan]. Where there was no one in Red Cross and a very small Navy unit.

And I stayed there until there was a chance to be in line to go home. And then I went to [Samar] to wait for transportation back to the United States.

Interviewer: Oh, while you were in the Red Cross, what kind of medical care was available to you?

Patricia Young Berri: The hospital staff could handle anything, mostly fungus.

Interviewer: Uh, tell me but the uniforms that you wore?

Patricia Young Berri: All of the Red Cross gear was unnecessary. We had purchased suntans, boots [...] And, suntan shirts. That was it, it was hot.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a funny, or a sad, or a touching, or any special experience that was really very, you know, memorable to you?

Patricia Young Berri: Well, let's see. My first experience was leaving Washington after being in West Virginia briefly while waiting for assignment. The transcontinental trip on a train to San Francisco. And to pick who cut cards. The highest card could go into San Francisco that night and I cut two clubs right off. So, I've never been to San Francisco.

Then when we arrived in Leyte. On the [...] which was a large transport at that time it was the first time the [...] was to go into Manila and without escort. Mine was one of three footlockers lost out of the whole ship load.

I felt very persecuted. Then, I had to leave everything else I owned on the airfield because there was no way to get it to Leyte. Again I fell to the bottom of the heap.

I have a very good friend who now lives in Texas and I have been able to see her all through the years. She was at the Red Cross and left before I did and of course found a replacement. She is still a vivid person and I wish she were living here and could be a member of the unit here.

Interviewer: What was the biggest adjustment that you had to make when you came into the Red Cross?

Patricia Young Berri: The latrine! I didn't mind the cold shower; I didn't mind the tent life. I did mind sitting on the latrine with the little Filipinos would come and go with a great disregard of sex.