

**Interview of Theodora C. Smolinski
on her service in the U.S. Army during WWII**

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5 Amelia Bunder: This is Amelia Bunder, oral history chairperson for the Pittsburgh unit,
6 Women's Overseas Service League. Today, I am interviewing Theodora
7 Smolinski, a member of the Pittsburgh unit for a great many years.
8 [0:20] Theodora, what, what did you think when I selected you to be one
9 of the participants for oral histories?
10
11 Theodora Smolinski: Well, it's kind of interesting. I don't think about the army except
12 somebody calls it m-, to my attention. I – uh, it's just part of my past, I
13 guess.
14
15 Amelia Bunder: Okay. Well, let's start with the questions. [0:39] Now, what branch of
16 service did you serve?
17
18 Theodora Smolinski: I was with the Women's Army Auxiliary Core for about 10 months and
19 then I joined the Women's Army Core and was a member for th-, 26
20 months. Three years altogether.
21
22 Amelia Bunder: Oh. [0:56] Well, th-, you had an extended tour of duty.
23
24 Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
25
26 Amelia Bunder: [0:59] Uh, and, uh, w-, where did you serve? Where did you...?
27
28 Theodora Smolinski: Daytona Beach, Florida; Maxwell Field, Alabama; Tidworth, England;
29 Salisbury, England; and Paris, France.
30
31 Amelia Bunder: [1:13] How long was your – well, where did you have basic training?
32 Where did you s-...
33
34 Theodora Smolinski: Daytona Beach.
35
36 Amelia Bunder: Oh. That was your, that was your area of basic training. And, uh, now
37 you mentioned your overseas assignment. [1:23] How long were you,
38 uh, s-, stationed overseas?
39
40 Theodora Smolinski: About 18 months.
41
42 Amelia Bunder: [inaudible 1:28] You did have an interesting experience. [1:31] What,
43 uh, what influenced you to volunteer for the military service?
44

1Theodora Smolinski: Well, I always felt that I as a, as an ex-Canadian needed to help America
2 win the war! And I also – there was also a big push to, to keep a father
3 at home and, uh, by the time I joined, the p-, one person I knew who was
4 a father was already in the Service, so I didn't help him.
5

6Amelia Bunder: [2:01] Well, when you say, uh, ex-Canadian, what do you mean by that?
7 Uh.
8

9Theodora Smolinski: I was born in Canada.
10

11Amelia Bunder: I see. [2:07] And then when did you come to the United States?
12

13Theodora Smolinski: When I was about 3 in...
14

15Amelia Bunder: Oh.
16

17Theodora Smolinski: ...1922.
18

19Amelia Bunder: I see. [2:14] So you considered yourself, uh, an American.
20

21Theodora Smolinski: Definitely.
22

23Amelia Bunder: Yes. [2:19] And, um, tsk, were, were you, um, uh, were you the only
24 member of the family to be involved in military service?
25

26Theodora Smolinski: My brother was in the Merchant Marine and my sister was an army wife.
27

28Amelia Bunder: Y-, oh. Well, so you had [laughter], you had more support in...
29

30Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
31

32Amelia Bunder: ...the family.
33

34Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
35

36Amelia Bunder: Uh. [2:40] Uh, what were you doing prior to your enlistment? And, and
37 let us know when you actually did enlist. What was the date of your
38 enlistment?
39

40Theodora Smolinski: Uh, Septem-, um, tsk, I was a stenographer and switchboard operator.
41

42Amelia Bunder: [2:52] And where was that at?
43

44Theodora Smolinski: Uh, Pittsburgh, uh, er, for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company.

1
2 Amelia Bunder: Oh. Uh-huh.
3
4 Theodora Smolinski: And I, uh, joined in like October 21st, 1942.
5
6 Amelia Bunder: [3:15] D-, uh, uh, when you, uh, well, uh, now you, your, you –
7 apparently your reason for joining the Service s-, seemed to be, uh,
8 principally patriotic.
9
10 Theodora Smolinski: Patriotic.
11
12 Amelia Bunder: Yes. [3:26] Did you expect, you know, your military service to, to offer
13 you a t-, uh, to, to achieve any other purpose or was...?
14
15 Theodora Smolinski: No.
16
17 Amelia Bunder: [3:35] You hadn't g-, really given that a thought...
18
19 Theodora Smolinski: No.
20
21 Amelia Bunder: ...at the time, did you? [3:39] Would you say that it did, now in
22 retrospect.
23
24 Theodora Smolinski: Well [sighing], um, I don't think it did except that, uh, the G.I. – under
25 the G.I. Bill, I went to school to become an occupational therapist and,
26 uh, I guess that's influence of the Army. [laughter]
27
28 Amelia Bunder: Yes. And that, and that...
29
30 Theodora Smolinski: I s-...
31
32 Amelia Bunder: ...is a very critical one.
33
34 Theodora Smolinski: ...I saw occupational therapy at work in the Army hospitals and so I, uh
35 – where I did volunteer work in Paris, and I knew that, uh, uh, oh,
36 activity could keep...
37
38 Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
39
40 Theodora Smolinski: ...help people a lot.
41
42 Amelia Bunder: [4:18] Well you, you said volunteer work. You mean in addition to your
43 military experience you were a...
44

1Theodora Smolinski: We were...
2
3Amelia Bunder: ... d-, working as a volunteer?
4
5Theodora Smolinski: ...we worked six days a week. No, seven days a week, six hours a day
6 on the switchboard in Paris, and that gave you 18 hours a day to fill with
7 something and I didn't drink, so I had to find [laughter] something to do.
8 So, I went into the Red Cross and volunteered.
9
10Amelia Bunder: [4:46] And, and what was the nature of that activity?
11
12Theodora Smolinski: Well, at first, I was to write letters – help G.I.s who couldn't write
13 letters...
14
15Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
16
17Theodora Smolinski: ...to their wives, and I got to the place where I could not look at the men
18 and say, 'Oh, your husband is fine!' [laughter]
19
20Amelia Bunder: Oh [inaudible 5:03].
21
22Theodora Smolinski: I – so then I went back to the Red Cross and I asked for a different
23 assignment and they, uh, assigned me to an arts and crafts area, which I
24 knew about.
25
26Amelia Bunder: Yes. [5:13] And that s-, subsequently led...
27
28Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
29
30Amelia Bunder: ...to your choice of, uh, occupational...
31
32Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
33
34Amelia Bunder: ...therapy as your professional role in the future.
35
36Theodora Smolinski: Yes.
37
38Amelia Bunder: That's very interesting, Theodora. That really is unusual. Here you
39 were, uh, really involved in two, you know, two...
40
41Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
42
43Amelia Bunder: ...great aspects. That's, um. [5:30] When – uh, now you mentioned that
44 the nature – you were a, um, an operator. A telephone, ...

1
2Theodora Smolinski: Telephone operator.
3
4Amelia Bunder: ...telephone. [5:38] Was that essentially the nature of your work
5 throughout your military experience both state, uh, stateside and
6 overseas?
7
8Theodora Smolinski: No, oversea – before – um, stateside, I was a secretary or a company
9 clerk or something like that.
10
11Amelia Bunder: Yes.
12
13Theodora Smolinski: But overseas, they needed switchboard operators and I volunteered and –
14 when they asked for volunteers, and the sergeant said, “You’re not
15 supposed to volunteer.” I said, “Oh, I like it!” So I did it!
16
17Amelia Bunder: So, so.
18
19Theodora Smolinski: I was on a small switchboard in southern England and, uh, then I moved
20 from there to the next – to – it was Paris military, the largest military
21 switchboard and, uh.
22
23Amelia Bunder: [6:26] Well, you must have had some very interesting things probably
24 come over the telephone. Uh, maybe not even, uh, I don’t know
25 [inaudible 6:33] personally but, uh, maybe with a group involved, I
26 guess. Uh.
27
28Theodora Smolinski: Well, we didn’t pay – we didn’t have time to find out...
29
30Amelia Bunder: I see.
31
32Theodora Smolinski: ...what was on the telephone.
33
34Amelia Bunder: I see. I see.
35
36Theodora Smolinski: They – just before we left, we called San Francisco and we could hear
37 them but they couldn’t hear us because the lines in Paris were so –
38 needed repair so badly.
39
40Amelia Bunder: Yes. So, you couldn’t make the connection. So. Let’s talk a little bit
41 about the, uh, tsk, about the housing and, um, uh, some of the more
42 concrete, uh, things that are pertinent to the military service. Uh. [7:11]
43 D-, do you recall what your, what your pay was and, and, uh, uh, your
44 rank? How did you, how did you move up in rank?

1
2Theodora Smolinski: Well, as a, as a private I got \$21 a month. Tsk. And about four or six
3 months later, within six months anyway, I er-, started earning \$50 as a
4 private and then as I went up in rank I gained – got more, but I haven't
5 any idea how much more. I was a sergeant when I came out of the
6 Army.
7
8Amelia Bunder: [7:43] Now, did they have, uh, male, uh, soldiers i-, in doing the – p-,
9 carrying out that particular type of work or were, were you all women as
10 t-, as operators?
11
12Theodora Smolinski: No. In England it depended on the, um, tsk, ba-, uh, the type of, uh,
13 army installation you were in.
14
15Amelia Bunder: I see.
16
17Theodora Smolinski: There were a lot of girls doing switchboard, but there were a lot of men
18 doing it too.
19
20Amelia Bunder: [8:10] Now when you say the type, you mean like, uh, maybe, um, uh...
21
22Theodora Smolinski: Well, uh, I...
23
24Amelia Bunder: ...closer to an area that, that might be, uh, more critical in terms of, uh,
25 fire – I mean, uh, of – no? [Not there 8:21]?
26
27Theodora Smolinski: No. In London, the switchboard was the 4th story underneath the
28 building.
29
30Amelia Bunder: Wow.
31
32Theodora Smolinski: And those – us – were a mixture of boys and girl – men and women.
33 And then, uh, in Tidworth, uh, we were – uh, we had a, um, switchboard
34 inside one of the men's barracks and, uh, we – every day I would hear
35 about those terrible WACs that went up into the men's barracks and I
36 couldn't of believed it because we were all so busy. Then I discovered it
37 was me they were talking about! [laughter] But they didn't know that the
38 end of the barracks was separated. [laughter]
39
40Unidentified speaker: Oh. So you, so you [rule it 9:10].
41
42Amelia Bunder: [9:11] Why, uh, you mentioned four stories. Uh. Was that a bomb
43 shelter?
44

1Theodora Smolinski: It was underneath a store. Um. Like a parking – uh, probably
2 would've...
3

4Amelia Bunder: Oh.
5

6Theodora Smolinski: ...been a parking garage but then was made into a switchboard
7 operating.
8

9Amelia Bunder: That's really very interesting. [9:27] Did, did – uh, uh, now, about the
10 pay and s-, the nature of the assignment, but what about the housing, did
11 – and the medical attention? Did y-, did you find any discrepancies in
12 term what was afforded to you versus what would've been afforded to
13 the male soldier?
14

15Theodora Smolinski: No. Uh-uh. We got the same.
16

17Amelia Bunder: [9:45] Uh, were you housed in the same areas or did they have separate,
18 uh, areas for, uh, the female military?
19

20Theodora Smolinski: Well, we had – yeah, we were sort of separated but, um, not – uh, now in
21 Paris, we had a whole hotel for WACs only but, uh, men could come and
22 go...
23

24Amelia Bunder: Yes, visit.
25

26Theodora Smolinski: ...in the first floor.
27

28Amelia Bunder: Yes.
29

30Theodora Smolinski: But I don't know their [inaudible 10:10].
31

32Amelia Bunder: [10:10] But you weren't housed together.
33

34Theodora Smolinski: No. Yeah, no. Uh-uh.
35

36Amelia Bunder: Yes. I think that was the pattern. I think generally speaking...
37

38Theodora Smolinski: Mm.
39

40Amelia Bunder: ...women were housed separately...
41

42Theodora Smolinski: Separately, yes. Mm-hm.
43

44Amelia Bunder: ...from the – from, uh, uh. As you said though, they had access to the...

1
2Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
3
4Amelia Bunder: ...to the lobby or the living room or whatever the, uh, the guest areas
5 would be in these facilities. Tsk. [10:31] Uh, uh, what about your, uh,
6 your dress. You uniform dress. Do you recall, uh, any ch-, I mean,
7 how, uh, what you began with versus, you know, any changes that may
8 have occurred throughout [inaudible 10:44].
9
10Theodora Smolinski: Well, uh, no, I don't think so. Um.
11
12Amelia Bunder: [10:49] Were – did you get suited at – you, you weren't at – were you in
13 ODs when you went into the service?
14
15Theodora Smolinski: No, we had the, the khaki when we...
16
17Amelia Bunder: Yes.
18
19Theodora Smolinski: ...were in Florida and Alabama. Then when we went overseas, we got
20 ODs...
21
22Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
23
24Theodora Smolinski: ...and Eisenhower jackets and...
25
26Amelia Bunder: Yes.
27
28Theodora Smolinski: ...slacks. Hm.
29
30Amelia Bunder: Well, you know the nurses started in navy blue. You know, the...
31
32Theodora Smolinski: Hm.
33
34Amelia Bunder: ...the nurses who earlier – who went into the service earlier during in the
35 World War II started with the color navy blue uniform...
36
37Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
38
39Amelia Bunder: ...and then subsequently that was changed...
40
41Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
42
43Amelia Bunder: ...and, uh, I wondered if that was true of the, the WACs...
44

1Theodora Smolinski: No, I...
2
3Amelia Bunder: ...but apparently.
4
5Theodora Smolinski: ...I tried to get into the navy because their uniforms were blue and I
6 have blue eyes. [laughter] But they wouldn't take me because I had
7 glasses.
8
9Amelia Bunder: That's a very [laughter], that's a very interesting reason for selection at
10 service. [laughter] How do you know what you're doing?
11
12Theodora Smolinski: Patriotic. It's patriotic! [laughter]
13
14Amelia Bunder: Right. But you, but you did want something to match your blue eyes!
15 [laughter]
16
17Theodora Smolinski: Hence, then brown. [laughter]
18
19Amelia Bunder: [12:00] What – uh, in, uh, what would say were some of your
20 memorable experiences, uh, in terms of your military. Wh-, was it the
21 entry into the service? The different uh, uh, type of lifestyle or did you
22 have any – did you happen to have any unusual experiences as part of
23 your...?
24
25Theodora Smolinski: I think crossing the ocean on the Queen Mary was...
26
27Amelia Bunder: Oh.
28
29Theodora Smolinski: ...the – about the nicest thing except that it took us 12 days and we were
30 – one day we would be in the North Atlantic...
31
32Amelia Bunder: Yes.
33
34Theodora Smolinski: ...and the next in the South Atlantic...
35
36Amelia Bunder: Yes. Yes.
37
38Theodora Smolinski: ...and we had English rations...
39
40Amelia Bunder: Yes.
41
42Theodora Smolinski: ...two meals a day and in the morning, you had lamb and potatoes but at
43 nighttime, you had potatoes and lamb and it worked out all right.

1 Course, I don't – I liked – I don't mind eating, so it's [laughter] alright
2 with me as long as they feed me. [laughter]
3
4 Amelia Bunder: [12:56] How, uh, how many were on the ship, on the Queen Mary when
5 you went overseas?
6
7 Theodora Smolinski: I have no idea, but there were 500 WACs but there were a lot of G.I.s.
8
9 Amelia Bunder: Yes. Yes.
10
11 Theodora Smolinski: We had a lot of, um, churches. I went to every church service no matter
12 what denomination because we had 40 girls in a stateroom, probably 30
13 of which were sick.
14
15 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
16
17 Theodora Smolinski: And so I got out of there...
18
19 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
20
21 Theodora Smolinski: ...at every time.
22
23 Amelia Bunder: As I recall, my experience.
24
25 Theodora Smolinski: Then coming back we were on the Ile de France and we had American
26 rations, and we ate with the officers so we got all kinds of fancy food,
27 tsk, and, uh, the waiters always made sure we had something for our
28 third meal. Of course, I never – don't remember anybody ever getting
29 back – getting it back because the G.I.s were still eating...
30
31 Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
32
33 Theodora Smolinski: ...K rations and they needed it more than we did.
34
35 Amelia Bunder: Yes. Yes. [13:57] Did you, uh, were you, uh, surprised at meeting
36 people – or maybe you had more exposure but were you surprised at
37 meeting the different people from, you know, from all parts of the, the
38 country and, uh, d-, d-, d-, d-, did that have any significance for you?
39
40 Theodora Smolinski: I don't think that bothered me at all.
41
42 Amelia Bunder: Well, I don't mean so much bothered...
43
44 Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.

1
2 Amelia Bunder: ...but I mean, were you impressed with...
3
4 Theodora Smolinski: I was...
5
6 Amelia Bunder: ...uh, er, you know?
7
8 Theodora Smolinski: Well, I, I don't know. Part of it was, uh, when I'm – uh, in the Tidworth
9 switchboard, we weren't allowed to use our names, and...
10
11 Amelia Bunder: [14:29] Well, how did – how – what did you have, a number? Or how
12 did, how did...?
13
14 Theodora Smolinski: W-, I was called Penny from Pennsylvania...
15
16 Amelia Bunder: Oh.
17
18 Theodora Smolinski: ...and somebody else would be called, uh, New York.
19
20 Amelia Bunder: Was that, was that considered a code name? Uh, Penny, was that
21 considered a...
22
23 Theodora Smolinski: No, no.
24
25 Amelia Bunder: ...code name or just...
26
27 Theodora Smolinski: Just a, a name among the operators.
28
29 Amelia Bunder: A nickname.
30
31 Theodora Smolinski: A nickname, yes.
32
33 Amelia Bunder: I see. A nickname.
34
35 Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
36
37 Amelia Bunder: Not official. Just a nickname.
38
39 Theodora Smolinski: Nothing official. [laughter]
40
41 Amelia Bunder: I see. Just a, just a nickname.
42
43 Theodora Smolinski: [laughter] There were a lot of things that weren't...
44

1 Amelia Bunder: Were not, uh, right.
2
3 Theodora Smolinski: ...official on the switchboard. [laughing]
4
5 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
6
7 Theodora Smolinski: But, uh.
8
9 Amelia Bunder: Well now were you – now, you mentioned your nickname being Penny
10 ‘cause you were from Pennsylvania. [15:02] Did, did you – were you –
11 when you went into the service, did you go, uh, alone or were there
12 some other people that accompanied you or did you meet a group from
13 Pennsylvania or what, what, uh?
14
15 Theodora Smolinski: Well, the girls that I went in with, what I – that I joined with in...
16
17 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
18
19 Theodora Smolinski: ...October...
20
21 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
22
23 Theodora Smolinski: ...were in the Army in November but somehow or other they couldn’t
24 believe that I was an American. They thought I must still be can-,
25 Canadian because it wasn’t on my mother’s naturalization so I had to
26 prove to them.
27
28 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
29
30 Theodora Smolinski: So, the next group came and I was still red-, I was ready to go and they
31 still weren’t ready for me to go, so.
32
33 Amelia Bunder: I see. Because of your, uh, uh, verification...
34
35 Theodora Smolinski: Because of [inaudible 15:41]. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
36
37 Amelia Bunder: ...of your naturalization.
38
39 Theodora Smolinski: There was a short period when children were not put on a naturalization.
40
41 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
42
43 Theodora Smolinski: Course, that would be when I was there. [laughter]
44

1 Amelia Bunder: Yes. That's – yes, it happened to affect your, your...
2
3 Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
4
5 Amelia Bunder: ...mother's papers.
6
7 Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
8
9 Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh. [15:55] So then you – so, but actually when you went into the
10 service, you went alone. You didn't go...
11
12 Theodora Smolinski: Yes. I didn't, no. Uh-uh.
13
14 Amelia Bunder: ...with a friend or something like this...
15
16 Theodora Smolinski: No.
17
18 Amelia Bunder: ...and then whatever group you, you came in contact with.
19
20 Theodora Smolinski: They were always new. [laughter]
21
22 Amelia Bunder: Yeah. [16:07] Did you like England? Were y-, were you – uh, did you?
23
24 Theodora Smolinski: Y-, I liked England, yes.
25
26 Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
27
28 Theodora Smolinski: Very much. It was, uh, sort of a soft, uh, atmosphere, ...
29
30 Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
31
32 Theodora Smolinski: ...a soft country and the peep-, to me, the people were...
33
34 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
35
36 Theodora Smolinski: ...nice.
37
38 Amelia Bunder: Yes. [16:22] Did you, uh, uh, did you, uh, well, of course England w-,
39 uh, now, was this, this part of England that you were in, was that part of
40 the – uh, part of your – uh, part of the area that was bombed, uh, by the
41 Germans?
42
43 Theodora Smolinski: Uh, er, no because they couldn't find – above the Tidworth's area it
44 looked like a big lake from a plane up above and, uh, people coming

1 back from France would realize when they got across this lake that this
2 was Tidworth but people from ur-, from – the Germans, they didn't
3 know what was down there, so.
4
5 Amelia Bunder: I see. They weren't really aware that that w-, because it seemed to be
6 camouflaged.
7
8 Theodora Smolinski: Yes. Mm-hm.
9
10 Amelia Bunder: That's very interesting.
11
12 Theodora Smolinski: That was a natural camouflage.
13
14 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
15
16 Theodora Smolinski: But I've been, I've been on trains that were bombed, and I've been in –
17 as I say in the – when I was...
18
19 Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
20
21 Theodora Smolinski: ...in the switchboard, uh, four stories down, uh, there was a time when
22 there was bomb and all the lights came on and even I who was visiting
23 sat and said, "Are you there?" And if they was – weren't there, we'd
24 plug it up so that we wouldn't have to see – answer that again because
25 the telephones had all been jiggled off their hooks.
26
27 Amelia Bunder: I see. Yes.
28
29 Theodora Smolinski: But, uh.
30
31 Amelia Bunder: [17:43] Did you, uh, uh, what did you think of i-, of, uh, Paris. You
32 mentioned part of your experience included an assignment in Paris.
33
34 Theodora Smolinski: I didn't think much of Paris. It's a beautiful city...
35
36 Amelia Bunder: Mm-hm.
37
38 Theodora Smolinski: ...but, um, I wasn't very happy – I wasn't, uh, simpatico I guess with
39 them as I was with the English.
40
41 Amelia Bunder: [18:03] D-, w-, w-, do you think that because of the language, uh,
42 barrier?
43
44 Theodora Smolinski: I think the language.

1
2Amelia Bunder: I see.
3
4Theodora Smolinski: I have a real problem with that.
5
6Amelia Bunder: With French. With –
7
8Theodora Smolinski: With, uh, not being able to understand people.
9
10Amelia Bunder: I see.
11
12Theodora Smolinski: It doesn't matter even...
13
14Amelia Bunder: Yes.
15
16Theodora Smolinski: ...as an occupational therapist...
17
18Amelia Bunder: I see. Yes.
19
20Theodora Smolinski: ...I still run into the same business. I can't understand what the patient
21 is saying and it's hard.
22
23Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
24
25Theodora Smolinski: But, uh, coming from England to Paris, I was in a convoy...
26
27Amelia Bunder: Mm-hm.
28
29Theodora Smolinski: ...and the boat in front of us was, uh, hit by a...
30
31Amelia Bunder: Stray.
32
33Theodora Smolinski: ...mine.
34
35Amelia Bunder: Oh.
36
37Theodora Smolinski: And, uh, the convoy immediately disbanded and th-, we – you couldn't
38 s-, you were in the middle of this – of...
39
40Amelia Bunder: Yes.
41
42Theodora Smolinski: ...no place!
43
44Amelia Bunder: Yes.

1
2Theodora Smolinski: And, uh, then when we got to the shore, we had to wait. We couldn't
3 get off right away and, uh, the people who were getting off, being
4 disembarked, were the people who had been in the, uh, boat that was...
5
6Amelia Bunder: Oh.
7
8Theodora Smolinski: ...hit. They had been picked up by a, a...
9
10Amelia Bunder: Yes.
11
12Theodora Smolinski: ...destroyer...
13
14Amelia Bunder: Yes.
15
16Theodora Smolinski: ...and brought in and they came in just before us.
17
18Amelia Bunder: Well that had to be a frightening moment.
19
20Theodora Smolinski: Yes indeed. [laughter]
21
22Amelia Bunder: Yes.
23
24Theodora Smolinski: But [laughter] the worst part was the G.I. cans full of spaghetti which
25 had been sitting around since supper time. [laughter] This was four in
26 the morning. [laughter] You can see I'm food-oriented. [laughter]
27
28Amelia Bunder: Oh! That's a serious moment but it does have a...
29
30Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
31
32Amelia Bunder: ...have a light, uh, little bit attached to it.
33
34Theodora Smolinski: Thank you. You need to have a little sense of humor.
35
36Amelia Bunder: Yes, you do. You really do.
37
38Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
39
40Amelia Bunder: Yes, otherwise it, it, it was – tsk. [19:47] Uh, th-, d-, was – uh, were
41 there, were there any other, uh, parts of your experience that, th-, th-, it's
42 s-, I mean, what would you say stands out the most in terms of your
43 military experience? If you were – if someone asked you what was the,

1 the, the singular thing about it that, that had either meaning or, or
2 remembrance, what, what would you say?
3
4Theodora Smolinski: Gee, I wouldn't have any idea...
5
6Amelia Bunder: I see.
7
8Theodora Smolinski: ...what that would be.
9
10Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
11
12Theodora Smolinski: The whole business was. [laughter]
13
14Amelia Bunder: The whole. Yes.
15
16Theodora Smolinski: Three years of new things every day!
17
18Amelia Bunder: Yes. [20:21] Would you repeat it if you had – if the opportunity
19 presented itself? Of course, you know, say at that same age d-, in
20 retrospect, would you?
21
22Theodora Smolinski: Oh, I think yes. I, uh, didn't go from Paris to Czechoslovakia, which I
23 was offered an opportunity go and teach, uh, girls to operate army
24 switchboard, but I decided I wanted to come home then.
25
26Amelia Bunder: [20:44] I s-, you were homesick.
27
28Theodora Smolinski: I guess. [laughter]
29
30Amelia Bunder: Yes. Yes. So. [20:54] Uh did – uh, one of the questions, uh, uh,
31 suggested is can you compare service careers, you know, with the
32 present? Now, actually you had moved into a new field, um.
33
34Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm. Tsk. Well, it's pretty hard expect that you still had to get up
35 and go to work every day...
36
37Amelia Bunder: Yes.
38
39Theodora Smolinski: ...and I had to go to work every day at home...
40
41Amelia Bunder: Yes.
42
43Theodora Smolinski: ...because being just post-Depression, you really – you didn't have a
44 chance to stay home...

1
2Amelia Bunder: Yes.
3
4Theodora Smolinski: ...and not do anything.
5
6Amelia Bunder: [21:21] So, you mean you went to g-, you got a job as soon as you...
7
8Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
9
10Amelia Bunder: ...you came back from the service.
11
12Theodora Smolinski: Oh yes. I went back to the job I had before I went in.
13
14Amelia Bunder: Yes.
15
16Theodora Smolinski: And, uh, they had me as a switchboard operator but they didn't need one
17 because they'd been – I'd been replaced there, so they put me on the
18 billing machine, and I wasn't very good at that. [laughter] So I – but
19 since I was going to OT school very shortly, they kept me on anyway.
20
21Amelia Bunder: That was good.
22
23Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
24
25Amelia Bunder: [21:54] So then how long did you remain at, at that job?
26
27Theodora Smolinski: About nine months I guess. I came home probably the end of October
28 and, um, went to school in September.
29
30Amelia Bunder: [22:09] And, uh, well, so that's – then you began – uh, then you made
31 use of some part of your G.I. bill.
32
33Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
34
35Amelia Bunder: That was the educational...
36
37Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
38
39Amelia Bunder: ...and, uh, d-, was that going to a university?
40
41Theodora Smolinski: University of f-, Pennsylvania, but it's – was called Philadelphia School
42 of Occupational Therapy.
43
44Amelia Bunder: I see. [22:28] And how long did you, did you attend?

1
2Theodora Smolinski: Three years.
3
4Amelia Bunder: Three years.
5
6Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
7
8Amelia Bunder: S-.
9
10Theodora Smolinski: I got a diploma, not a college –
11
12Amelia Bunder: Degree. I see. To be – and that, that gave you the – uh, then you
13 became an occupational therapist on a basis of...
14
15Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
16
17Amelia Bunder: ...this, uh, three years of... [22:44] D-, did you use any the other
18 benefits available under the G.I. bill such as housing...
19
20Theodora Smolinski: No.
21
22Amelia Bunder: ...or. No. That was the only one.
23
24Theodora Smolinski: [inaudible 22:51]
25
26Amelia Bunder: Just the educational benefits.
27
28Theodora Smolinski: Yeah. Mm-hm.
29
30Amelia Bunder: [22:59] Theodora, what area of your military experience would you, uh,
31 say demanded the most adjustments?
32
33Theodora Smolinski: Well, I don't know about that. I did what I was told and, uh, let it go at
34 that. I'll have to admit that I used to keep my footlocker in apple pie
35 order and when they were gonna be inspected, they'd ask somebody else
36 to fix theirs up and that used to make me mad, but, uh, I [inaudible
37 23:31] it's just the same as at home. You have to go to work and you
38 have to learn the words that go with, uh, the place you're working.
39 Come to terminology, just join the occupational therapists and you'll
40 know there's lots of different words, but, uh, I don't think I had really
41 any trouble. I was pretty much a loner and if I wanted to do something,
42 I did. I had friends, but, uh, I had like I said, more friends from away
43 that would come to Paris and then, uh, when I was, uh, at the, uh,
44 [inaudible 24:13] brought this map. When I was at the Red Cross, uh,

1 some young man came up to me and looked and me and he said, "Tsk.
2 You look like a sensible girl." And I thought, oh my. [laughter] He said,
3 "Can you dance? Do you have to dance that way, the jitterbug?" And I
4 said, "No." And he said, "Well, I'll dance with you then." [laughter]
5 And I thought, well. So, every time he had a buddy coming down to
6 Paris, he would tell'm to look me up.
7
8 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
9
10 Theodora Smolinski: If he thought they fit for me to meet. [laughter]
11
12 Amelia Bunder: Well that was very good!
13
14 Theodora Smolinski: I thought it was real nice! Had a lot of fun going that way. Ran a
15 sightseeing – Paris sightseeing tour for everybody that came into town.
16
17 Amelia Bunder: Well that, that, that, uh, helped you to get better oriented to the, to the
18 city.
19
20 Theodora Smolinski: Yes. Mm-hm.
21
22 Amelia Bunder: So. [25:03] Did, uh, did you find any regulation that w-, uh, that was, uh,
23 particularly annoying or unpopular for yourself or for the group in which
24 you found yourself while you were in the service?
25
26 Theodora Smolinski: Mm, I don't know. I guess, uh, there were a lot of people who didn't
27 like to keep on time but, uh, that was not my problem. I w-, if they said
28 such and such a time...
29
30 Amelia Bunder: Mm-hm.
31
32 Theodora Smolinski: ...I was there. One time we were watching in the Louvre looking at the
33 Mona Lisa I think when I realized that I had a half an hour to inspection
34 time and as I got to the inspection place, my boyfriend shined my shoes
35 and I pushed my hat on straight and fixed my hair and walked out just as
36 the officer started walking in! [laughter]
37
38 Amelia Bunder: So y-, so you made it.
39
40 Theodora Smolinski: I made it!
41
42 Amelia Bunder: So, you made it. So. Well, in some areas, you know, the, uh, like the e-,
43 there would be a curfew, you know...
44

1Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
2
3Amelia Bunder: ...when you had to come in and so forth. [26:03] Did you, did you – was
4that any – was that part of your experience at any point?
5
6Theodora Smolinski: No, I'd, I, I've – uh, we were – we lived through that sort of thing in
7Paris. There were a lot of times when we weren't supposed to go out.
8
9Amelia Bunder: I see.
10
11Theodora Smolinski: But, uh.
12
13Amelia Bunder: You were restricted.
14
15Theodora Smolinski: We were restricted to our hotel, but...
16
17Amelia Bunder: Yes.
18
19Theodora Smolinski: ...uh, it's like other things, you can always go to bed if you can't do
20anything else and of course when you walk to the seventh floor to go to
21bed, you – by that time, you were pretty tired.
22
23Amelia Bunder: [26:33] Well, then, uh, actually, uh, Paris was your last assignment...
24
25Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
26
27Amelia Bunder: ...and y-, when demobilization – is that...
28
29Theodora Smolinski: Yeah. Mm-hm.
30
31Amelia Bunder: ...what, uh, uh, that was the basis...
32
33Theodora Smolinski: Yes. That was the basis.
34
35Amelia Bunder: ...for your termination of, uh...
36
37Theodora Smolinski: Yeah.
38
39Amelia Bunder: ...military service.
40
41Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
42
43Amelia Bunder: And then you, you, uh, returned to the States...
44

1Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
2
3Amelia Bunder: ...and, um, tsk, did you consider joining the Reserves in any capacity
4after you came home from the mili-...
5
6Theodora Smolinski: No way. [laughter]
7
8Amelia Bunder: No way. No way.
9
10Theodora Smolinski: Not patriotic enough for that. [laughter]
11
12Amelia Bunder: Not. [27:01] Well, tsk, tell us some of the things that you did do after
13service. Now, we know that you took advantage of the G.I. Bill of
14Rights, uh, in the education. You went to school and you became an
15occupational therapist. What did that mean then in terms of ongoing
16employment?
17
18Theodora Smolinski: I worked from then with, uh, long-term patients, tuberculosis patients,
19psychiatric patients.
20
21Amelia Bunder: [27:25] And where was that? Why don't you mention the facilities that
22you worked – uh, in which you worked.
23
24Theodora Smolinski: The – only in New York is where there was a small private sanitorium
25that I s-, worked in and they were closed so then I came back to the
26University of Pittsburgh, the psychiatric hospital, and then I worked for
27the city of Pittsburgh in the TB sanitorium. Tsk. Then I worked for the
28State of Pennsylvania in the Dixmont State Hospital. Then I transferred
29to Polk State School where I worked with retarded – and this is the first
30time I had really realized the needs of the retarded and so I was very
31happy there and busy.
32
33Amelia Bunder: [28:12] How long did you work at Polk?
34
35Theodora Smolinski: Three years.
36
37Amelia Bunder: Uh-huh.
38
39Theodora Smolinski: And then I came home to take care of my mother who was 85 or so and,
40uh, while I was home, I got a college degree because at Polk they kept
41saying, 'She doesn't have a college degree. Let her teach that!' Or, 'Let
42her do that!' [laughter] And so I got a college degree.
43

1 Amelia Bunder: [28:37] So you – then you g-, what was your degree in? What was the
2 nature of your degree?
3
4 Theodora Smolinski: Special Studies, I think it's called.
5
6 Amelia Bunder: Yes. Uh-huh.
7
8 Theodora Smolinski: And, uh, uh, then I went back to the psychiatric hospital so that I would
9 be in Pittsburgh with my family.
10
11 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
12
13 Theodora Smolinski: And, uh, then I – [sighing] when that job terminated, I went to work at
14 Torrance State Hospital with a retarded group up there and then I retired.
15
16 Amelia Bunder: Yes. [29:05] Did you, um, in – uh, uh, when you think of your – uh, do
17 you think that, uh, being in the military enhanced your capacity to, to,
18 um, move into the professional role?
19
20 Theodora Smolinski: I don't know about that, but it helped me with the patients because when
21 I said – when I was having difficulties, I'd say, "Now you know as a
22 sergeant in the army..." [laughter] Y-, ah, "When I say go..." [laughter]
23 And the boys all thought that was pretty funny for a lady to be a
24 sergeant.
25
26 Amelia Bunder: Yes.
27
28 Theodora Smolinski: As long as it was a h-, you could make it into a humorous, uh, time for
29 everybody...
30
31 Amelia Bunder: It was acceptable.
32
33 Theodora Smolinski: ...it was acceptable.
34
35 Amelia Bunder: Yes. So, actually, it did, uh, well, it, it, it, it h-, it did help you to prepare
36 in working with others...
37
38 Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
39
40 Amelia Bunder: ...i-, in – to some, to some extent, so.
41
42 Theodora Smolinski: Yes. Mm-hm. And then when I, uh, met an occasional French patient,
43 then I could also have – uh, talk to them about what I...
44

1Amelia Bunder: Yes.
2

3Theodora Smolinski: ...knew about their...
4

5Amelia Bunder: Yes.
6

7Theodora Smolinski: ...country which made them more, uh, um, at home.
8

9Amelia Bunder: Yes. More comfortable.
10

11Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
12

13Amelia Bunder: [30:20] Now, Theodora, I know you, you've been with the Women's
14 Overseas Service League for, for, well, practically ever since WWII and
15 you have been a very active member and, and involved in some unusual
16 activities. Would you share some of those things with us now, please.
17

18Theodora Smolinski: Well, one of the nicest things about being out of the army was the
19 Women's Overseas League. I b-, I met a lot of lovely people and
20 [sighing] they were always trying to do things for other people and that
21 fit in with my way of thinking, and one of the projects which we have
22 done for, uh, oh, at least fift-, about 12 years, anyway, is, uh, make
23 Christmas presents for the Transitional Living Service people, who
24 are...
25

26Amelia Bunder: [31:16] Tell us what, what are the Transitional Living Services. What
27 does, what does that mean?
28

29Theodora Smolinski: Well, they take care of people who have been in the hospital for many
30 years and have – are training them to live on their own in the
31 community.
32

33Amelia Bunder: [31:35] These are essentially psychic patients with psychia-, I mean,
34 people with psychiatric disorders, is that correct?
35

36Theodora Smolinski: Psychiatric and mentally retarded.
37

38Amelia Bunder: Oh, both. I see.
39

40Theodora Smolinski: Yes. Mm-hm. And, uh, the packages we make at Christmas is to help
41 them and who – or who don't have enough, uh, smarts to manage to, uh,
42 get along in the world or maybe they don't – uh, they have enough
43 smarts and they know better than to get along in the world. They stay
44 where there's a protected environment and where there are people. Uh,

1 one of the groups that I also work with other than the Christmas
2 presents, that's – those are people who are in the, uh, Transitional Living
3 Services homes. The people who don't – who have graduated from TLS
4 are, uh, in the community, and I have a group of about 12 of them who
5 are – were friends with me at Polk and, uh, needed help – needed a
6 friend in the community, and we have taken them from people who all
7 sat around and everybody talked at once and nobody would listen to
8 anybody else to where we now can have a fairly normal conversation
9 and we could all – I can remember the day we first laughed at the same
10 joke, all – there were 12 of us at that time, and all 12 laughed at the same
11 joke, and this was a real big day for me. Tsk, they, uh, used to have to
12 have help at the end of the month with their food but by now, they are –
13 uh, nobody has called me for over a year for money for food at the end
14 of the month.
15

16Amelia Bunder: [33:26] But they are living in a, in a community arrangement.
17

18Theodora Smolinski: They are living together in a home!
19

20Amelia Bunder: Yes. Yes. Uh-huh.
21

22Theodora Smolinski: Not anybody else's home, but their home!
23

24Amelia Bunder: Yes.
25

26Theodora Smolinski: And they, uh, have a garden – they, they have an older man there who,
27 uh, seems to know about gardening and so he's helping the boys to do
28 the gardening and they grow...
29

30Amelia Bunder: Yes.
31

32Theodora Smolinski: ...and can food as if food was going out of style and probably it is –
33 maybe that's the reason they don't call me. [laughter] But when they
34 have trouble with the law or with, um, tsk, the dog catcher or something
35 like that, uh, they call me because I can guide them [at least 34:10].
36

37Amelia Bunder: And advise them.
38

39Theodora Smolinski: Yes. Advise them.
40

41Amelia Bunder: [34:11] Do they have any, uh, f-, profession-, do they have any official
42 supervision in this home?
43

1Theodora Smolinski: Not in this home, no. Um. The, uh, there – they have a case worker, I
2 guess, with, uh, social s-, secur-, not social security.
3
4Amelia Bunder: [inaudible 34:27]
5
6Theodora Smolinski: SSI.
7
8Amelia Bunder: Oh, s-, s-.
9
10Theodora Smolinski: SSI. They have some kind. But, uh, they're, they're on their own now.
11
12Amelia Bunder: Yes.
13
14Theodora Smolinski: They work. There are four of them in one home and they sell
15 newspapers and if th-, two go out by – two go out and do it and if the
16 men can't go, the girls go and, you know.
17
18Amelia Bunder: [34:52] But, but orig-, were these part of the, uh, transitional services...
19
20Theodora Smolinski: Yes. They were originally and transferred.
21
22Amelia Bunder: ...originally then they, then they were able to, to, to move...
23
24Theodora Smolinski: Move into [inaudible 35:00]
25
26Amelia Bunder: ...into this independent.
27
28Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
29
30Amelia Bunder: [35:01] Now, you were talking about the Christmas gifts for the transi-,
31 transitional services. How many, uh, gifts would, would you say were...
32
33Theodora Smolinski: Well. [laughter]
34
35Amelia Bunder: ...acquired for, uh, di-, for, uh, distribution at that time?
36
37Theodora Smolinski: We, we, we acquire about 175 at a value of \$5 each.
38
39Amelia Bunder: That's a tremendous, that's a tremendous effort.
40
41Theodora Smolinski: This is a year-long thing.
42
43Amelia Bunder: Yes.
44

1Theodora Smolinski: Uh, I ha-, showed somebody my room – my transitional room and it
2 looks full already [laughter] and this is only February.
3

4Amelia Bunder: [35:35] And when, when you speak about these bags, what, what w-,
5 give us what's in a bag on a, on an average, uh, basis would you say for
6 – as a gift.
7

8Theodora Smolinski: Oh, toothpaste and toothbrush and soap and, uh, washcloths and
9 something like jewelry or, um, shampoo and, uh, oh, maybe a flower
10 arrangement or a, a pretty scarf or handkerchief. I'm s-, I'm already
11 pricing handkerchiefs because I need one for each bag.
12

13Amelia Bunder: Yes.
14

15Theodora Smolinski: And, uh, it's a, it, it v-, the value is about \$5. Between 4 and 5.
16

17Amelia Bunder: [36:22] Now, is, is, is this j-, is this met by the, uh, the members of the
18 Pittsburgh unit, uh, or, uh, is any other group contributing to this...
19

20Theodora Smolinski: Well, uh.
21

22Amelia Bunder: ...uh, to this, uh, particular project.
23

24Theodora Smolinski: The church that I belong to contributes. In the – at rummage sales, I can
25 get anything I need free.
26

27Amelia Bunder: Oh.
28

29Theodora Smolinski: The Women's Overseas League get together between 30 and 40 presents
30 at the Christmas party but in the meantime, I'll – uh, somebody else'll
31 leave 10 bars of soap on my front porch and everybody knows that this
32 is from somebody in WOSL. Uh. We try – I try to stress to people, well
33 look for things that are inexpensive but that are pretty! You know, life is
34 pretty dull if you don't have anything.
35

36Amelia Bunder: Well, essentially though it is a project of the Pittsburgh unit...
37

38Theodora Smolinski: Yes.
39

40Amelia Bunder: ...but you do have some – you, you are getting some assistance from
41 other groups.
42

43Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
44

1 Amelia Bunder: You're also involved with the Jubilee Kitchen, which is, uh, which is
2 certainly, uh, receiving a lot of attention in the Pittsburgh area right now
3 and w-, we are proud of your participation in this group. [37:42] Do you
4 want to spell that out a little for us?
5

6 Theodora Smolinski: Well, I work on Thursdays preparing soup – vegetables for tomorrow's
7 soup and serving today's soup and, uh, salad if there is any and donuts
8 for dessert if there are any or cake and, um.
9

10 Amelia Bunder: [38:06] Now, where is the Jubilee Kitchen located in the Pittsburgh
11 area?
12

13 Theodora Smolinski: Well, it's called Uptown. It's also called SoHo. It used to be SoHo and
14 it's – uh, we have between 200 and 300 men a day. Uh.
15

16 Amelia Bunder: [38:26] Just men, or?
17

18 Theodora Smolinski: No. Uh. Men and women, but, uh, more men than women. Um. I
19 don't know why that is except that there are men – if a truck driver
20 drives up the street and is hungry at noon and they're serving, he can
21 come in. If, uh, the men who work in the area are hungry, they can
22 come in because nobody checks to see...
23

24 Amelia Bunder: I see.
25

26 Theodora Smolinski: ...uh, whether [inaudible 38:53]. But if you have 10 children and are a
27 truck driver, you need a free meal the same as anybody [laughter] else
28 does. There is no need f-, no, uh, problem for anybody in there and you
29 have as many bowls of soup as you want and we – they aim to get meat
30 into every soup k-, every kind of soup and, uh, they, uh, if they run out
31 of soup and there are – there's – they happen to have, you know, a case
32 of s-, cans of soup that they can pass out. And, uh, there's – there are
33 -clothing can be given out there. I have contributed, uh, 15 blankets
34 down there that go to people who need them. We have people who sleep
35 under the bridges and we have people who have small children and don't
36 have enough blankets and we have people who don't have heat, so that
37 there's always a need for warm clothing, underwear.
38

39 Amelia Bunder: [40:06] W-, who funds this project? H-, where is the source of...
40

41 Theodora Smolinski: There...
42

43 Amelia Bunder: ...money that...
44

1Theodora Smolinski: ...there is no real source of money. There is a Jubilee Association
2 which is comprised of the soup kitchen and a new project at the prisons
3 where they're working with the families of the new prisoners and a
4 pantry for emergency food for people who don't, uh, who have a fire or
5 for some reason lose their, uh, stamps. And, uh, the money comes from
6 donations. Uh, twice a year, I guess, they send out a letter. I don't get
7 one of those though, so...
8

9Amelia Bunder: Yes.

10

11Theodora Smolinski: ...I don't know what [laughter] that is.
12

13Amelia Bunder: I never have either. I have never gotten a letter from them.
14

15Theodora Smolinski: But, uh, twice a year they send out a letter and, uh, that goes for – well,
16 w-, they always buy coffee. I mean they – if they can't get coffee some
17 other way, they do go out and buy it.
18

19Amelia Bunder: Yes.

20

21Theodora Smolinski: Uh, they have – they go to the Strip District, which in Pittsburgh is a
22 wholesale house – wholesale area, and, uh, they buy a lot down there if
23 they have to buy something but also those people send a lot out to us.
24

25Amelia Bunder: [41:24] How did you get involved with Jubilee Kitchen 'cause that is not
26 a, uh, Women's Overseas Service League project, per se. How did you
27 get involved with the...?
28

29Theodora Smolinski: Uh, one of the girls in the carpool that, uh, I belo-, I was in when I – the
30 last 4 years I worked talked about it. She was a, uh, tsk, I guess you'd
31 call it a gopher.
32

33Amelia Bunder: Hm.

34

35Theodora Smolinski: If some restaurant had bread that was left over, they would call and then
36 she was one of the people who would make it her business to go and get
37 them. Tsk. And I thought maybe I could do that but I'm really much
38 better at scraping carrots and peeling [laughter] onions.
39

40Amelia Bunder: [42:04] W-, were y-, you were involved with the Raggedy Anne and
41 Andy project too, weren't you? It was a, a project of the Pittsburgh unit
42 for a good many years.
43

1Theodora Smolinski: Oh yes. Oh yes. I was an expert at it and everyone once in a while I
2 look at all the boxes that I have that have Raggedy Anne things in –
3 patterns in them. I think I should start that up again. That was a good
4 money-making [laughter] project.
5

6Amelia Bunder: [42:26] That certainly was and certainly a very interesting one and, uh,
7 p-, w-, have you any idea how many Raggedy Anne and Andy dolls
8 were made by the, uh, Pittsburgh unit over the period of time that this
9 was a project?
10

11Theodora Smolinski: Well, I would be tempted to say between 2000 and 3000. I know in one,
12 one year alone, I made 300 myself. And then the next year I sort of, uh,
13 slacked off; I probably only made 200 and then we kept going down.
14

15Amelia Bunder: That was a tremendous project and of course that the purpose of which
16 was to make funds, you know, for...
17

18Theodora Smolinski: I, I only made the bodies, though.
19

20Amelia Bunder: Yes.
21

22Theodora Smolinski: Th-, we all specialized in our little...
23

24Amelia Bunder: Right. But still, that was a tremendous thing, you know, and, and, I, I
25 think everyone enjoyed it. [inaudible 43:15] with the dolls.
26

27Theodora Smolinski: I think so too. They were so pretty to look at, too.
28

29Amelia Bunder: Yes. [43:19] Let me ask one other question. Now, uh, w-, we were
30 talking about some of your, um, activities. Uh, uh, I know also that you
31 have been, uh, involved as an officer and presently you are vice
32 president. What other, uh, offices did you hold since you...
33

34Theodora Smolinski: I have been everything except treasurer, I think. Uh. They don't trust
35 me with their money. [laughter] I spend it. I don't – [laughter] I earn it
36 or I spend it but they don't, uh.
37

38Amelia Bunder: It, it's probably 'cause you resist that one, so. Well, Theodora...
39

40Theodora Smolinski: One other project which I'm, uh, I'm very proud of though it's sort of
41 quiet is that we send \$40 worth of seeds to Appalachia and, uh, they –
42 first time I sent them, they didn't know what to do with them, but now
43 they have a volunteer who teaches people how to grow these seeds in the
44 area where they are.

1
2Amelia Bunder: Yes. They work.
3
4Theodora Smolinski: I mean if they're up in the mountainside and they have just a little bit of
5 green and they know what t-, or a little bit of shade, no sun, why they
6 know what to plant there.
7
8Amelia Bunder: For that particular climate. [44:29] Where in Appalachia are these seeds,
9 uh, being forwarded?
10
11Theodora Smolinski: Kentucky.
12
13Amelia Bunder: Kentucky.
14
15Theodora Smolinski: Mm-hm.
16
17Amelia Bunder: Yes. And that's become an annual project...
18
19Theodora Smolinski: Yes.
20
21Amelia Bunder: ...with the Pittsburgh unit Women's Overseas Service League. So.
22
23Theodora Smolinski: Yes.
24
25Amelia Bunder: So. Well, Theodora, I thank you very much. It was very i-, it, it's been
26 an interesting time here getting, you know, getting your, uh, military
27 experience and bringing us up to date with your volunteer activities.
28 Thank you very much.
29
30
31/ad