

**Mary E. Price talks about her more than thirty-years  
as a U.S. Navy nurse and her service in three wars**

5 Vivian Peterson: This is a Women's Overseas Service League project – oral history project on  
6 Mary E. Price, and it was taken by, uh, Mary Braumer at the September 1  
7 meeting of the Orange County Unit of Women's Overseas Service League in,  
8 uh, Laguna Hills, California.

10 Mary E. Price: [Inaudible 00:32]. In 1933, I went to Georgetown University Hospital. It was  
11 the third year of the Depression. We had no money and nobody else had any  
12 money, so it didn't matter. [Inaudible 00:49] Georgetown was at least 9 miles  
13 from downtown. We could not [inaudible 00:53]. He walked me down the  
14 the Capital [inaudible] Lincoln Memorial [inaudible] [laughter] [Inaudible  
15 01:17] walking with us. He said, "Don't [inaudible 01:19]." But anyway, we  
16 got over that. And I want to tell you why [it was important 01:25] at  
17 Georgetown. Our instructor there in nursing had been a World War I nurse in  
18 the Red Cross. She [inaudible 01:32] the Red Cross, but then she went to  
19 Paris, then she came home by way of Siberia. So we thought, oh, that's  
20 wonderful. It's too bad we couldn't have [inaudible 01:41] in World War I  
21 'cause that was the war to end all wars. Little did we know. So anyway, she  
22 saw that we all joined the Red Cross but when we graduated, everybody  
23 joined the Red Cross [inaudible 01:56]. [Inaudible 01:57] there was about 35  
24 in our class and 24 graduated but 3, 3 went in the army. I was the only one  
25 that went in the navy 'cause I thought I always liked the sea and I think I better  
26 choose the navy. So in 1938, I got my papers to [inaudible 02:14] to the  
27 reserve, filled'm out [inaudible 02:16]. Poland was invaded the 1<sup>st</sup> of  
28 September in 1939. [Inaudible 02:22] to go in the reserves and I [inaudible  
29 02:24]. So I filled'm out and I, uh, – pretty soon I was in the Naval Reserves.

31 But they didn't need nurses at the time. But then I went down on the bulletin  
32 board one day, and they had a sign and they needed 15 nurses in Panama.  
33 They were building the third set of locks, and it was through the, uh, Canal  
34 Zone [inaudible Division 02:47], and there was a [apartment 02:48] in  
35 Washington, D.C. And you went to see this man. His name was Mr. [Erdman  
36 02:53] on K Street. So I was on night duty, and I went down for my interview  
37 and [inaudible 03:00] we had to send him a picture [inaudible]. And the first  
38 thing he told me was, my, you look like a picture. Well, I didn't know if that  
39 was good or bad. [laughter] I said I don't know if I'm in or out, you know. But  
40 anyway, I got in, and I got my [inaudible 03:14] to go to Panama. Well, I, I  
41 had been in Georgetown for seven years with my, uh, student [days 03:18]  
42 and working as a graduate student, so I was ready to go to see the world. And  
43 Panama sounded very interesting. Well, we didn't get a whole lot of money,  
44 but we got a lot of good, uh, fringe benefits. Our apartments were only \$15 a

1 month. Our food was \$30 a month, and we had 7 dieticians, so we had  
2 excellent food. And the hospital was one of the best in the world there at  
3 Gorgas Hospital on the Pacific side. It was a pleasure to work there.  
4

5 But [inaudible 03:48] how you got there, you had to go down on a ship. They  
6 had three ships that belonged to the Panama Canal Railroad. The *Ancon*, the  
7 *Panama* and the, uh, *Cristobal*. Well, I went down on the *Ancon*, and they  
8 paid your way down through – your pay started the minute you set, set foot on  
9 that ship. And it was a seven-day trip and you stopped in Port-au-Prince,  
10 Haiti. And Port-au-Prince was a lovely place then. The natives would come  
11 out, swim out and dive for coins and [inaudible 04:17] for people. They want  
12 you to throw coins in – and [inaudible 04:22] Mr. Striped Shirt [inaudible  
13 04:26] they don't want to do that anymore, but it was fun. And the harbor was  
14 beautiful there, and we stayed from 7 in the morning until about 4 in the  
15 afternoon in Haiti, and we got a chance to go up the hill [inaudible 04:39] and  
16 hear the voodoo drums and [inaudible 04:43]. And then we got the, uh, rum  
17 there but you had to drink the rum before you got to Panama 'cause you  
18 couldn't take it in. [Inaudible 04:53] you didn't see a single soul [inaudible  
19 04:54]. You didn't see a single soul up on deck that night. They were all  
20 [inaudible 04:59] drinking their rum before they got to Panama [inaudible  
21 05:02].  
22

23 And then when we got there in Panama, there were seven us on the ship, and  
24 six of us went to the Pacific side, one nurse went to the Atlantic side. So – but  
25 she didn't mind, she didn't [inaudible 05:13] the rest of us [inaudible 05:14]  
26 the area. But she wasn't, she was from somewhere else, and she didn't mind.  
27 So anyway, uh, a representative of the governor met us when we got – when  
28 the ship docked there on the Atlantic side. And then you had [boat 05:28]  
29 train to take you from the Atlantic side to the Pacific side, and it only takes an  
30 hour and 20 minutes. So nobody ever in their right mind went through the  
31 canal on a ship because it took all day. And I worked in Panama for 3½, and I  
32 never had gone through the canal until I went in the navy [inaudible 05:47]  
33 that was the navy. [Inaudible 05:49]. But anyway, when we got to, uh,  
34 [inaudible 05:52], the [inaudible] met us, and she had us sign a pledge that we  
35 wouldn't go on duty drunk. I thought, oh my goodness, what I have gotten to?  
36 I'm was with a bunch of [inaudible 06:03]. Well, [inaudible 06:04] was a  
37 nurse [inaudible], and she was a terrible [person 06:10]. She was a prostitute,  
38 about the worst person in the whole of society. So I said [inaudible]. They  
39 were good to us, and we were the first nurses that they had had for months.  
40 They had a lot of older nurses but no young nurses.  
41

42 So we well-received, and we learned a lot down there because they had, uh,  
43 good doctors and [inaudible 06:35] because it was part army and part civilian,  
44 but it was all part of the United States, you know. But everybody respected

1 each other, they got along well, and it was a pleasure to work there in the  
2 Canal Zone then [inaudible 06:46] but that was really nice. It was [inaudible  
3 06:53] So we all got there. We got our places. We got our [inaudible 06:58].  
4 We didn't have a [inaudible 07:00] yet so they put us out on the porches of the  
5 big quarters and every day at 5:00, the birds would wake you up. Oh they had  
6 the noisiest birds, but they were [inaudible 07:09]. So we enjoyed'm. So  
7 pretty soon our quarters were built so everybody had their own place, but I  
8 stayed there – and then Pearl Harbor – this was in 1940, and Pearl Harbor was  
9 the 7<sup>th</sup> of December '41. So I was on duty that night and we didn't hear until  
10 about 5:00 in the evening because even with the time difference we didn't  
11 know. And I was working on a colored OB ward and we went right into  
12 darkness. Well, you could imagine trying to get the little dark babies to the  
13 little dark mothers in the dark. It wasn't that easy. Well, I said, I [inaudible  
14 07:45] take your little baby because [inaudible] the mothers going back and  
15 forth in the dark [inaudible 07:53].  
16

17 Then after that we went from about a 500-bed hospital to about a 1,500-bed  
18 hospital overnight because [inaudible 08:01] – 'cause we were the only  
19 military hospital and civilian hospital [inaudible 08:05] military. We had  
20 navy, army, marines, coast guard, people that came on the ships, everything  
21 [inaudible 08:12]. So I [wasn't called 08:15] from down there. I was in the  
22 Naval Reserves but I wasn't called from there because it was considered a war  
23 zone. They sent all the dependents out immediately and the word was that  
24 they were supposed to hit the Panama Canal the same time that they hit Pearl  
25 Harbor but they didn't realize the extent of what all they had done, so they  
26 [inaudible 08:31] but they could have hit us just as easily as they did Pearl  
27 Harbor because we were [inaudible 08:39]. But anyway, it [inaudible 08:43]  
28 right into our time [inaudible] I really came down and I thought [inaudible]  
29 asked me if I wanted to stay down there or if I wanted to go home and join the  
30 navy, you know, on active duty. Well, I said, I'd been down there for 3½  
31 years and I would really like to go home if it was convenient. So I got sent  
32 back to Washington, D.C., to Bethesda [inaudible 09:02] I was the only  
33 person in the world to join the navy to get sent home.  
34

35 But I had joined and, uh, I went on active duty in, uh, January of 1924. There  
36 were 110 in our indoctrination class. I was the first one. I didn't have any  
37 warm clothes because I'd been in Panama and they told us not to bring any  
38 warm clothes. They said, [inaudible 09:23] you won't need'm. So I thought,  
39 well, all right. [Inaudible 09:28] that didn't come together and it was freezing.  
40 So [inaudible 09:32] one girl [inaudible] and she asked me, she said,  
41 "[Inaudible] you got on," I said everything I own. I had my pajamas,  
42 everything [inaudible 09:44] 'cause I was freezing. So [inaudible 09:45]  
43 uniforms [inaudible] all right. So I had gotten my hair cut real short because I  
44 knew that the navy they didn't want your hair long, they didn't want

1 [inaudible]. So I got it cut real short. So when I got my cap on, it looks like I  
2 didn't have any hair. It was ridiculous. [Inaudible 10:08] the whole nine of'm  
3 laughed at me. [Inaudible 10:10] don't worry, it'll grow. But when the chief  
4 nurse was doing the [inaudible] stations, she was telling us how now we were  
5 navy nurses and we're supposed to wear our uniforms in a proper fashion, and  
6 she told us all these things [inaudible 10:25] I'll do that, and she said, and  
7 that's the way I want the hat to look and I look around [inaudible 10:32] and,  
8 you know, I had the last laugh because that's the way I was wearing my hat.  
9 [laughter] [Inaudible 10:40] oh you're so lucky to be going to Bethesda. They  
10 said they have private rooms, [inaudible 10:49] it's just like a [inaudible]  
11 hotel. Well, when we get to Bethesda, there was [inaudible 10:54]. They put  
12 us in the basement, 10 beds in the basement. We had a tunnel. When we went  
13 to the hospital, we had to go through the tunnel. We [inaudible 11:04]  
14 quarters. I said, we'll never know when it's spring because we're sleeping in  
15 the basement and we're going through the tunnel to work. [laughter] So  
16 [inaudible 11:12] until they found nice quarters [inaudible 11:14]. We, we  
17 could walk outdoors [inaudible] it was nice [inaudible 11:18].

18  
19 I stayed there for 18 months and then I got ordered to a hospital shift and that  
20 was very, very interesting. Now my roommate and I – I'm going to [inaudible  
21 11:30] my roommate on the ship. We had a, uh, a reservation in New York at  
22 the Commodore Hotel and the ship was, at the time, [inaudible 11:35]. And it  
23 was pretty hard to get a hotel reservation in wartime, you know, but  
24 everybody wanted to stay with us. [Inaudible 11:46] cots in our room, so I  
25 was going to have 13 cots in the room and I don't know how I was [inaudible  
26 11:50]. So when we got to New York, the chief nurse had a reservation for us  
27 in Brooklyn, which is where the Todd Shipyard was and where our ship was.  
28 So I got [inaudible] I did not have 13 cots [inaudible 11:56]. So I stayed on  
29 the ship for, uh, – we went, uh, – well, we were commissioned on May 12  
30 right after V-E Day, and we were going out to Japan getting ready for the  
31 invasion of Japan. So when our ship was ready, we sailed from New York  
32 and we went through the Panama Canal and that's one of my first trips through  
33 and my – I [couldn't have 12:26] my friends [inaudible 12:28] I was coming,  
34 so I told them I'd see'm soon and they knew I was comin', you know. So they  
35 [inaudible 12:32] of the locks, and the captain let her come on the ship. We  
36 were at [Inaudible 12:37] come on the ship and go on down through  
37 [inaudible 12:39] peacetime but [inaudible] in wartime, you know. I said I did  
38 keep my [inaudible 12:46] be all right. So they went, they came and they were  
39 with us and then I had a picture of us all at one of the night clubs there  
40 [inaudible 12:53]. They had these outdoor gardens [inaudible] doctors, nurses,  
41 we all got together and had a good time as we were going through.

42  
43 But when I got to Honolulu, another one of my friends was there that I had  
44 known in the Canal Zone. So she worked in [inaudible 13:11] and she lived in

1 a lovely place and she had a lovely bathroom and a bathtub. So we didn't  
2 have any bathtubs on our ship so I liked going to call on her. So she asked me  
3 one time, she said, you probably [inaudible 13:22] bathtub. I said, well, both.  
4 I said I really do. I mean I love you and I love your bathtub. [laughter] But  
5 she lives right here [inaudible 13:31] and I'm trying to get [inaudible 13:32]  
6 and her husband's here but he hasn't been too well so [inaudible 13:39]. But  
7 it's funny how you keeping running into people [inaudible 13:44] you knew  
8 from all over the world, you'd – you will keep running into them again.  
9

10 Well, this will take us up to – then when the [inaudible 13:50] – when we got  
11 to Japan, the war was just getting ready to be over. It was about the 29<sup>th</sup> of  
12 August. [Inaudible 13:58] we went in before it was officially over to take care  
13 of our prisoners of war because they were let out of the prison camps. And  
14 that first night, on August the 29th of, uh, 1945, um, they let 1,500 of them out  
15 and we were out there in Tokyo Bay, and we couldn't go anywhere because  
16 [the harbor had been bombed and they're still here 14:15]  
17

18 So we had to wait out in the open sea for the ships to [inaudible 14:23] the  
19 boats to come out and they were so happy to see us those prisoners. A lot of'm  
20 swam out to the ship, you know. And we processed about 1,500 prisoners that  
21 night and the ones that were well enough, we sent onto Honolulu on the  
22 *Jonathan Wainwright* and [inaudible 14:37] and, you know, all those people  
23 that had been [inaudible 14:44]. It was really very exciting. And then we had  
24 these three ships there. We had a navy ship, a army ship and a Dutch ship. So  
25 when, uh, things quieted down, we started separating people. We got the  
26 army together and the air force and we got the navy and the marines together  
27 and then the Dutch and the Australians and the Canadians. We got'm  
28 separated where they could get, uh, you know, the proper care and everything.  
29 And I had this one man [laughter] on, uh, on my ward, and he had a very bad  
30 leg and he was going to be sent over to the next ship. I said, [inaudible 15:12]  
31 we were – well by this time, we were all out at a pier right next to each other.  
32 I said, doctor, do you think he can go on gurney or should he walk over? Oh,  
33 he said, he, he has to go on a gurney.  
34

35 So a half hour later, I looked around, the man's gone. I said, what happened?  
36 [Inaudible 15:31] on that gurney, oh, he says, that ship's not air conditioned  
37 and he said he didn't like that ship. [laughter] He came back to ours and he  
38 said, I'm sick. He didn't [inaudible 15:40] that ship. And then, and then they  
39 issued [inaudible 15:46] prisoners of war [inaudible] had gotten [inaudible  
40 15:49]. They took the [inaudible 15:50] and [inaudible] parachute and he got  
41 hit by one of these [inaudible 15:54]. You know, and he had a fractured skull  
42 and they wouldn't help him. And he loved his navy, oh, they issued him navy  
43 clothing. And he'd lie in his bunk with his cap on. I said, [inaudible 16:03], we  
44 do not wear our cap to bed [inaudible 16:06] in the navy. We do not wear our



1 cap to bed, you know. But he liked it, so he [inaudible 16:10] let's let him  
2 wear his cap, so nobody [inaudible 16:13]. But he looked so pitiful and he  
3 had about three fractured [inaudible 16:16]. [laughter] And the doctor asked  
4 this one man, he said, uh, how much, uh, did you have for breakfast, uh? Oh,  
5 he said, I only had 17 pancakes. [laughter] And so the doctor said, well, I  
6 think a little too much [laughter] because you had to be careful, you know.

7  
8 But then after a while, we stayed there three months that time and then we  
9 brought a lot of the men back to, uh, the United States 'cause it was getting – it  
10 was right after Thanksgiving and they wanted to get'm home for Christmas –  
11 the [inaudible 16:45] to get'm near their home. So when we got to the United  
12 States, we went to San Francisco and most of the nurses were detached then  
13 because they were just – they were just gonna keep a few on and then go back  
14 and forth between Honolulu and San Francisco for the rest of – oh, for about  
15 two to three months. And a, uh, they take the [inaudible 17:06] home and  
16 they take the dependents out to Honolulu. And this was called Magic Carpet  
17 duty so we'd go back and forth. You know, that was really nice. And then  
18 there was going to be, uh, [inaudible 17:16] nurses stay on board and they  
19 were going [inaudible 17:18] Marshall Islands to do some atomic bomb  
20 testing. But I, I had already [inaudible 17:24] so I got [inaudible 17:25]  
21 because they, they were deployed [inaudible 17:28] and I could go back to  
22 Panama. So I got off and went home for a leave and then I went back to  
23 Panama.

24  
25 And I stayed there for another 3½ years because I had a trip I had to take  
26 [inaudible 17:39] South America on a Dutch freighter for 3 months and I had  
27 a friend – you can save up your time in Panama. You can get 2 months leave  
28 a year if, uh, you got 7 – you got 30 days leave, 24 days sick leave and 7 days  
29 [inaudible 17:55], you got 7 days travel leave. So you could take 61 days a  
30 year and you save up to 4 months. So this one friend of mine, we had this trip  
31 we wanted to take around South America and it was only \$1,000 and, and we  
32 were to be gone for 3 or 4 months depending on the cargo. So we had planned  
33 this trip forever since when we had first gotten there. So I had to go back to  
34 take this trip. And we took it and it was splendid. We went all around, we  
35 went through the Straits of Magellan. We stayed in Buenos Aires for two  
36 months and we stayed at this hotel we [inaudible 18:27] American money.  
37 [laughter] [Inaudible 18:31] and, and don't ever say you're an American when  
38 you get there and they say, we're Americans too. You have to be very careful  
39 to say you're a North American 'cause I read this recently and it said that they  
40 were Americans before we were. Yeah. [Inaudible 18:51]. But, uh, then I  
41 got my trip but then I got out of there.

42  
43 I left Panama and came home to go [inaudible 18:55] the G.I. Bill. I went to  
44 school. I wanted to get my, my BSN in nursing. So I went to Immaculate

1 Heart College and I was there when I got called back in for the Korean War.  
2 So I went back. I came into the United States on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August. I went  
3 out the 21<sup>st</sup> of September and I was in Japan. [laughter] I was in Japan on the  
4 30<sup>th</sup> and, uh, that hospital out there [inaudible 19:19], it went from a 100-bed  
5 dispensary in September to a 5,000-bed hospital in, uh, the end of December  
6 of – this was 1950. So – and that was good experience too. And we kept  
7 getting moved all the time because they needed our quarters for the patients,  
8 you know. So you never knew where you're gonna [inaudible 19:39]. There  
9 was one girl, she worked in the operating room so we knew her because most  
10 of us girls worked the afternoon shift. She said, you didn't put me in the  
11 living room, did you? Oh, we said, yes, [Chris 19:49], we said, we did. We  
12 thought you liked the living room because you were there last time. [laughter]  
13 So we put her in the living room. But then they built us a nice quarter. We  
14 had really nice rooms. But then I got [inaudible 20:01] – well, I never did get  
15 my [inaudible 20:02] orders [inaudible 20:03], you know. I was gonna tell  
16 you about that.

17  
18 Well, before I went to Japan during the Korean War, uh, 12 nurses had gotten  
19 killed, uh, in [inaudible 20:11]. They, uh, had a plane crash and they never  
20 did know what caused it to crash, never found out. But we got the [inaudible  
21 20:19] to take their place. We were up in Oakland waiting to go but they were  
22 just ahead of us. And my mother, she reads it in the paper. You know, my  
23 mother, she read every bit of news. So she calls me on duty crying. I said,  
24 what's the matter mother? Oh she said, I thought you were on that plane. I  
25 said, now mother you know I wouldn't go without telling you. She said, but  
26 your friend was on it and I did – I had a good friend that was killed on it. I  
27 said no Mother, I wasn't on it. So then I go off duty [inaudible 20:46] orders  
28 on the board, we had [inaudible 20:50] orders to take their place. So I called  
29 my mother [inaudible 20:53], uh, mother, I'm going to Japan. She said you're  
30 not flying are you? I said, now mother, you know they need us. I got to fly. I  
31 said accidents happen. You don't need to worry. [Inaudible 21:01] we'll be all  
32 right. So we got there. I went home for the weekend and then I went to Japan  
33 and that's [inaudible 21:11] all the patients and – Then I had – I stayed there  
34 for about, oh I was there about eight months in Japan. And we didn't have  
35 any time off 'cause we were so busy but then we got more nurses so we got  
36 some time off. So three of us, we had – it was still the occupation there in  
37 1950 and if you had your uniform on, you could go on the train for nothing.  
38 You didn't have to pay anything and the hotels were only \$1 a night [inaudible  
39 21:35] hotel. So three – [Inaudible 21:36] travel. So three of us decided we'd  
40 go to Tokyo in uniform and have a good weekend.

41  
42 When we get to Tokyo and the [inaudible 21:44] was about, oh about 30 miles  
43 from, uh, or 30 minutes from the train from, uh, Tokyo – so we – well, more  
44 or less. [laughter] [Inaudible 21:54] It wasn't far. So then we got down there

1 and we asked this lady if there – get – if we could find a place to stay that'd be  
2 nice for the weekend. She said, oh, she said, no. She said there's nothing.  
3 She said, no, it's very crowded and when – she said, where would you like to  
4 stay? Oh, I said, the Imperial and, of course, the Imperial [inaudible 22:11].  
5 She laughed at us. We said, well, we may as well start high and go down.  
6 [laughter] But she said, why? She said my husband [inaudible 22:23]. She  
7 says, uh, my husband's [inaudible 22:27] Korea. She said, I'll take you  
8 [inaudible 22:29] home with me for the weekend. So she took us home  
9 [inaudible 22:31]. She took us everywhere. She took us to the [Inaudible]  
10 Club [inaudible]. But they were really wonderful the way they took care of  
11 us.  
12

13 So we – I stayed there for about seven months and [inaudible 22:48] as much  
14 as I could because I [inaudible] everywhere. And then, I had [inaudible  
15 22:54]. Well, she had a farewell party. She fell [some way 22:59] and broke  
16 her arm. So she got her orders delayed and I got her orders. So I said yeah I  
17 wish just once I'd get my own orders. [Inaudible 23:05]. But I loved the  
18 Philippines and I stayed there a year. So after that, I went to Camp Pendleton  
19 in 1952 and I stayed there – and then I went back to school and finished up  
20 under the G.I. Bill and then I went [inaudible 23:21] got my BSN, I went back  
21 in the navy and I got sent back to Bethesda and I was there – and oh, I just had  
22 the best time. I wasn't going to school and I was enjoying everything. And  
23 [inaudible 23:34] said, Miss Price, wouldn't you like to go back to school? I  
24 said, are you out of your mind? I said, I just finished. I said, I'm, I'm  
25 [inaudible 23:40]. Oh she said, [inaudible 23:42], they have this wonderful  
26 instructor and she said, oh, this is her last year to teach and it's for hospital  
27 administration. I thought, well, [inaudible 23:51], I'm going to do my hospital  
28 administration. So I went to [inaudible 23:55] University at the same time I  
29 was in the navy. We were part time, and I finally graduated, and I did  
30 everything when I was working on my Masters and I told myself – I told the  
31 [inaudible 24:05], I said, I'll never do it. I cried over my dissertation. Oh, I  
32 did everything. But I finally finished. Everybody helped me, I got through  
33 and I graduated.  
34

35 Then they sent me to corps school and – to be a teacher. Now this is during  
36 the Vietnam War. So I was there to teach the little corpsmen and that was  
37 funny too because I had never taught before and I learned as much as I taught  
38 because, you know, [inaudible 24:27]. And, uh, we had to, um, show how  
39 you demonstrate the bath. Well you got somebody in the class to come up and  
40 you gave'm, right there in front of'm all, you gave them a bath and then had  
41 they had to show you the next day, they took turns giving the bath, you know,  
42 and you'd think they'd volunteer the person that they wanted to have the bath.  
43 So I was a little suspicious of [inaudible 24:46] Jordan. We want Jordan to be  
44 the patient and I said I don't know about that. But he'd been in the Marine



1 Corps and then he switched over to the navy to be a corpsman. So Jordan's up  
2 there, I'm giving him a bath. Well, he has 20 Korean tattoos. I'm telling you,  
3 it was hilarious, [laughter] it really was. I laughed as much as they did. I  
4 knew why he was volunteered.

5  
6 And now another funny thing was we were giving, uh, the injections. Usually  
7 we put sterile water in the hypos, and we'd [inaudible 25:14]. We had one  
8 of'm give us the injections to show that it didn't hurt [inaudible 25:19]. So the  
9 next day, they practiced on each other. They [inaudible 25:22] the corpsman,  
10 you know. So this one, uh, brave – I mean this one, uh, [inaudible 25:27]. I  
11 can't do it. I can't take it. I said, [inaudible 25:31], you saw me take that  
12 injection. He said, yes but you're a brave woman. [laughter] I said, yes and  
13 you're a brave sailor. [laughter] But – and then another time one of'm was over  
14 at the [inaudible 25:43] and he came back and he said, the doctor didn't talk to  
15 me. I said, well, the doctor doesn't talk to the nurse lots of times, you know.  
16 We don't think anything of it. The doctor has a lot on his mind. So then this  
17 one day, he [inaudible 25:54] and he tells me, the doctor talked to us. And I  
18 said, what'd the doctor say? Oh, he said, the doctor asked me for a cigarette.  
19 [laughter] I said, [inaudible 26:02]. [laughter]

20  
21 Well, after I finished in corps school, I went to, uh, Corpus Christi, Texas. Oh  
22 I love Texas. It was really nice. I did. And they were so polite there. And  
23 this one girl was from Massachusetts and she said, I never realized how rude  
24 the people in Massachusetts [inaudible 26:26] the sales people because in  
25 Texas, people say thank you for shopping with them and oh, they just want  
26 you to like their country. They do. Then I went to El Toro, and that's where I  
27 retired from. I retired [inaudible 26:37] five years in El Toro and I really liked  
28 it. Well, first I had orders for Massachusetts but I – they were cancelled and I  
29 got sent to El Toro and I was grateful cause I had never lived where it was  
30 really cold weather and I had never lived where – I had never driven in snow.  
31 So I wasn't looking forward to it so I was happy to come to El Toro. So when  
32 I retired, they asked me, they said, well do you want a army retirement or a  
33 navy retirement? And I had had half duty with the marines and half duty with  
34 the navy but I said, well, I've been in the navy all this time, I better have a  
35 navy retirement.

36  
37 And they, they thought that would be nice. So the women thought that would  
38 be real nice because they [pipe 27:12] you over the side, you know, when  
39 you're taking your retirement and, uh, [inaudible 27:15]. They said, oh,  
40 they're gonna dump you over the side. I said, well, they're gonna dump you  
41 but you don't call it that. [laughter] I said, [inaudible 27:25] they're gonna pipe  
42 you over the side. So they all came down to see my retirement and then I  
43 retired to San Clemente and I had really been – oh I had to give a speech. I  
44 forgot to tell you about my speech. I had to give a little speech when I retired.

1 So they were all lined up there, I had to review the new troops. So I told them,  
2 I said, the navy to me was like the magic carpet. I said it took me to foreign  
3 places, foreign shores and it took me places that I never thought I would go to.  
4 And I told'm that I thought – I hope that each one of them would find their  
5 magic carpet. And then I retired from the navy and went to San Clemente.  
6 [laughter]  
7  
8 [applause]  
9  
10 Thank you [inaudible 28:04].  
11  
12 Mary E. Price: You're welcome.  
13  
14 Vivian Peterson: This speech by Mary Price was given at the September 1, 1990, meeting of the  
15 Orange, uh, Women's Overseas Service League, Orange County, uh, Unit and,  
16 uh, this is Vivian Peterson. I am the, uh, one who's sending the tape.  
17  
18  
19/lj