PATRICIA YOUNG BERRI

Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Interview

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PREFACE

This transcript is the product of an interview conducted on 29 May, 1986, for the Women's Overseas Service League.

Signed, dated agreements of release and biographical information accompany the original cassette.

Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

Lansing, Michigan

1 June, 1989

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Oral History Project

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8 PATRICIA YOUNG BERRI

10 Denver, Colorado Unit

NOTE: Interviewer is Marjorie Brown of

12 the Denver Unit. MB: What is your name?

14 PY: Patricia Young Berri.

MB: When did you join the Denver Unit of WOSL?

16 PY: In the fall of 1948, I think. It could have been 1949.

18 MB: Were you in the Service?

PY: I was in American Red Cross Hospital Branch, as a

20 replacement late in the war.

MB: About what time did you come into the Service?

22 PY: February, 1944.

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

24 PY: I was a secretary for Shell and was doing USO work for the British because I had a British friend who

26 would come for me, and we would go where the tankers came in. I was living in Houston, Texas, then.

28 Tankers would come for oil and the boys would have a night at the British USO and leave the next day.

30 MB: What were your duties in the Service?

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My title was secretary, at the unit of Red Cross at 117th Station Hospital, Leyte, Philippine Islands. In that, I had turns at going on the wards as the recreation and social worker; and also sitting in the recreation rooms just like the other people. It was quite a change from secretarial work in an office.

How long were you in the Red Cross? Until March, 1945.

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

I was first assigned to the 117th Station Hospital

in Leyte, and then I was assigned to go into a field hospital unit to Japan: But after the atomic bomb, there was no need for hospitals as there would have been in case of invasion of Japan. I was a floater until I was sent to Talwon, where there was no one in Red Cross and a very small Navy unit. I stayed

there until there was a chance to be in line to go

home. Then I went to Samar to wai t for transportation back to the States.

While you were in the Red Cross, what kind of medical care was available to you?

The hospital staff; for anything, mostly fungus. [Laughter]

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Tell me about the uniforms that you wore?

All the Red Cross gear was unnecessary. We had to purchase suntans, boots (ankle-high boots), and suntan shirts. That was it. It was hot.

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

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 the people who cut cards: The highest card could go into San Francisco that night, and I cut the two of clubs right off. [Laughter] I've never been to San Francisco!

Then when we arrived in Leyte on the Lurlene,

which was a large transport at that time. It was the first time the Lurlene had gone into Manila; and without escort vessels. Mine was one of three footlockers lost out of the whole shipload. 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 felt at the bottom of the heap!

I had a very good friend who now lives in

Texas, and I have been able to see her all through

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the years. She was in Red Cross and left before I did. Of course, I was a replacement. She is still a vivid person, and I wish she were living here and could be a member of the unit here.

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

The latrine! I didn't mind the cold shower; I didn't mind the tent life; but I did mind sitting on the latrines. The little Philippinos would come and go with a great disregard of sex. [Laughter] But it was great.

Thank you.

94 End of Interview

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