

**Interview of Genevieve Manning Voelker on her service in the
U.S. Army Nurse Corps during WWII**

1
2
3
4
5 Virginia Cornett: My name is Virginia Cornett and I am chairperson of the oral history
6 project for the Louisville Unit of the Women's Overseas Service League.
7 Today's date is March 16, 1983. I am interviewing Genevieve Voelker of
8 Louisville, Kentucky. [0:21] Genny, we have a list of questions to ask
9 you. But before we begin, would you please fill us in on your
10 background?

11
12 Genevieve Voelker: All right. I was born in Vermillion, South Dakota. Um, after I graduated
13 from high school, I attended the University of South Dakota for 1 year.
14 After that, I was accepted at Saint Mary's Hospital School of Nursing in
15 Rochester, Minnesota. I graduated in 1940 and worked at the hospital for
16 2 years as a head nurse. And, um, then on Pearl Harbor Day we were
17 having a big, nice party [inaudible 01:07] and at that time we immediately
18 all – none of us had volunteered to go into the service prior to that. And as
19 [inaudible 01:19] look back and what I think is really rather interesting
20 speaking about the Red Cross, as soon as we graduated from nursing they
21 were trying to get us to become [inaudible 01:29], being young and
22 careless and carefree and obstinate. There was no way we were going to
23 be [inaudible 01:39] [chuckling] for some strange reason.

24
25 Well, the day, that Sunday, Pearl Harbor Day, um, came and the next
26 morning I remember very vividly walking into the director of nurse's
27 office and saying I would like to become a [inaudible 01:28] Red Cross
28 and I would like to because I want to volunteer in the army nurse corps, so
29 we took care of that. I didn't go out immediately because the Mayo Clinic
30 had a unit and they were going to go. They were going to get this unit
31 together and they were going to go and I would be a member of that unit.
32 Also, my father was ill and I thought, well, then I probably shouldn't leave
33 until...am I giving too much information?...until we actually knew what
34 was going to happen. So anyway, when he died in July and the Mayo
35 Clinic unit had not been activated yet and I was getting very impatient
36 sitting around Rochester working, and I thought I can't stand this or
37 tolerate this any longer so I went ahead and requested that I leave the
38 Mayo Clinic unit and just go ahead and go into the, a regular army unit.

39
40 So I received my orders to go to Camp Crowder, Missouri, and I reported
41 there on September 9, 1942, and, uh, there was no, no particular unit
42 involved. I was just in a regular army nurse corps. So I was there only
43 about a week in which time I received orders and was transferred to the air
44 force base in Sioux City, Iowa, which was 30 miles from my home which

1 rather distressed me because I had planned to see the world. And, um, so
2 then I spent 1 ½ years at the, uh, army hospital at the air force base in
3 Sioux City.

4
5 There were 5 of us sent from Camp Crowder, Missouri, to open the
6 hospital, 5 nurses. The hospital had been open I think for about probably
7 4 weeks staffed by the doctors and the army corpsmen. And the army
8 corpsmen resented us very much because they had everything all arranged
9 and they thought that they were doing well. And we, we, of course, didn't
10 resent them at all. We really enjoyed'm. But finally they became our very
11 good friends. Then, um, I never really had any desire to serve overseas
12 because frankly I didn't really know what was going to happen. I always
13 sort of like to know things and, um, however, that decision was made for
14 me by my chief nurse who wasn't really too fond of me after a while so
15 she – 3 of us were, shall we say, sent overseas. [chuckle] This was a
16 marvelous thing. Ultimately, all good, all things do have, come to a good
17 ending.

18
19 Virginia Cornett: [04:47] Genny, how long did you serve in the nurse corps and where are
20 some of the different places you served?

21
22 Genevieve Voelker: We left for overseas on the 7th of March from I have written down Camp
23 Stone, I think it was in San Francisco and, um, we were on, we went on a
24 [inaudible 05:07] which was very lovely, had been a very lovely liner and
25 with, um, but there were 5000 troops aboard. There were 14 of us in a
26 state room and so we were very happy 13 days later when we sighted New
27 Guinea. And some of the enlisted men on the shore at New Guinea came
28 out to greet us [inaudible 05:26] and kept hollering "You'll be sorry.
29 You'll be sorry." But we were, I was, I was, we were all very happy to
30 dock I believe.

31
32 So we stayed in Milne Bay and worked [inaudible 05:36] service until
33 September of 1944 when we, um, established our permanent hospital at
34 Hollandia, New Guinea. It was the 51st General Hospital. There were 105
35 nurses in the unit, but I don't remember how many doctors. So we stayed
36 in Hollandia until, um, I believe June of, um, '45, at which time we left
37 Hollandia for Manila and we were very happy to think we were going to
38 Manila because that would be civilization we thought, um, where in, in
39 New Guinea we had to wear trousers and long sleeves and all that
40 [inaudible 06:29]. And Manila it was so terribly warm and really very,
41 very uncomfortable so we, we still had to wear trousers during, at night
42 because of the mosquito control. So we stayed in Manila and were
43 stationed at Fort McKinley Hospital and, uh, we stayed there until the 11th
44 of November 1945, when we left for the States by way of, of Honolulu

1 and I was granted a 5-day delay in Honolulu because the, my fiancé was
2 stationed there. And then from there we were sent to, we arrived in
3 California and were discharged at Fort Sheridan, Chicago, Illinois, on I
4 think it was about November the 26th.
5

6Virginia Cornett: [07:24] What are some of the different, uh, jobs you did as an army nurse?
7

8Genevieve Voelker: I was a staff nurse, strictly bedside care, taking care of patients.
9

10Virginia Cornett: [07:37] Uh, did your experiences prepare you for a career after you left the
11 service?
12

13Genevieve Voelker: Well, I had, I already had my career and, um, it certainly made, uh, I think
14 broadened our, our concept of, of different things and made us much more
15 appreciative of people and just, just the situation in general.
16

17Virginia Cornett: [08:05] What was your pay?
18

19Genevieve Voelker: When we entered, we were paid \$90 a month and when we were over-,
20 went overseas we were paid \$150 a month. Then our pay after we became
21 first lieutenants then – I don't remember what the first lieutenant pay was.
22 I think it was \$175. But one thing that was rather unique in the army
23 nurse corps, one of the rules and regulations was that a girl had to be 30
24 years old before she could be promoted to first lieutenant. Now this I
25 believe was probably for everyone. Then I think the, uh, they were
26 lacking in getting volunteers so finally they had to go ahead and, and
27 promote everybody [inaudible 08:49].
28

29Virginia Cornett: [08:51] Was there a minimum age requirement for second lieutenant?
30

31Genevieve Voelker: Um, well, no, not really. I don't – I imagine probably 21, but all of us was
32 at least 21 having graduated from 3 years of nursing.
33

34Virginia Cornett: [09:09] Were you given equal opportunities for service and education?
35

36Genevieve Voelker: I would imagine. I would say yes.
37

38Virginia Cornett: [09:18] Do you recall any kind of extra training that you were given by the
39 army such as operating room procedures or [inaudible 09:28]?
40

41Genevieve Voelker: No, because they were, whatever your prior training had been is what
42 more or less determined what area that you served in the hospital.
43

1 Virginia Cornett: [09:43] What assignments were giv-, generally given to, to female nurses,
2 or did it depend on their experience?
3

4 Genevieve Voelker: Well, just your regular, regular hospital assignments. Of course, we had
5 our, our chief nurse and the assistant chief nurse which were
6 administrative; but the rest of us were doing our regular assignments,
7 operating room, um, staff nursing, supervisory work.
8

9 Virginia Cornett: [10:07] What was the nature of your housing?
10

11 Genevieve Voelker: When we arrived in Milne Bay, in the beginning we lived in tents and fo-,
12 had foxholes.
13

14 Virginia Cornett: [10:18] Did you put the tents up and make the foxholes?
15

16 Genevieve Voelker: We didn't. No, but I'm surprised we didn't. And, um, then we, um, later
17 lived in native huts when were in New Guinea. In Hollandia we had long
18 barracks that had an overhanging roof to keep the rain out. [phone
19 ringing]
20

21 Virginia Cornett: [10:38] By the way, what was the nature of the native huts? [chuckling]
22

23 Genevieve Voelker: Well, they were built off the ground on I guess more or less stakes on the
24 sides of them. They took the, the palm fronds and they ran, they sort of
25 laced them and put them on big long, long pieces of wood or of branches
26 off of a tree and they just nailed those to the side and overlapped them to
27 reinforce them so they were very rain repellant and the same way with the
28 roof.
29

30 Virginia Cornett: [11:05] What other types of housing did you live in?
31

32 Genevieve Voelker: When we were in, um, in Manila then we had, we had lived in Quonset
33 huts, which were very nice. And, um, we also had, uh, native girls, the
34 local girls – who we had housemates...
35

36 Virginia Cornett: Oh.
37

38 Genevieve Voelker: ...or house servant, whatever you wanted to call them. They did our
39 laundry for us whereas in New Guinea we, of course, had to do all that
40 ourselves.
41

42 Virginia Cornett: [11:34] What was the nature of your medical care?
43

1 Genevieve Voelker: Very good. First of all was we were young and healthy, so we really
2 didn't need that much.
3

4 Virginia Cornett: Okay. [11:44] What was a typical day like for you?
5

6 Genevieve Voelker: Um, well, we had to be on duty at 7:00 in the morning so I guess we
7 probably were at breakfast at 6:30 and, um, would report on duty. And
8 each, each of us had X number of people that we took care of and we just
9 had mastered all of the care that they needed during our, um, our period of
10 the day. Sometimes it was, we worked 12 hours, sometimes longer if
11 necessary. And just, just did the actual bedside nursing. We were on a
12 medical ward. We were on a surgical ward. I did a lot of work on the
13 dermatology unit. We did a lot, an awful lot of compresses and things like
14 that.
15

16 Virginia Cornett: [12:39] Did you find the, uh, the weather and just the general living
17 conditions very different from what you were used to here in the States?
18

19 Genevieve Voelker: Oh, very much so. We didn't have, of course, had no hot water and, um,
20 the water was limited. We couldn't drink it out of the faucet, and, um, we
21 had, just were allowed so much water to wash our clothes in, in New
22 Guinea. And, of course, the clothing that we wore was rather strange we
23 thought. We had to wear leggings when we were in Milne Bay and
24 Hollandia because of the mosquito situ-, malaria situation. So in order to
25 look chic we would cut the leggings down and get, use white shoe polish –
26 I don't know where we got the white shoe polish – and get them all fixed
27 up with white shoe polish, then we thought we looked quite nice.
28

29 Virginia Cornett: [13:28] Describe the leggings.
30

31 Genevieve Voelker: It was a canvas piece of material. It was probably a foot long. It went
32 from our ankle to our knee, it looked really awful, and it was laced on the
33 thigh. We wore men's trousers, also men's shoes. And, uh, some of the
34 shoes instead of wearing high tops when it was really quite warm, we
35 would take a razor blade and cut them down and make them into sandals
36 and then take shoe strings and lace them and tie them around our ankles so
37 we would look very, very feminine. We tried to look feminine.
38

39 Virginia Cornett: Oh really. [laughter] [14:05] Did you supplement your diet with native
40 foods?
41

42 Genevieve Voelker: We ate coconuts and bananas. And when we were in Manila that's where
43 I had my first mango and it was the most glorious, most glorious
44 experience I've ever had in my life. And so other than that, though, the

1 army provided – most of the, of the food was provided by the army. As a
2 matter of fact, when we were in – we had no towns in New Guinea as
3 such, they were just names on the map. When we got to Manila, we
4 couldn't eat in any of the restaurants because of the sanitation situation, so
5 we ate [inaudible 14:47].
6

7Virginia Cornett: C-rations.
8

9Genevieve Voelker: Well, it all depended upon what the ships brought in from Australia.
10 Sometimes we ate a lot of dried foods, dried eggs, and we had a lot of, uh,
11 say our jam and things like that that came from Australia. And then they
12 also sent some awfully good rabbit and lamb chops and things like that, so
13 our food wasn't too bad. But I always felt that the fellows were so much
14 worse off than we were so we really [inaudible 15:19].
15

16Virginia Cornett: [15:23] What did you do in your leisure time?
17

18Genevieve Voelker: When we were overseas we had, um, rather nice officers' clubs and they
19 had, uh, um, they'd have a base club [inaudible 15:36] all the different,
20 different areas with men. We partied. We had – Oklahoma came. Any
21 number of the musical productions from the States came over and
22 different kinds of entertainment. But we had, we had dances. We went
23 swimming a lot when we were in, in New Guinea. Uh, Hollandia had
24 more beautiful beaches than ever, we could ever imagine. Just it would
25 make a marvelous resort area we always thought. And, um, we, we played
26 bridge a lot and we played different, oh, Monopoly when it was raining,
27 and all those different things.
28

29Virginia Cornett: [16:20] Movies?
30

31Genevieve Voelker: Movies, uh-huh. We had movies.
32

33Virginia Cornett: [16:26] Were they fairly current or?
34

35Genevieve Voelker: Uh-huh. And most of the, uh, of the live productions that came were
36 really very high class. Every now and then they would come in with some
37 that were really quite obnoxious and they were received by everyone just,
38 everybody just really – I'm trying to think of a word – just did not accept
39 it well at all. I mean they, they knew that – I think our idea was conditions
40 were so bad there that we wanted things that were uplifting instead of
41 debased things.
42

43Virginia Cornett: [17:00] What were some of your memorable experiences?
44

1Genevieve Voelker: [inaudible 17:05].

2

3Virginia Cornett: [inaudible 17:06].

4

5Genevieve Voelker: Oh. All right. Um, the, the thing that comes to mind first of all is how
6very un-G.I. the army nurse corps was. Now, the regular army nurse corps
7was G.I. I'm sure, but we who had just volunteered for the duration
8weren't. We had no basic training. Somebody asked me how did we, how
9we learned how to salute. We learned that on our own. In fact, it was
10funny to see us walking down the street and one of us would nod our head
11off trying to salute somebody. Another thing about saluting, when we
12were in Hollandia, a Japanese, um, man who had been hiding out came
13through our area and several of the – he saluted and several of the nurses
14who he turned to salute didn't even realize he was a Japanese, which we
15thought was terribly funny. Then another thing when we were in
16Hollandia I thought was, was – or in Milne Bay in New Guinea, we had
17the outdoor bathrooms and they were outdoor privies. They were 16-hole
18affairs in 8 back to back. So one of the girls wasn't too fond of one of the
19chief nurses so she said "Can you imagine I sitting in there saying 'Would
20you please pass the paper, Thelma?'" And we thought that was quite
21funny.

22

23Then the day that I received my promotion, I was very busy doing a
24dressing on a patient in Hollandia Hospital and they came and told me that
25I was to report to, to the colonel's office, our commanding officer. So I
26said "Well, tell him that I'll be there when I get through with my
27dressing." The doctor said "I think maybe you should probably go now."
28So I did and, um, much to my surprise I, he presented me with my silver
29bars, and I don't even think I saluted. So then several friends of mine said
30"Well, I guess you're going to really be G.I. now aren't you? So you
31won't wear the plaid socks that we were wearing, we weren't supposed to
32be wearing?" So I said "Yeah, I think I'll wear them." So we all – they
33brought me some really, really loud ones. So this is how we, we en-,
34entertained ourselves. It kept us happy.

35

36And, um, then I guess one of the, another memorable occasion was when
37we were at, uh, the staging area in Manila waiting to come home and
38somebody came [inaudible 19:41] said they wanted volunteers to fly home
39and I said, oh heavens. I wouldn't want to fly all that distance because I, I
40just didn't. I thought I wanted to go on the boat. It would be much safer.
41So then they said "We're going to stop in Hawaii and Honolulu." And I
42said, well, then I immediately volunteered because my fiancé was in
43Honolulu, so then I was granted a 5-day delay in Honolulu and missed 3
44planes out of Honolulu to get to the States, but I had a very nice general

1 whose charge I was under. He told me that if anything happened to me
2 that he was in, would take care of me and see that I was [inaudible 20:18].
3 I had, I didn't have any problems with him.
4
5 By the way, I think I forgot to say that my maiden name was Manning and
6 I met the man that I married in, in Fort Worth, Texas, 10 days before I left
7 for overseas and we corresponded. And 1 ½ years later I saw him in
8 Hawaii and then I came back to the States and he, he came back probably
9 6 months later or something like that.
10
11 Virginia Cornett: [20:54] Were you ever in any immediate danger?
12
13 Genevieve Voelker: Not from bombing or the enemy because in the South, in the Pacific, there
14 was no female personnel allowed, any of the hospital personnel that was
15 allowed close to the [inaudible 21:08] lines in a station hospital and that
16 was back from any of the firing that the field, the evac units were all
17 manned by, by men. And the reason for our being back that far was
18 because of the, uh, of the Japanese, they were trying to, to prevent us from
19 getting hurt from the Japanese.
20
21 Virginia Cornett: [21:33] Were there ever any, um, problems with the, the natives?
22
23 Genevieve Voelker: No.
24
25 Virginia Cornett: Besides the Japanese.
26
27 Genevieve Voelker: And these natives were really very, very friendly people. They were quite
28 short, had very fuzzy hair, and were light, were, were a dark, were a, a
29 chocolaty brown. And they wore a piece of material around their waist,
30 bare at the top, men and women. And the men wore these white belts, it
31 was a machete. And they would put a belt around their feet and that way
32 shimmy up the coconut trees and knock off the coconuts and also knock
33 off the fronds to make our, our, our native huts with. And then I would
34 have the good fortune, I was dating an Australian officer and he took me
35 to a native village one Sunday and, where they were having a native
36 powwow and so all these different entertainments that they did. And just
37 the men were participating. They had their skin painted with orange lead
38 paint that they got apparently from some of the, off the ship someplace
39 and they had their heads all filled with feathers and newspapers and all
40 different things, white chalk. And each, each design on the body meant
41 something, so that was really interesting. They played different things.
42
43 Virginia Cornett: [22:59] Can you compare service careers then with the present?
44

1 Genevieve Voelker: I really, um, I really don't think I could. I really don't have any idea how
2 they would compare.
3

4 Virginia Cornett: [23:16] Did you experience conflict be-, between being feminine and
5 being a military professional?
6

7 Genevieve Voelker: As a military, uh, the only conflict that we experienced being, being
8 feminine I believe was when we were going to our boat, to get onboard the
9 boat to go overseas. The, there were 105 of us nurses who were made to
10 walk to the boat, and I think we had to walk about 5 miles. And the
11 doctors, they were probably 40 members, all rode so that was a bad, I
12 thought a rather bad experience. It had been very un-, unthinking on their
13 part. But, um, as being a military professional, we were received very
14 well in, in the States, overseas. The enlisted men really liked us all.
15

16 Virginia Cornett: [24:13] Were there any female doctors in your unit?
17

18 Genevieve Voelker: No. I don't think that female doctors were accepted in the army.
19

20 Virginia Cornett: [24:24] Did you use benefits of the G.I. Bill or were you entitled to them?
21

22 Genevieve Voelker: I was entitled to them, but I didn't, I didn't go ahead and, and continue my
23 education because I was getting, being married.
24

25 Virginia Cornett: [24:42] What demanded the greatest adjustment for you, uniform dress,
26 living with others, regulations, lack of freedom, terminology?
27

28 Genevieve Voelker: Oddly, one of the greatest, probably not an adjustment, but it was a
29 revelation to us why we were going overseas was we were [inaudible
30 25:05] a group of doctors at which time one of the doctors advised us that
31 we need not worry about if we became pregnant when we were overseas
32 because they had a footlocker full of contraceptives so we would have no
33 problem like that. We were quite shocked, very irate, wondering why,
34 what in the world these men must have had in their mind, their idea of
35 why we were there, who we were, and what we were. Well, we very soon
36 got all that straightened out. Our, our relationship with him was rather
37 cool although it was, it was ultimately became quite, quite friendly
38 [inaudible 25:40].
39

40 Um, our living quarters I believe was probably one of the most persistent
41 problems. We, um, when we were in Milne Bay we were sleeping in tents
42 on canvas, uh, camp, canvas camp beds with a straw mattress, which they
43 were constantly damp because of the moisture. Our shoes or anything that
44 we had that was leather were covered with a green mold every morning

1 we arose. We had to take them out in the sun and use much shoe polish on
2 them to keep them in shape.

3
4 Um, our – when we, then we went to Milne Bay and, uh, went to
5 Hollandia, we were in more or less you'd call permanent quarters, but they
6 really weren't. And at which time our, um, our director, our chief nurse
7 had called us to a meeting and they advised us that since we needed many
8 things for our quarters to make them feminine and home-like, anytime that
9 we happened to accept a date with an officer just to be sure to tell him that
10 we were really in dire need of things to make our quarters livable such as
11 dressing tables. Well, it was amazing how many each one of us, how
12 many dressing tables and chairs and straw mats and parachutes that we
13 received to, parachutes to cover the ceilings in our quarters. And it really
14 became quite homey and we just really felt very attached to it.

15
16 Um, our life of freedom didn't really enter into the picture because we
17 realized that we were not there for – of course, we all enjoyed having a
18 good time and all that, but we weren't there really to have too much
19 freedom, plus the fact there were no towns. The places in, in New Guinea
20 were really names on a map [inaudible 27:40].

21
22 Terminology was no problem. Um, and I think as I said before and I shall
23 stress that probably one of the most disagreeable regulation was actually
24 our dress because we had to protect ourselves from malaria therefore we
25 had to wear long sleeves, trou-, men's trousers, and things like that.

26
27Female: Forgive me for interrupting, Virginia, but I would like to ask Genny a
28 question. Forgive me, Genny, for not calling you Genevieve, but we
29 always think of you as Genny. Um, Genny, um, you have told us some
30 very amusing sidelights on a nurse's life in the, in the South Pacific.
31 [28:33] We have not heard yet, and I would like to ask you to say
32 something in regard to your patients, either people who were well known
33 to history so to speak or were important during wartime or a common G.I.
34 Though I really can't say that any of them were common, they were all of
35 them uncommonly brave men. And, uh, I wonder if you will fill us in a
36 little bit about their story, perhaps a sad story or a happy story. And then,
37 of course, I know that, uh, [inaudible 29:14] is going to want to ask you
38 last of all about what happened to you after you finished your service
39 overseas, and you can conclude with that.

40
41Genevieve Voelker: I believe that the thing that imp-, that impressed me and I'm sure all the
42 other nurses was the attitude of the G.I.s. They were absolutely the most
43 marvelous group of people as patients that we ever had. Nobody
44 complained. Everybody was very cooperative, always had a laugh, um, no

1 matter how bad the situation was. I, I think probably we all tried to just
2 maintain a cheerful [inaudible 29:56] and it wasn't really an artificial
3 cheerfulness because it was – I think a good attitude was probably one of
4 the most important things to anybody's recovery. And, um, they just were
5 an admirable group of people. I believe that when I was asked before if
6 anything had really affected my life, I think probably all I have to do is
7 reflect back on these men who were out there, um, and suffering, not
8 really suffering but enduring hardships that were just, just made ours look
9 like really at the Waldorf Astoria. So, um, I believe that was, that was one
10 of the most impressive things.

11
12 I don't want to get into – I have never really tried to dwell on sad things or
13 anything like that, but, um, one thing that was really rather heart-rending.
14 We had a patient who came in and being forwarded to the United States.
15 Both of his arms were broken. And if you ever saw such a sorry sight, it
16 was really, it was actually funny. He laughed and we laughed. And he,
17 his first question was "How am I going to love and hold my wife when I
18 get home with both arms broken?" And just various things like that
19 happened.

20
21 Um, speaking of important person, 2 other girls and I were asked by our
22 commanding officer to be private nurses for General George Kenney. He
23 was probably one of the most disagreeable people that, that ever was. Yet
24 just as so many other people, once you get, get under that little veneer that
25 they present, he was really quite a nice, shall I say, guy. Not disrespectful.
26 Um, a thing that was, was really very funny that the corpsman who was
27 helping us in his care, um, was from Oklahoma and his name was Ingmire.
28 We always called him Ing. He would do anything for us or for anybody.
29 General Kenney had the very bad habit of tossing cigarette butts on the
30 floor. We asked him on several occasions to please use the butt can.
31 Ingmire became very put out with this and his attitude and he walked up
32 one day to his bed and said "Now, General, if you don't start using the
33 butt can, you're going to [inaudible 32:26]." And that is another thing that
34 I should bring up. Um, we were very un-G.I., the nurses, the nurse corps
35 was. Uh, because no one, the minute that somebody came in to our
36 hospital or our camp or our ward under our care, their rank was left
37 outside the door. We never pulled rank on them; but when we did, what
38 we advised or suggested they did, very few questions were asked and we
39 had a very, very happy relationship.

40
41 Um, after I was discharged, um, being in, as we always said, away from
42 civilization for almost 2 years, it was really very strange when we came in
43 to Honolulu. We had never, we hadn't had hot water in a faucet. We
44 couldn't drink any water out of the faucet if we had faucets over there.

1 We came into Honolulu and here are cars zooming down the streets, we
2 were walking on the sidewalk. I was absolutely terrified. I wonder if I – I
3 don't know if I had a little jungle shock or what. But it was very terrifying
4 all this activity because we weren't used to it, accustomed to any of these
5 things for a couple of years, so it took a little while for us to – for me, I
6 should say, to become adjusted to that.

7
8 So I returned to my home in South Dakota. I had enough leave to carry
9 me until the 2nd or 3rd of February 1956, no 1946. And, um, I guess I was
10 home for about 6 weeks when several friends of mine called and asked me
11 if I would like to go to San Francisco, and so the 3 of us went to San
12 Francisco. We had no jobs, no apartments, lots of courage. That was
13 another thing that, that I learned from the army, we, we really developed
14 courage. I mean, we were really not – nothing, actually should I say,
15 stopped us. Nothing was a problem. We thought that we could – or at
16 least I did, I thought I could – no matter what happened I was ready. And,
17 uh, so we went. I went to San Francisco and worked for 6 months or 8
18 months until my hu-, my husband-to-be came home from Honolulu and,
19 um, where he suffered he always told me for 2 years in Honolulu. He
20 called me Genny from New Guinea. He felt terrible to think I was over
21 there living in tents and he was languishing on the beaches eating steaks
22 and things like that. And, um, so then I came home and accepted a
23 position with the Veterans Administration of Louisville, Kentucky where
24 he lived, and a year later we were married [bell].

25
26 Virginia Cornett: [35:11] What was the year?

27
28 Genevieve Voelker: 1948. I started with the VA in December of 1946 and worked for a year.
29 And then I was in the hospital for 9 months with a little spot on my lung
30 and was discharged in July. And I was married the 28th of August 1948,
31 and have lived happily ever after.

32
33 Virginia Cornett: You have worked, though, I know since.

34
35 Genevieve Voelker: I hadn't worked. I did no – as soon as I was married then I didn't work
36 until my husband died. When he worked then, I mean when he died then I
37 took over the [inaudible 35:51] the food brokerage company which he had
38 run quite successfully. And I, I continued that for 15 years at which time I
39 think [inaudible 36:02] business world were changing considerably and I
40 thought that it would be, it would be much better for me that I would just
41 sell the business since my son was really not interested in being in sales.
42 And I then started to work with the public health department and I worked
43 for the public health department for 13 years. Very, I was really happy
44 with the decision I made.

1

2Female: Well, thanks very much for answering my question, Genny.

3

4Genevieve Voelker: You're welcome.

5

6

7/mlc