

RITA GEIS

Denver, Colorado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Reminiscence

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Rita Geis

PREFACE

This transcript is the product of a tape-recorded reminiscence conducted 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*

1987

RITA GEIS

2 Denver Chapter

RG: I was a conscription nurse; I 'd serve one year, and then
4 be through. Instead, Pearl Harbor came along in
December, so I remained in the service. Most of my
time

6 in the service was done in the surgical nursing depart
ment; I also did supervision and ended up as chief
nurse

B of a general hospital. In this time, (it was three-
and-a-half years) my experiences were in World War II;
in

10 Europe and Korea; in Japan; and all over the USA,
moving approximately every three years.

12 Our living conditions weren't always the best. I
moved from tents to barracks; to apartments; to my own
house,

14 eventually. Our uniforms varied in this time. We
probably had about five or six changes in my three-and-
a-half

16 years.

IB Many interesting experiences; one that was a great chal
lenge to me was to take the hospital unit overseas
during wartime. I got my chance in 1965, going to El
Paso,

20 *Texas, taking the 106th General Hospital which had 40
nurses, and some of these Cabout five or six) were
male*

22 *nurses. We arrived in Yokohama, Japan, on the 15th of
December, and we were ready to take patients by the
31st.*

24 *We had four huge, concrete buildings. We set up a
thou sand beds in this area. I really should
say, we took*

E6 over a recreation center which had a gymnasium, church,
mess hall. The buildings were there, but it took a
lot

EB of hard work to get it in shape to see patients. Almost
From the day we opened up the hospital and all the while
30 I was there for two years, every week we received a bou
quet of Flowers From an unknown donator. To this day, I
3E don't know who it was. U)e never knew.

MB: How many patients did you average a day while you were
34 there?

RG: Well, most of the time we had about seven or eight
hun
36 dred, but during the TET offensive we were Filled up—
and we had only the GIs; the Army, Navy, Air Force,
Marines
30 and Coast Guard.

One amusing thing happened one day. I went through the
40 wards, and there was quite an uproar going on. We
asked who it was, and some GI put up his cast and said,
'Look,
43 who did this?" There was "Navy" written across all the
casts in the ward! CLaughterD Many other unusual
things
44 happened since that time.

I retired in 1971, and since that time I have done quite

46 a bit of volunteer work including with the Red Cross,
the church, and various clubs. I am now Commander of the
48 Women's Metropolitan Post E06, of Denver, which is
the only women's post in Colorado.

50 *I enjoy traveling quite often to various places I*
haven't seen. I 've enjoyed the UIOSL groups, and
especially their
52 *friendship. I was President in 1976 till 1978, and had*
to be retired. This concludes tape 1 of the Denver
Unit.

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Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

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Lansing, Michigan