

**Interview of Sarah Penrose “Penny” Schemmel Edlin
on her service in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during WWII**

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Dorothy Harrison: This is Dorothy Harrison, interviewing Penny Edlin on her experiences the Second World War. [00:08] So let's begin, Penny, with your biographical information, your name, when you entered service, and something of your background, where you born, and your education, and so on.

Penny Edlin: I was born in Hibbing, Minnesota, in 1922. Uh, my name is listed as Sarah Penrose Schemmel; however, most of my life I've gone by Penny.

Dorothy Harrison: [00:39] Let me, let me interrupt here and ask you to spell your last name.

Penny Edlin: Capital S, c-h-e-m-m-e-l.

Dorothy Harrison: Good. I wanted that because, um, this will not necessarily appear on the written portion of this and so the typist who is going to do this will like to know how to spell that correctly.

Penny Edlin: [laughter]

Dorothy Harrison: Go ahead.

Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. Uh, my father was, uh, a mining superintendent and so we were moved around the northern part of Minnesota throughout all of the, uh, iron mining sections, uh; however, uh, you might say I grew up within a 250-mile radius of Hibbing, uh, Minnesota. And I attended, uh, the Junior College at Hibbing and then went on to the University of Minnesota, where I graduated in 1943 in physical therapy. Uh, shortly thereafter, I graduated in June and then in August I was sworn in to the army. I went directly in. Uh, and, uh, was assigned to Nichols General Hospital here in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dorothy Harrison: Oh, that's the way you got to Louisville, Kentucky!

Penny Edlin: [laughter] Yep. Mm-hm. And at that time, they told us that unless you volunteered, you would not be going overseas. So I figured my stay at Nichols was going to be a long one. Of course, I was [laughter] green, I didn't know any better at the time. Uh, they – in January, no, I think it was in late fall – they said they weren't getting enough volunteers for overseas duty so you would be assigned. By the way, I also went in with a Second Lieutenant commission.

1 Uh, so in January – er, latter part of December, I received orders to go and
2 – to Spokane, Washington, and join the 82nd General Hospital, which was
3 going overseas. Uh, we did not, at that time, know where, but uh– so
4 anywhere, I took a short leave, came home, uh, to say my fond farewells
5 and then about mid-January, went out and, uh, joined the unit, uh, which
6 was st-, uh, oh, training beside Baxter General Hospital in Spokane.
7 However, when I got out there, I found that I was going to be one of about
8 ten girls to join the unit there. The rest would be picked up at the Port of
9 Embarkation. Uh, and the girls were the fir-, five Red Cross workers, uh,
10 two PTs, two dietitians, and one nurse, who was affiliated with Baxter at
11 the time.
12
13 Well, Baxter did not know really what to do with us. I mean, they didn't
14 have enough work to do for us to be spending a whole lot of time there
15 and the fact that we didn't know from day-to-day whether we were going
16 so they kind of, uh, didn't give us anything to do, so the men of our unit
17 decided, well, they were going to put us in training with them. So we had
18 to learn how to drive every vehicle on the post and all the boys had a big
19 time. They'd take us out and they'd say, "Okay, there's a body over there.
20 Now take this ambulance and go over into that field." And I was, at that
21 time about, about 105 pounds and was going across this field, of bouncing
22 up and down.
23
24 Dorothy Harrison: [laughter]
25
26 Penny Edlin: But then they took us – we had to go through the booby trap school with
27 them, and the gas chamber with them and the hikes, except we didn't have
28 shoes to fit us so they put men's boots on us that uh...
29
30 Dorothy Harrison: The smallest size.
31
32 Penny Edlin: [laughter] ...the smallest size. But anyway. We finally received orders
33 then to, uh, oh, go across country to Boston.
34
35 Dorothy Harrison: [05:15] Now you were still at this point...
36
37 Penny Edlin: ...still with the 82nd.
38
39 Dorothy Harrison: ...still with the 82nd.
40
41 Penny Edlin: And this – I stayed with the 82nd for my whole uh...
42
43 Dorothy Harrison: ...career.
44

1 Penny Edlin: ...career. And, um, so they split our unit. One took a northern route and
2 one took a southern route to – I guess to confuse the enemy where we
3 were going. [laughter] And, uh, we had it up – I was on the northern, uh,
4 group.
5

6 Dorothy Harrison: [05:40] And you were going by train.
7

8 Penny Edlin: By train. [inaudible 05:41].
9

10 Dorothy Harrison: [You had gone out 05:42] by train and you were...
11

12 Penny Edlin: Yes. But this was a troop train and, uh,– but we had a lot of fun going
13 across country. Uh, we – the officers were in one section and kind of
14 toward the end so, uh, at night – I know one night, we had a weenie roast
15 in the caboose. [laughter]
16

17 Dorothy Harrison: [laughter] Well, nothing [inaudible 06:05].
18

19 Penny Edlin: And another funny thing that happened - we had to stop every day. It
20 took about 10 days to go across country because we were going up and
21 down and around. And this was up in northern Minnesota again. Mind
22 you, my – round my own home, er...
23

24 Dorothy Harrison: ...territory?
25

26 Penny Edlin: ...area, area. And, uh, we had to stop and once a day and have 15 minutes
27 of exercise or running or something to...
28

29 Dorothy Harrison: ...keep you active.
30

31 Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And, uh, the colonel had said as long as there were only the 10 of
32 us we did not have to be in – stay in uniform if we didn't want to. We
33 could...
34

35 Dorothy Harrison: ...be in dresses.
36

37 Penny Edlin: ...just were our cities. So of course we were wearing slacks when we got
38 out in that cold weather. And we stopped at this one station and energy to
39 out and an old man – I'd say about, probably had been in World War I,
40 looked at us and said, "Mm-hm. Troop followers."
41

42 Dorothy Harrison: [laughter]
43

44 Penny Edlin: [laughter]

1
2Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 07:04]...
3
4Penny Edlin: So...
5
6Dorothy Harrison: ...he must have thought that the army was very accommodating to...
7
8Penny Edlin: [inaudible 07:07].
9
10Dorothy Harrison: ...since you got the places on the train.
11
12Penny Edlin: But anyway, we finally, uh, got out to Camp Miles Standish. And at that
13 time, we were, uh, there of course with many, many units because we
14 were – we went in the largest convoy ever to leave the port, or the largest
15 one...
16
17Dorothy Harrison: ...up to that time.
18
19Penny Edlin: ...up to that time. And...
20
21Dorothy Harrison: [07:33] What – which port?
22
23Penny Edlin: It was out of Boston.
24
25Dorothy Harrison: Uh-huh.
26
27Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. But we were at Camp Miles Standish where they processed us,
28 changed us from our blues to the olive drab uniform and all of that. And
29 made sure all of – we were, of course had all of our immunizations and
30 whatnot. And then, uh, left out of Boston about – I don't know the date.
31 It was the last part of February.
32
33Dorothy Harrison: 1944.
34
35Penny Edlin: 1944.
36
37Dorothy Harrison: [08:05] Now pause just a minute here, Penny...
38
39Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
40
41Dorothy Harrison: ...and let me ask a question. You said you got out of your blues, and in to
42 olive drab. Well of course I understand olive drab. [laughter]
43
44Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.

1
2Dorothy Harrison: But, uh, they – did they have these, um, uh, uniforms on-hand to fit you
3 with? Or did you already have the olive drabs?
4
5Penny Edlin: No, they – we were sent over to a big distribution center and you to-, told
6 them what size you were in...
7
8Dorothy Harrison: Right.
9Penny Edlin: ...in your blues – you turned in your blues and...
10
11Dorothy Harrison: [Gotcha 08:34].
12
13Penny Edlin: ...they issued you your olive drabs.
14
15Dorothy Harrison: ...olive drabs. Now you said you were in blues. I'm not familiar with the
16 word "blues." [08:40] What – was this a blue uniform?
17
18Penny Edlin: This was...
19
20Dorothy Harrison: Meant for nurses? Or...
21
22Penny Edlin: ...before, this was the uniform before the olive drab came out. And this
23 was back in the 1943 –, uh, well, '44 and '43. This was what we – I was
24 in when we went in to the army. Were, um...
25
26Dorothy Harrison: [08:58] Was it a light blue, or a dark blue?
27
28Penny Edlin: ...it was a dark blue. The capes – we had the big capes.
29
30Dorothy Harrison: [09:03] You had capes?
31
32Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. That were lined in kind of a maroon.
33
34Dorothy Harrison: ...maroon.
35
36Penny Edlin: And, uh, the piping was in maroon.
37
38Dorothy Harrison: ...maroon.
39
40Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
41
42Dorothy Harrison: And you had a little, uh, cap.
43
44Penny Edlin: Yeah.

1
2Dorothy Harrison: [09:12] What kind of a – was it a hat...
3
4Penny Edlin: It was um...
5
6Dorothy Harrison: [09:17] With a bill on the front?
7
8Penny Edlin: One – it was exactly the same as the olive drabs. One was – we had a one
9 with the bill, and then gee, I’ve forgotten what the, the name of the one
10 [laughter] that just sat on your head.
11Dorothy Harrison: ...sat on your head. On the side.
12
13Penny Edlin: Uh-huh.
14
15Dorothy Harrison: Okay.
16
17Penny Edlin: And, uh, at that time we were in – also, we were in white uniforms when
18 we worked in the clinics, when you had your blues. When you went in to
19 – when we went overseas we went into seersucker, uh, wraparound
20 uniforms with the seersucker hats and uh...
21
22Dorothy Harrison: [09:56] And also, didn’t you have slacks finally overseas? Uh, seems to
23 me that, that someone said, “Well, at least it may have been in evac
24 hospitals,” or...
25
26Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. We were not issued slacks.
27
28Dorothy Harrison: You were not. [10:09] You wore just seersuckers all the time.
29
30Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. We wore the seersuckers for duty and then the, uh, you know,
31 your olive drab skirts and whatnot. Uh, we wondered why they were
32 setting up these tents within, oh I guess about a half a mile radius.
33 Because we could see them going up. Uh, and it was all around the
34 hospital. Uh, then the Colonel stood up at lunch and said, “We are going
35 back. I want everybody to go back to the wards immediately and we will
36 have a, uh, quick inspection. All patients are to go to the back to the
37 wards and we will search their beds and pillows and all of their
38 belongings.” Well, they found glass, knives, forks, everything imaginable
39 that had been sharpened and whatnot. Uh, the – it turned out that a report
40 had been received that all prisoners in, uh, England were going to, uh, try
41 a massive escape on Christmas Eve because they felt that the, um,
42 Americans would be celebrating and this would be a revolt within the, uh,
43 island itself. Uh...
44

1Dorothy Harrison: Strange that they would have – with an island, how could they have
2 expected to get off? Obviously they just meant to create...
3

4Penny Edlin: ...create complete havoc.
5

6Dorothy Harrison: [Concurrently] ...havoc. Uh-huh.
7

8Penny Edlin: And, uh, but this was what – why they had completely surrounded our unit
9 with MPs, uh, and another group of, uh,– there had been stationed some
10 paratroopers, uh, in the area preparing to go over and make their jumps
11 and whatnot so they put those – completely surrounded us, uh, to give us
12 protection. Uh, also on Christmas Eve morning about, uh, 5:00, we –
13 there was a lot – there was – you could hear bombs dropping. They
14 dropped close enough so they broke some of our windows but it wasn't,
15 you know, that really, they were going to hurt us. But some of the planes
16 had gotten through and had dropped enough...
17

18Dorothy Harrison: [12:47] Was this – did they feel this was a support move for the, for the,
19 uh, hospital patients that were going to riot? Was this the idea?
20

21Penny Edlin: No, this was the Germans that had broken through and gotten some of the,
22 uh,– they were giving the air support.
23

24Dorothy Harrison: Yep.
25

26Penny Edlin: They were giving the air support for the people that were supposed to be
27 escaping.
28

29Dorothy Harrison: Oh, wait a minute. I must be sure. They're in England.
30

31Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
32

33Dorothy Harrison: This, this – we're still at Whitchurch.
34

35Penny Edlin: We're still at Whitchurch. And these were German bombs...
36

37Dorothy Harrison: Planes – coming.
38

39Penny Edlin: ...that were dropped, uh, close enough. The – and it was the only time
40 that...
41

42Dorothy Harrison: [13:24] Did you ever have anything...
43

44Penny Edlin: ...anything...

1
2Dorothy Harrison: ...come near you?
3
4Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And the, uh,— we were awakened — we heard this noise but we
5 were awakened really by the chief nurse coming through and saying, “All
6 people reporting for 6:00, run from hut to hut.”
7
8Dorothy Harrison: Because of shrapnel.
9
10Penny Edlin: Because they were — just in case, you know, they were worried that they
11 might get closer than what they were and to make sure that all of the, uh,
12 oh, blackout shades, I mean boards, were up.
13
14Dorothy Harrison: ...were up.
15Penny Edlin: And things like that. But so anyway that was one thing where it had
16 filtered through, uh, and...
17
18Dorothy Harrison: But interesting that they should have had that good, uh, spy organization
19 that messages could have gotten to the continent.
20
21Penny Edlin: And it was very odd because every patient you treated, you’d think...
22
23Dorothy Harrison: “Is this one of the ones?”
24
25Penny Edlin: “Is this one ours?”
26
27Dorothy Harrison: Mm-hm.
28
29Penny Edlin: And we gave them excellent treatment. There was no doubt about it. But
30 getting back also to the fact that, um, they would not claim that they could
31 speak English. We had a whole clinic full — and I would say there would
32 have been at that time about 15 in the clinic at one time. And I was ma-
33 massaging this one boy, and none of them claimed to be able to speak
34 English. And I was massaging this one boy and he, he was just a baby.
35 Really. And I said, “[Aubitt 14:56]?” That was the name of one of our —
36 Corporal [Aubitt 14:59]. I said, “How old do you have to be before you
37 get whiskers?” And he said, uh, “Oh, I guess 14 or so. At least...” And I
38 said, “This kid doesn’t even have peach fuzz.” And with that they all
39 snickered so we knew that...
40
41Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 15:21].
42
43Penny Edlin: ...they could understand. So that’s how we found out that there was a
44 whole lot [inaudible 15:26].

1
2Dorothy Harrison: ...a lot more that could speak English. Well when we were in Germany
3 we found that the young people – this was before the Second World War –
4 1936 when I traveled there, that the young people were almost all
5 educated in English.
6
7Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
8
9Dorothy Harrison: You could only – if you didn't – if you couldn't find an older person, you
10 asked a young person and they could speak English.
11
12Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
13
14Dorothy Harrison: [15:42] What – how did you manage with the German patients? Did you
15 have an interpreter who went around with you or did you, um, did you use
16 the German officers?
17Penny Edlin: Well, we – if it became absolutely necessary we used the German officers.
18 The nurses on the floor – there were German, there were a few German
19 doctors there too. And they would call in – the doctors would call in the
20 doctors. However, we had several doctors that could speak German.
21
22Dorothy Harrison: Mm-hm.
23
24Penny Edlin: So we tried...
25
26Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 16:12].
27
28Penny Edlin: ...you know...
29
30Dorothy Harrison: ...use these people...
31
32Penny Edlin: ...uh, accommodate our...
33
34Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 16:15].
35
36Penny Edlin: Yeah. And, uh, everything. But in about, uh,– it was in March, uh, most
37 of the patients were then able – we had rehabilitated them where they were
38 well enough that they could all be transferred over into prisoner camp...
39
40Dorothy Harrison: ...camp.
41
42Penny Edlin: ...at the hospital. So then we reverted back to our American patients.
43
44Dorothy Harrison: [16:42] And this was at what time? How long did you have them?

1
2 Penny Edlin: In March. We had – from about November until March.
3
4 Dorothy Harrison: ...until March.
5
6 Penny Edlin: It was about five months...
7
8 Dorothy Harrison: ...you had the German patients.
9
10 Penny Edlin: ...I'd say.
11
12 Dorothy Harrison: [16:49] And this was a hospital that came from the Cherbourg peninsula,
13 was it?
14
15 Penny Edlin: From the – in an underground hospital at Brest.
16
17 Dorothy Harrison: What – Brest.
18
19 Penny Edlin: ...Brest.
20
21 Dorothy Harrison: Oh, excuse me. I'm – my mind is wandering when you talk about it.
22
23 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. Uh, so and one of the interesting things was one of the first
24 patients or – within the first few weeks of American patients, my
25 husband's – who wasn't my husband at the time but I was dating him –
26 brother came in as a...
27
28 Dorothy Harrison: Patient?
29
30 Penny Edlin: ...as a patient.
31
32 Dorothy Harrison: Oh, my.
33
34 Penny Edlin: He came in to one of the hospitals in our hospital center, which was
35 usually – there were, I don't know how many, but three or four hospitals
36 within an area and then they had a headquarters center, uh, and he was in
37 one of the others so we just moved him over into ours, which made it very,
38 very nice.
39
40 Dorothy Harrison: ...nice. [17:44] Now Larry, um, was, um, Lawrence B....
41
42 Penny Edlin: Lawrence B. Edlin.
43
44 Dorothy Harrison: ...was with the administrative staff.

1
2 Penny Edlin: Yes. He was the hospital adjutant.
3
4 Dorothy Harrison: Adjutant. Okay, and of course in the army.
5
6 Penny Edlin: Yes. Uh-huh. Uh, then, uh, we kept our, uh,— we had the patients on V-E
7 Day, which was a big celebration. Uh, our doctors ordered – for medicinal
8 purposes...
9
10 Dorothy Harrison: ...a large quantity... [laughter]
11
12 Penny Edlin: ...an ounce-and-a-half of liquor for each patient. [laughter] And the staff
13 went around with – one food cart with beer, one food cart with [laughter]
14 the medicinal.
15
16 Dorothy Harrison: ...with the medicinal plus ice. [18:36] Did – could you have any ice? Did
17 you have [inaudible 18:37].
18
19 Penny Edlin: Yes. We had ice. Uh-huh.
20
21 Dorothy Harrison: ...and water, so it was, it was on the rocks...
22
23 Penny Edlin: [laughter] ...rocks.
24
25 Dorothy Harrison: ...whatever it was.
26
27 Penny Edlin: And, uh, all of us girls had, uh,— oh, they also had hooked up a
28 loudspeaker system because we knew it is, it was coming and so that it
29 could be announced over the loudspeaker system. Uh, also all of us girls
30 had brought over, uh, a formal - or a long dress...
31
32 Dorothy Harrison: I did too. I had a formal dress.
33
34 Penny Edlin: ...for that, for that day. So we were all dressed up and the patients got up
35 and lined the walks – all those that could – could, because of the li-, or
36 [laughter] they didn't have their neighbor's liquor and theirs too.
37
38 Dorothy Harrison: [laughter]
39
40 Penny Edlin: ...and watched while we went over to the dance – we were having a dance
41 that night and wouldn't you know. The inspectors, a nurse, and another
42 inspector – and I don't know what headquarters they were out of...
43
44 Dorothy Harrison: [19:44] Don't tell me they came and ordered you out of your formals!

1
2 Penny Edlin: They came and ordered – read the colonel and – the colonel and the chief
3 nurse did not go to the dance – or party, because they...
4
5 Dorothy Harrison: ...they wanted to be able to...
6
7 Penny Edlin: ...wanted to be able to say that they had seen it and so the inspectors came
8 in and ordered us all out and back and into Class A uniforms. So you can
9 imagine what...
10
11 Dorothy Harrison: That was, that was a place where, where a relaxation of orders should have
12 followed, and where someone was sticking...
13
14 Penny Edlin: ...too tight...
15
16 Dorothy Harrison: ...too tight to the book.
17
18 Penny Edlin: And uh...
19
20 Dorothy Harrison: It – sometimes, you know, sometimes it really got to you.
21
22 Penny Edlin: It really did.
23 Dorothy Harrison: And then there were the – bless them, the ones who said, “Oh, phooey!”
24 [laughter]
25
26 Penny Edlin: Phooey, yeah. [laughter] Well, you know, after what everybody’d been
27 through and whatnot and then the excitement of it all. And what
28 difference...
29
30 Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 20:35].
31
32 Penny Edlin: ...would it have made.
33
34 Dorothy Harrison: ...made. And the men loved...
35
36 Penny Edlin: Oh, they just oohed and aahed and I don’t care what – we could have been
37 in just anything other than this olive drab stuff that they had been looking
38 at, you know. And, uh, they just thought we were the most beautiful...
39
40 Dorothy Harrison: ...most beautiful. And everyone – every time they looked at you, where
41 they – they were seeing another woman in that dress.
42
43 Penny Edlin: That’s right.
44

1Dorothy Harrison: You know? [laughter]
2
3Penny Edlin: That's right.
4
5Dorothy Harrison: Someone they loved.
6
7Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. So then, on – we – our unit was closed on D plus 1 year. And
8 we were moved over to, uh, France, uh, to, uh, close – or, to, to run
9 hospitals that were – had just recently come over to France and would be
10 moved on into the, uh, oh, the...
11
12Dorothy Harrison: ...into the Occupation Zone?
13
14Penny Edlin: No, into, uh, over into Japan. The...
15
16Dorothy Harrison: Oh, I see. I see.
17
18Penny Edlin: [inaudible 21:43] Theater. The uh...
19
20Dorothy Harrison: The war wasn't finished.
21
22Penny Edlin: No. Uh-uh. And they were gonna be then taken down and shipped over
23 to Japan.
24
25Dorothy Harrison: And you were older personnel so...
26
27Penny Edlin: And we had been there...
28
29Dorothy Harrison: ...you had higher, a higher – points.
30
31Penny Edlin: ...Mm-hm. So what we were gonna do was go in and work those
32 hospitals till they were closed and then just move from one to the other.
33
34Dorothy Harrison: Yeah.
35
36Penny Edlin: And, uh, so, we went from, uh, down to Southampton and over to Le
37 Havre. And un, there were, uh, many units, uh, and I cannot remember the
38 camp that we were – from Le Havre we went to, uh, a camp and then...
39
40Dorothy Harrison: [22:25] Was it in Le Havre, or near Le Havre...
41
42Penny Edlin: It was above – oh, we went in trucks, so I know – and we had to go
43 through Paris.
44

1Dorothy Harrison: Oh.
2

3Penny Edlin: So it was...
4

5Dorothy Harrison: ...it was on the east side of Paris, beyond Paris.
6

7Penny Edlin: And it was an area where they held – there were several hospital units
8 being held – and what they were gonna do see, was move in half a unit –
9 half of our unit and then move out half of their – the, the hospital that we
10 were taking over...
11

12Dorothy Harrison: Yeah.
13

14Penny Edlin: ...it would move out half of their unit and half of ours would be [advanced
15 23:01].
16

17Dorothy Harrison: Half the personnel, we're talking about.
18

19Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. Yes. And then they would be trained for two days and then the
20 other half would [inaudible 23:07].
21

22Dorothy Harrison: ...would go.
23

24Penny Edlin: ...would move in. And this was kind of a holding area for that. So
25 anyway, we finally – we did take over a hospital in Saussan. This was a
26 hospital full of displaced persons.
27Dorothy Harrison: Very interesting.
28

29Penny Edlin: And there were times in which we did not have anybody in the clinic,
30 again, who could speak English because they were all – some of them
31 were Poles, Russian – Russian...
32

33Dorothy Harrison: ...Russian.
34

35Penny Edlin: ...Poles...
36

37Dorothy Harrison: ...Poles. Lithuanians. Estonians.
38

39Penny Edlin: Any, anything.
40

41Dorothy Harrison: Austrian.
42

43Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
44

1Dorothy Harrison: I had such a mix once too.
2

3Penny Edlin: And sometimes they were, uh, oh, civilians, sometimes they were...
4

5Dorothy Harrison: Personnel.
6

7Penny Edlin: ...army. Uh-huh.
8

9Dorothy Harrison: Slave laborers. Sometimes they were army.
10

11Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. And so we, uh,— then that hospital was closed and we closed that
12 in oh, let's see, this was in June and I would say latter part of August.
13

14Dorothy Harrison: Of '45.
15

16Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And then we went up to Tulle, France. I don't know if it was up
17 — or, anyway we went to Tulle...
18

19Dorothy Harrison: Tulle.
20

21Penny Edlin: ...France. And, uh, did the same with that hospital.
22

23Dorothy Harrison: [24:35] What were your, what were your patients here?
24

25Penny Edlin: They were, uh, mostly American.
26

27Dorothy Harrison: Yes.
28

29Penny Edlin: Uh, then I was sent home from, uh,— from there. I had enough points at
30 this point and, uh, oh, was sent home. One of the things while we were at
31 Tulle, there wasn't a whole lot for — in physical therapy at that time. So
32 they...
33

34Dorothy Harrison: It wasn't wounds so much as sickness.
35

36Penny Edlin: That's right. So they sent me to, uh,— and here again, I'm getting old. My
37 memory doesn't serve me. Because it was just for five days, I know.
38

39Dorothy Harrison: Mm-hm.
40

41Penny Edlin: We went over to the — and it was a large hospital complex and there were
42 many, many hospitals there, and we worked, uh, in a couple of large
43 clinics but [laughter] the thing that impressed me most at that point was
44 there so many of us that, uh, our showers were scheduled according to a

1 roster. If you had a shower – and that was – I only had one shower for the
2 five days I was there and I was – I know it was 2:00 in the afternoon so I
3 had to take off time [laughter] to go get...
4
5 Dorothy Harrison: ...a bath.
6
7 Penny Edlin: ...and take my shower.
8
9 Dorothy Harrison: Well at least you had a bath.
10
11 Penny Edlin: But at least I had one. And uh...
12
13 Dorothy Harrison: [25:59] Now what was it that you did on this five days of detached duty?
14
15 Penny Edlin: I was working in this hospital where they did have...
16
17 Dorothy Harrison: ...just, just the same thing. Physical therapy.
18
19 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. Physical therapy. Uh, but anyway – I was discharged back
20 home in October of '45. And uh...
21
22 Dorothy Harrison: You came home just about the same time I did. I came home in October
23 too.
24
25 Penny Edlin: And, uh, then...
26
27 Dorothy Harrison: [26:28] Now what stage had your romance reached at this point?
28
29 Penny Edlin: Well at this point – we had been – my husband and I had of course met
30 before we went overseas and...
31 Dorothy Harrison: Oh, had you!?
32
33 Penny Edlin: Yes, at – up in the eighty – he was adjutant of the 82nd all the way through.
34
35 Dorothy Harrison: [26:43] So he was in, in Spokane?
36
37 Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And, uh, we double dated the first time we went out. I was with
38 somebody else and he was...
39
40 Dorothy Harrison: ...with somebody else. But you switched partners. [laughter]
41
42 Penny Edlin: Well within, within a week to ten days we were dating. And then, before
43 we went to Tulle, he transferred out to a until that was going to overseas –
44 or go, go to Japan.

1
2Dorothy Harrison: Sent to go to Japan.
3
4Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And, uh, so everything was just kind of, you know, up in the air.
5 We kept saying that we would be married. We wanted to wait till we got
6 back to this country to be married because there was nothing that was
7 uh...
8
9Dorothy Harrison: ...very permanent and normal...
10
11Penny Edlin: ...normal...
12
13Dorothy Harrison: ...where you were. Right.
14
15Penny Edlin: ...or anything and, uh, also, uh, I was the youngest one in the until I
16 celebrated my twenty-, I was only twenty-one when I joined it and uh...
17
18Dorothy Harrison: You're still under 25.
19
20Penny Edlin: ...so, uh, and, uh, so he kind of felt that I may have been using him as a
21 substitute for the – my home situation or something. [laughter] But, uh, of
22 course I didn't. And so when we got back – I – so, he was down in
23 Marseilles getting ready to go to Japan...
24
25Dorothy Harrison: ...Japan [inaudible 28:09].
26
27Penny Edlin: ...when V-E Day – or...
28
29Dorothy Harrison: V-J.
30
31Penny Edlin: ...Day...
32
33Dorothy Harrison: Yeah.
34
35Penny Edlin: ...occurred. So he actually got home before I did. [laughter]
36
37Dorothy Harrison: That was sneaky, wasn't it?
38
39Penny Edlin: So anyway, he stayed in the army then until, uh, March of '46.
40
41Dorothy Harrison: ...six.
42
43Penny Edlin: And then we were married August first, in Hibbing, Minnesota, of '46.
44

1Dorothy Harrison: 1946.
2

3Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And then I returned to Louisville where I started [laughter] in my
4 army career and continued on with the Veterans Administration.
5

6Dorothy Harrison: [28:45] Did you go to work with veterans? I forgotten that.
7

8Penny Edlin: Yes, Uh-huh.
9

10Dorothy Harrison: [28:48] And how long were you with...
11

12Penny Edlin: I was only with the veterans about six months and then went in to private
13 – to a private hospital.
14

15Dorothy Harrison: Private hospital. I know that you ended your career as head of the
16 physical therapy unit. [29:04] Was is director? Or...
17

18Penny Edlin: Yes.
19

20Dorothy Harrison: ...supervisor. I'm not...
21

22Penny Edlin: Director.
23

24Dorothy Harrison: ...Director of physical therapy. Physical therapy at...
25

26Penny Edlin: Parkway Medical Center.
27

28Dorothy Harrison: Parkway Medical Center, right here in Louisville. And a responsible
29 position it was. Um, that I think covers a good portion of your service
30 very, very well. And, uh, I had been thinking of the various questions that
31 – we, we were supposed to ask you from time to time had you not been,
32 uh, able to...
33

34Penny Edlin: [inaudible 29:41]. [laughter]
35Dorothy Harrison: ...flow so well with your story. Uh, and I think that you have beautifully
36 covered almost all the subjects. What uniform you wore, what your living
37 conditions were like [audio skips] this.
38

39Penny Edlin: Six beds in these little, oh, cinder block huts. They were, uh, not too well
40 constructed because when we had a snowstorm, sometimes we ended up
41 with snow on our beds that had been filtered through the ceiling. And we
42 had one stove in the middle of the hut that was – we measured it one day –
43 it was nine inches in diameter and eleven inches high and no grate and, uh,
44 that we could, uh, – during the winter we could light it at 5:00 in the

1 afternoon and let it burn. And we had – we were allotted so much coal
2 and that was it.
3
4Dorothy Harrison: [30:47] You had coke too. Did you not?
5
6Penny Edlin: Yes, mm-hm. Maybe it was coke, I don't know.
7
8Dorothy Harrison: It was very hard to light...
9
10Penny Edlin: ...light.
11
12Dorothy Harrison: ...I remember.
13
14Penny Edlin: And then it would – we could keep it going until we went to sleep. We
15 became very adept at dressing under the covers in the morning. [laughter]
16
17Dorothy Harrison: So you wouldn't have to get out of bed.
18
19Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. And our, uh,– I know we had the fire buckets in our hut, for
20 every other hut had fire buckets. And I know some of the girls – the first
21 ones up would say, "There's ice on the floor [inaudible 31:19]."
22
23Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 31:19] buckets. [laughter]
24
25Penny Edlin: [laughter]
26
27Dorothy Harrison: They began to appreciate the 19th century when people used to break the
28 water in their pitchers.
29
30Penny Edlin: [laughter] That's right. But then when we were in England, uh, I mean in
31 France, we lived actually in the hospital itself because they had rooms
32 where they had certain areas where the staff lived and then in, uh, the one
33 up in Tulle, there was, uh, little houses around that we lived in. And that
34 was in the summertime so we didn't have any...
35
36Dorothy Harrison: You had no problems of cold, whatnot.
37Penny Edlin: ...problems, no. Uh-huh. The mice were the only problems. [laughter]
38 And that was minimal. I mean we didn't...
39
40Dorothy Harrison: You were lucky. I had rats...
41
42Penny Edlin: ...rats.
43
44Dorothy Harrison: ...in my chateau.

1
2 Penny Edlin: [laughter]
3
4 Dorothy Harrison: Was not fun and I can remember going down to get, uh, the lids off of
5 large, uh, food cans in the kitchen and I would block up the holes that the
6 rats were – had gnawed behind the wallpaper in the bedroom and, uh,
7 jammed these lid tops down so that the rats couldn't get into the bedroom,
8 but they could get freely into the bathroom. And we'd close the door.
9 And in the morning the, the, uh, porcelain, or the enamel of the tub and the
10 toilet and the wash basin would be covered with little foot marks. It
11 was...
12
13 Penny Edlin: Yuck.
14
15 Dorothy Harrison: ...just yucky. I – rats, I think I would not care to live with.
16
17 Penny Edlin: No. We did – in England we did have, uh, just one large latrine that had,
18 uh, some showers and of course – and that as about a block from the...
19
20 Dorothy Harrison: ...little huts where you were living.
21
22 Penny Edlin: ...little huts. And we would have to walk...
23
24 Dorothy Harrison: ...walk down...
25
26 Penny Edlin: ...there, with your flashlight at light – you know, at night...
27
28 Dorothy Harrison: ...night.
29
30 Penny Edlin: ...and, uh, [inaudible 33:18].
31
32 Dorothy Harrison: That was not too good if you had weak kidneys. [laughter]
33
34 Penny Edlin: No, and during some of those cold winter nights...
35
36 Dorothy Harrison: ...nights.
37
38 Penny Edlin: ...it wasn't...
39 Dorothy Harrison: Yeah.
40
41 Penny Edlin: ...uh too good.
42
43 Dorothy Harrison: So the last thing you did was take that walk down to the latrine.
44

1 Penny Edlin: [laughter]
2
3 Dorothy Harrison: [laughter] And the first in the morning.
4
5 Penny Edlin: ...morning.
6
7 Dorothy Harrison: And on those dark winter nights in England it was not too pleasant I am
8 sure. The whole situation of latrines is very seldom ever mentioned.
9
10 Penny Edlin: ...mentioned.
11
12 Dorothy Harrison: But yours were proper toilets and uh...
13
14 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
15
16 Dorothy Harrison: ...they weren't...
17
18 Penny Edlin: No, they were not the holes... [laughter]
19
20 Dorothy Harrison: ...the holes that you had to struggle with...
21
22 Penny Edlin: [inaudible 33:54]. Uh-uh.
23
24 Dorothy Harrison: ...on the continent.
25
26 Penny Edlin: And we had one bathtub.
27
28 Dorothy Harrison: Oh, they gave you a bathtub?
29
30 Penny Edlin: Uh-huh.
31
32 Dorothy Harrison: Did they have a black line marked where the water should come to?
33
34 Penny Edlin: [laughter] Uh, no.
35
36 Dorothy Harrison: I had – I saw many, I saw many English households with, um, a line
37 marked, painted on the tub inside and that was the line where you were
38 allowed to have your hot water.
39
40 Penny Edlin: No, these – I guess maybe because the hospital was built for Americans,
41 and they were [inaudible 34:27] ...
42
43 Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 34:28].
44

1 Penny Edlin: ...just put in.
2

3 Dorothy Harrison: [34:30] Could you have as much hot water as you wanted to in the
4 hospital?
5

6 Penny Edlin: Uh, no and your water pressure, as I say, was very, very low.
7

8 Dorothy Harrison: ...low.
9

10 Penny Edlin: Uh, I don't remember that that was a...
11

12 Dorothy Harrison: ...problem.
13

14 Penny Edlin: ...too much of a problem. I think it was more of an understanding, you
15 know, that you...
16

17 Dorothy Harrison: ...that you would be fair about it.
18

19 Penny Edlin: ...Uh-huh. And uh...
20

21 Dorothy Harrison: [34:54] Now how about – how about the – that covers your living
22 conditions pretty well. Uh, were you able to beautify your little concrete
23 hut at all? I mean did you have curtains? It had blackout curtains,
24 certainly.
25

26 Penny Edlin: It had blackout curtains. And so that was – that kind of elimi-, they
27 weren't curtains, they were boards.
28

29 Dorothy Harrison: Oh they were boards. That's interesting.
30

31 Penny Edlin: And big boards that you had to clip on. And so therefore, you couldn't put
32 too much on them.
33

34 Dorothy Harrison: ...dressing on them.
35

36 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
37

38 Dorothy Harrison: [35:23] So and you, you didn't have bedspreads...
39

40 Penny Edlin: No.
41

42 Dorothy Harrison: ...or such – it was strictly army?
43

1 Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. You had – army, and then you to – you had inspections
2 periodically just to make sure that it was...
3
4 Dorothy Harrison: [35:34] ...you put your, you put your locker underneath – your footlocker
5 underneath you bed?
6
7 Penny Edlin: Yeah. Oh, at the end of your bed.
8
9 Dorothy Harrison: At the end of your bed.
10
11 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
12
13 Dorothy Harrison: [35:44] And then you had upright lockers for [inaudible 35:49]?
14
15 Penny Edlin: No you had...
16
17 Dorothy Harrison: Hanging lockers?
18
19 Penny Edlin: No, there was – you had just poles. For...
20
21 Dorothy Harrison: ...for coats.
22
23 Penny Edlin: ...uh-huh, for – to hang up your things. Uh, and then we had, uh,
24 [inaudible 35:59].
25
26 Dorothy Harrison: [36:00] Horizontal poles or vertical poles?
27
28 Penny Edlin: Horizontal.
29
30 Dorothy Harrison: [36:02] Horizontal poles at the end of the hut?
31
32 Penny Edlin: Yeah, well at the – behind each of your beds.
33
34 Dorothy Harrison: Oh, I see.
35
36 Penny Edlin: So your clothes were kind of hanging down above you. Uh, and one
37 center light.
38
39 Dorothy Harrison: For the whole room.
40
41 Penny Edlin: For the whole room. And there was ...
42
43 Dorothy Harrison: You didn't do much reading in bed, did you.
44

1 Penny Edlin: No, uh-uh. And there was just, really, enough rooms for the seven beds
2 and a pathway kind of through – by the time you got all the foot lockers
3 and everything in there, uh, if you wanted, what some of the girls did was
4 put it – there was enough – if they were by the stove, uh, then that gave
5 them a little bit more, uh, room.
6

7 Dorothy Harrison: [inaudible 36:44] ...amount of space.
8

9 Penny Edlin: And so they would put theirs close to the head of the bed and, you know,
10 abut them side by side.
11

12 Dorothy Harrison: [36:54] Did they, um, – what were – what was the color of inside of, of the
13 – just cement color?
14

15 Penny Edlin: Just cement. It was...
16

17 Dorothy Harrison: That was one thing I did have. I had a room I could decorate. [laughter]
18

19 Penny Edlin: [laughter]
20

21 Dorothy Harrison: I had a bedspread, which I was able to buy in the civilian market and, uh,
22 you know, I was able to dec-, I had a chair – an easy chair in my room. I
23 never had a chance to sit in it very much but I had one.
24

25 Penny Edlin: [laughter]
26

27 Dorothy Harrison: The only chair...
28

29 Penny Edlin: Uh-huh.
30

31 Dorothy Harrison: ...in the room, but it was...
32

33 Penny Edlin: Our huts all had names. And uh...
34

35 Dorothy Harrison: Oh, they did? Well that was at least gave you a little...
36

37 Penny Edlin: ...so we would put a little sign on the outside. And our hut was a Whatnot
38 Hut.
39

40 Dorothy Harrison: A Whatnot Hut.
41

42 Penny Edlin: And the rea-, how that came about, uh, oh, Larry was, uh, oh, giving out
43 orders one day at a meeting and, uh, he said, “Officers, nurses, Red Cross
44 workers, and whatnots.”

1
2Dorothy Harrison: ...whatnots. [laughter]
3Penny Edlin: [laughter] So that...
4
5Dorothy Harrison: I love that!
6
7Penny Edlin: ...that, that left the dietitians and physical therapists. [laughter]
8
9Dorothy Harrison: ...physical therapists. That's right.
10
11Penny Edlin: And there were, there were, there were three dietitians, uh, actually. And
12 we picked up a third one. And, uh, so that left five, uh, five and then there
13 were two, there were two nurses but they were kind of outnumbered at that
14 point. So we called it the Whatnot Hut.
15
16Dorothy Harrison: Whatnot. I think that was a very appropriate title.
17
18Penny Edlin: [laughter]
19
20Dorothy Harrison: [38:28] How many of the girls married men in your unit? They must have
21 been – they were long associated, so...
22
23Penny Edlin: Oh, we had lots of them. I married, of course, Larry the adjutant. Uh, one
24 of the dietitians married the, uh, oh, mess officer. Our chief nurse married
25 our commanding officer when we – they got back to the States. Um, we
26 had, that I can think of, three nurses that married, uh, either administrative
27 officers or medical assist-...
28
29Dorothy Harrison: Medical...
30
31Penny Edlin: ...medical administrative officers. And about four nurses that married, uh,
32 corpsmen when they...
33
34Dorothy Harrison: Corpsmen.
35
36Penny Edlin: ...got back to the States. Uh, we had a Red Cross worker that married the
37 sergeant major.
38
39Dorothy Harrison: Oh, I see. [inaudible 39:31] [laughter]
40
41Penny Edlin: So we had really...
42
43Dorothy Harrison: ...a very large number of, of uh...
44

1 Penny Edlin: ...and there may have, you know, more that I...
2
3 Dorothy Harrison: ...that ripened after the...
4
5 Penny Edlin: Uh-huh. Yes. Uh-huh.
6
7 Dorothy Harrison: ...war was over.
8
9 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
10
11 Dorothy Harrison: Well that is, that is quite a list. I think we're coming to the end of our tape
12 very shortly, so I – and I think I have asked all the questions that are, are
13 appropriate. [39:57] One I do remember was about – did you – did the
14 men treat you as inferiors? Now, that sounds like a women's lib question.
15 And I, I never had any experience of that kind nor did I feel that the girls
16 themselves were feeling, uh, that they had to maintain their feminine
17 rights of any sort. Did you get that feeling?
18
19 Penny Edlin: No. The men were very protective.
20
21 Dorothy Harrison: Yes. They were. And [inaudible 40:25].
22
23 Penny Edlin: And, uh, we were not – from our hospital unit, we were not allowed to go
24 on leave or out on any sightseeing tours or anything unless one or two –
25 'cause we went in groups all the time...
26
27 Dorothy Harrison: Yes.
28
29 Penny Edlin: ...unless there were one or two men with them.
30
31 Dorothy Harrison: ...with them. Now this was even in England.
32
33 Penny Edlin: Yes.
34
35 Dorothy Harrison: Mm-hm.
36
37 Penny Edlin: And uh...
38
39 Dorothy Harrison: And so much so on the continent.
40
41 Penny Edlin: Yes.
42
43 Dorothy Harrison: That was nice. They were protective.
44

1 Penny Edlin: And – but we were just one big family, really. We’d been through
2 everything...
3
4 Dorothy Harrison: [40:55] You didn’t find any that resented your presence?
5
6 Penny Edlin: Oh, no. Uh-uh.
7 Dorothy Harrison: But particularly not in the hospital. I think you were about to say, “highly
8 respected.”
9
10 Penny Edlin: ...highly respected. That’s right. [laughter]
11
12 Dorothy Harrison: Um, that, um, that is the way I always felt we were treated, that we were
13 cherished and respected and I know that the men moderated their language
14 from...
15
16 Penny Edlin: [inaudible 41:18].
17
18 Dorothy Harrison: ...four-letter words if we were even anywhere within sight. And I was
19 amazed at the, at the fact that they would never use anything except the
20 most respectable language in front of us. As they would have done at
21 home.
22
23 Penny Edlin: That’s right.
24
25 Dorothy Harrison: And, um, uh, the only way I learned of some more four-letter words was
26 by hearing around the corner. [laughter]
27
28 Penny Edlin: [laughter].
29
30 Dorothy Harrison: Um, at any rate. Now, let me ask you – we have been talking while we’ve
31 changed reels and you told me that you recall that just before you closed
32 down the hospital at Whitchurch in western England on the Welsh border
33 in Shropshire, which they call Salops too.
34
35 Penny Edlin: Oh.
36
37 Dorothy Harrison: S-a-l-o-p-s.
38
39 Penny Edlin: I never heard that.
40
41 Dorothy Harrison: I found that out, not too long ago. I found it on a map. Um, that you
42 received some prisoners of war – American prisoners of war who had been
43 interned in Germany and, uh, I think this is very necessary to put in as to
44 what had happened.

1
2 Penny Edlin: Yes, we, uh, received many, uh, patients from – that had been released
3 from the prisoner – from the prisons in Germany. Uh, and you can
4 imagine after we had given their people such excellent care, what mixed
5 emotions we had when we received these patients that were very, very
6 thin. Matter of fact, they were skeletons with – covered with skin. Uh,
7 they were even unable to close their eyes. Uh, and they were very, very
8 ill.
9
10 Dorothy Harrison: They were, they were emaciated. They were – they had been starved.
11
12 Penny Edlin: That's right.
13
14 Dorothy Harrison: [43:31] And what was their – what were their symptoms, beside this awful
15 thing at night? Tell about how going in to the wards at night you could
16 see...
17
18 Penny Edlin: We'd go in to the wards at night and there would – it would just be like
19 skeletons lying there with half-open eyes because they, they were so weak
20 they couldn't even close them. Uh, we found – but of course, we have to
21 remember this too. When the Germans were losing the war, they were
22 without food lines, and whatnot, and they were gonna take care of their
23 own before they'd worry...
24
25 Dorothy Harrison: Yes, they were [inaudible 43:56] food supplies. Right.
26
27 Penny Edlin: ...about the prisoners, so it was a different. It was a little different,
28 maybe, situation. But one of the things that happened was when our
29 soldiers went into these camps and released, uh, the, uh, patient –, uh, the
30 prisoners, and saw the condition they were in, they wanted to help them,
31 so they gave them their candy bars and they gave them, you know, the
32 food that they had and, of course, the digestive system was such at this
33 time it just made these poor people sicker and very nauseous, and they
34 threw it all up.
35
36 Dorothy Harrison: ...threw it all up.
37
38 Penny Edlin: So there had to be an order issued that these people were NOT to be fed
39 when they were released. Uh, we...
40
41 Dorothy Harrison: [44:44] Who did? I've, I've often wondered about this. Do you know
42 how they tr-, first treated them because obviously by the time they got to
43 England, they had had to be fed, or they never would have made it.
44

1 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
2

3 Dorothy Harrison: They had to be fed from the time that they were released. [44:59] I mean,
4 what did they do? Did they have medical teams that went in?
5

6 Penny Edlin: I'm sure they must have because the – a lot of them were – we had to treat
7 by IVs – I don't remember exactly how they, you know, came to us. Uh,
8 and they responded fairly fast so I'm sure when they went in, there must
9 have been teams that went into these areas because especially after the
10 first one or two because they found that this was, uh, very kind of par for
11 the course...
12

13 Dorothy Harrison: Yes. Right.
14

15 Penny Edlin: ...as far as this was concerned.
16

17 Dorothy Harrison: They must have been – they must have had teams prepared to go into the
18 prison camps because I've never met anybody who did it.
19

20 Penny Edlin: No. Me neither.
21

22 Dorothy Harrison: But they must have had and perhaps the medical officer, whatever unit
23 was, uh, freeing the prison camp was the one that first met them.
24

25 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. Uh...
26

27 Dorothy Harrison: And they must have had a different – there must have – the prisoners must
28 have been in different condition, so that the most recent ones...
29

30 Penny Edlin: Yes.
31

32 Dorothy Harrison: ...in better condition.
33

34 Penny Edlin: ...than the older, than the older ones.
35

36 Dorothy Harrison: ...than the older ones. Perhaps you got the...
37

38 Penny Edlin: We...
39

40 Dorothy Harrison: ...worst of the lot.
41

42 Penny Edlin: Well, we got – it was a mixed – mixed group because, uh, they were sent
43 back to us, checked out, and were flown home. They did not, they did not
44 go back by boat. Anybody that was released from our hospital...

1
2Dorothy Harrison: Yeah.
3
4Penny Edlin: ...uh, was sent back – as soon as they were able to travel, they...
5
6Dorothy Harrison: They went back.
7
8Penny Edlin: ...were se-, they went back. And I could remember there were several
9 cases where an anniversary or a birthday or something was coming up and
10 they wanted to get back for that so badly and it was stretched a little bit.
11 You know maybe they weren't quite ready to go but the psychological
12 effect was going to be greater than anything.
13
14Dorothy Harrison: ...than the physical. Mm-hm.
15Penny Edlin: So we saw to it that they got back at that time.
16
17Dorothy Harrison: You didn't make the – the girls go back and take their formals off.
18 [laughter]
19
20Penny Edlin: [laughter]
21
22Dorothy Harrison: Put on Class A uniforms. You bent the rules for the need. Um, ...
23
24Penny Edlin: Another thing, uh, that I might – this might not be exactly the time to
25 mention it but, uh, I was a member of the Physical Therapy Corps. Now
26 that now longer exists.
27
28Dorothy Harrison: ...exists.
29
30Penny Edlin: Uh, it went into the – from the – in – we – our uniforms were exactly like
31 the nurses', except that we had a PT on our caduceus instead of an N. And
32 only at the time that I was in – only women were taken in and
33 commissioned. After the war, it was turned into the Medical Specialty
34 Corps.
35
36Dorothy Harrison: ...which included a larger number of people.
37
38Penny Edlin: And, and that included men...
39
40Dorothy Harrison: Mm-hm.
41
42Penny Edlin: ...also. But if you were a graduate of an approved school of physical
43 therapy you were commissioned in both instances. Now – and I think, I'm
44 not sure, but I think that corps is still...

1
2Dorothy Harrison: ...uh, a viable...
3
4Penny Edlin: ...uh-huh.
5
6Dorothy Harrison: ...part of the uh...
7
8Penny Edlin: Yes.
9
10Dorothy Harrison: ...of the army.
11
12Penny Edlin: I think that's the name of it at this time but at that time...
13
14Dorothy Harrison: You were attached to the army.
15
16Penny Edlin: Yes. At that time, uh,— oh, and our Head – I couldn't think of her name
17 but our, our Chief in Washington was Major Vogel.
18
19Dorothy Harrison: Vogel.
20
21Penny Edlin: Vogel. V-o-g-e-l.
22
23Dorothy Harrison: ...V-o-g-e-l. Means "bird" in German, Vogel.
24
25Penny Edlin: Oh, is it? And, uh, but, uh, at that – anyway, the Medical Specialty Corps
26 – when it went into Medical Specialty Corps, that also included
27 occupational therapists and I don't know if speech therapy or not.
28
29Dorothy Harrison: I see. Well, um, it's interesting how the, how the, how the organization of
30 the army and the air force too and...
31
32Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
33
34Dorothy Harrison: ...every-, everything else that has changed so, so much since the war.
35 And of course we say, "since the war," forgetting...
36
37Penny Edlin: [laughter] Right.
38
39Dorothy Harrison: ...Korea and Vietnam. It's our war...
40
41Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
42
43Dorothy Harrison: ...so it seems to be the war to us. Um, I, uh, I want to get back to those, to
44 those, uh, released prisoners of war. [49:12] I mean, now how did you

1 treat them? You said you gave them IVs at first, which would have fed,
2 fed them intravenously.
3
4 Penny Edlin: Uh, [inaudible 49:19].
5
6 Dorothy Harrison: And then, then what was the – how did they bring them back? I mean...
7
8 Penny Edlin: As, as soon – there was – we did very little, if any, physical therapy on
9 them. They – as soon as they were able to travel. As soon as they were
10 strong enough, where they could be flown...
11
12 Dorothy Harrison: [49:35] But how did they get them that strong?
13
14 Penny Edlin: Oh. Through, through their IVs. Through your [inaudible 49:41] ...
15
16 Dorothy Harrison: ...vitamins.
17
18 Penny Edlin: ...and your vitamins. And it was done really, really quite rapidly because
19 it was just a matter of say, maybe a month or so when we then closed
20 down and moved on because – so they had to be...
21
22 Dorothy Harrison: Oh I see. So within, within a month they were able to travel.
23
24 Penny Edlin: They were able to, uh, get back.
25
26 Dorothy Harrison: I've often wondered what they did with people who were very starving
27 because there were those terrible concentration camps, of course...
28
29 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
30
31 Dorothy Harrison: ...which had, uh, you know, thousands to deal with.
32
33 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. The type – the types of patients, of course, that we did treat
34 throughout the war were your, uh, your gunshot injuries, your burns...
35
36 Dorothy Harrison: ...your breaks.
37
38 Penny Edlin: ...your fractures, uh, your trench feet. We had a lot of that. Uh, the, uh,
39 also we had – of course, every type of gunshot wound imaginable. Uh,
40 concussions, your brain injuries, uh, the things that you saw and the things
41 that you treated at that time you would not see in a lifetime of civilian
42 practice or [inaudible 51:00].
43
44 Dorothy Harrison: So you got very good training there.

1
2 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
3
4 Dorothy Harrison: I have, um, and I think you lived very intensely...
5
6 Penny Edlin: Oh yes.
7
8 Dorothy Harrison: ...uh, in the, in the war situation as you say. Your experience was in the
9 medical field was accelerated and I think our – wouldn't you say that the,
10 um, your social experience was accelerated too. You saw all kinds of men
11 under all kinds of various pressures and, uh, you were able to have the
12 kind of, of, um, person-to-person experiences that were very unusual.
13
14 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm. I, I said I think this was one of the things that, as far as my own
15 personal life was concerned, uh, how many people – when before they
16 were married, could have seen the person they were married under all
17 sorts of stress....
18
19 Dorothy Harrison: ...stress.
20
21 Penny Edlin: ...uh, having worked maybe 24 hours straight and, and...
22
23 Dorothy Harrison: ...still maintaining his... [laughter]
24
25 Penny Edlin: ...under duress.
26
27 Dorothy Harrison: ...courtesy.
28
29 Penny Edlin: And, uh, oh, learning to deal with, uh, – seeing them deal with every type
30 of a person imaginable.
31
32 Dorothy Harrison: And every kind of a problem.
33
34 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
35
36 Dorothy Harrison: And to see how well they did it. It – exactly. Of course, I also, uh, knew
37 my husband for, for, uh, nine months before, um, we returned to the
38 United States and, uh, he proposed in the United States and we were
39 married in the United States but I saw him, um, under the – in a different
40 situation. You had special problems there. He had special problems and
41 he performed them well. But he wasn't under the same type of, uh, of a
42 situation. There was a great deal of boredom.
43
44 Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.

1
2Dorothy Harrison: He was an intelligence officer and he, uh, would read the photographs, or
3 he would look over the photographs that were taken by our photo
4 reconnaissance planes and, um, uh, his work was done, um, very early in
5 the morning, like 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, and they would sleep in and
6 then the rest of the day. Until there was another batch of photographs for
7 them to observe, um, they wouldn't have anything to do. And, um, I think
8 this boredom, this, um, lack of employment was about as hard on many of
9 the men as too much to do. [laughter]
10
11Penny Edlin: Mm-hm.
12
13Dorothy Harrison: Uh, because it tended to make a lot of them react in what we would
14 consider an improper fashion if we were back home and I was so pleased
15 to see that Ned, um, behaved in a very normal manner. Uh, when he went
16 in to Brussels, he would have dinner...
17
18Penny Edlin: Right.
19
20Dorothy Harrison: ...perhaps go to a museum and, um, or take in a movie. There weren't,
21 there weren't, there weren't any, uh, uh, girls or, uh, wild dances or wild
22 parties. Um, he would return to camp in the, in the appropriate hour when
23 the bus came back. And his, his behavior was entirely that of a person
24 who respected the country in which he was and expected to behave
25 himself as he would in his hometown and he obviously had come from a
26 good family with a good background and I can remember thinking, you
27 know, he's really a very well-behaved man. Uh, not like some of the
28 others. Unfortunately, there weren't too many of them but some of them
29 were pretty wild.
30
31Penny Edlin: That's right. That's how it was.
32
33Dorothy Harrison: Well, I think, uh, that we said everything we want to say now?
34
35Penny Edlin: I, I believe so.
36
37Dorothy Harrison: All right. Well, we'll turn this off, and this is the end of this, uh, interview
38 with Penny. We've always known her as Penny, not as Sarah. Penny
39 Edlin.
40
41
42/ks