

1 **Interview of Major (Ret.) Harriet J. Jayne on her long career in the U.S. Army Nurse**
2 **Corps**

3

4

5 [background speaker]

6

7 Betty Thompson: Uh, this is to introduce Harriet Jayne who was overseas as an army nurse, and
8 here she is to tell her story.

9

10 Harriet Jayne: Well I st-, I was, uh, born and raised in Illinois, and I went to Marquette
11 University in, uh, in Wiscon-, uh, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And a friend of
12 mine who had been in nurses training with me decided to go in the Army, uh,
13 Nurse Corps. We, um, got to, uh, Fort Custer Michigan February 12, 1941,
14 and, uh, we were met by a chief nurse by the name of Alice [Beckland 0:42].

15

16 Betty Thompson: Excuse me. [0:45] Did you enlist in Milwaukee or sign up in Milwaukee?

17

18 Harriet Jayne: Yes.

19

20 Betty Thompson: [0:49] Eh, eh, and they sent you to...

21

22 Harriet Jayne: Yes.

23

24 Betty Thompson: ...Fort Custer?

25

26 Harriet Jayne: And they sent me to Fort Custer. We had to delay our coming to Fort Custer a
27 week to 2 weeks because we had to give, uh, the hospital we were working
28 with, uh, um, notification of our resignation. And this Alice [Beckland 1:07]
29 who was our Chief Nurse at Fort Custer, Michigan, met us at the train. We
30 were too late to eat, so we stopped at a Farmer's Market and, uh, picked up a
31 little of this and a little of that, and we had, uh, a lunch when we got to the
32 barracks.

33

34 I – I worked as a, um, on the wards at Fort Custer along with being
35 housekeeper, and, uh, I left, um, was there from February 12, 1941, until sep-,
36 late September 1942, when I went to the pa-, uh, to California to, um, go to
37 the South Pacific. We, uh, left California October 20, 1942. We arrived in
38 Caledonia – New Caledonia n-, uh, November 11, 1942. On the way over, we
39 had 5 or 6 hospital, uh, 4 – 5 or 6 ships in the convoy, and, uh, there was 5
40 hospital units on the ship that we were on, which was the Rochembeau. Um,
41 and d-, one time during this time, the rudder went out of the ship, and we were
42 left alone in the middle of the Pacific. They finally got it fixed, and we were,
43 uh, united with our convoy again. We stayed in New Caledonia until February
44 of 198-, uh, 43, and – I think that was – eh, excuse me. I think it was January

1 1943. And, uh, went to New Hebrides with our own station hospital, which
2 was the 48th Station Hospital.

3
4 We were, uh, while we were in New Caledonia, we were with the, uh,
5 bivouacked with the 52nd Evac Hospital. Uh, one thing we noticed was all the
6 mosquitos, but no, uh, malaria in, in New Caledonia a-, but the, uh, eh, and
7 also how cold it was at night and how hot it was during the day, and we
8 almost, uh, froze by the cold coming up through the, uh, uh, the, um,
9 [stuttering] up to where we were sleeping. And, uh, but in New Hebrides, we,
10 uh, we were there until December of 1943. Uh, it was a malaria area, and I
11 had malaria at the time that I was in New Caledonia – I mean New Hebrides.
12 I'm sorry. And the, uh, uh, also just bef-, at the time that we were closing the
13 hospital in December of 1943, I broke my l-, uh, ankle. I, uh, uh, tried to stop
14 a jeep with the, with my foot and put the foot between the, uh, ditch and the
15 jeep. And I had the experience of g-, going at that time to the navy hospital in
16 New Hebrides and being evacuated by ship to, uh, uh, to, uh, New Caledonia
17 and then to New Zealand in, uh, late December 1943. I was in New Zealand,
18 uh, from 194-, uh, 3, December until June of 1944. And then we joined our
19 men and our doctors in Guadalcanal.

20
21 Betty Thompson: [4:47] You went back to the same unit?

22
23 Harriet Jayne: Same unit. And, uh, eh, while we were in New Zealand, we were s-, uh,
24 stationed with the 39th General Hospital, which was a Yale unit.

25
26 Betty Thompson: [5:00] Was that where you went for treatment or where you there on TDY?

27
28 Harriet Jayne: Well that was where – that was, that was TDY.

29
30 Betty Thompson: Oh.

31
32 Harriet Jayne: Because they wouldn't let the nurses in to Guadalcanal until it was safe. And
33 when we got to Guadalcanal, we had a 12-foot barbed-wire fence around our
34 nurses', nursing area to, uh, keep the GIs out. [laughter] And, uh, we did have,
35 uh, a nice swimming, uh, beach there, all black sand. And while on g-,
36 Guadalcanal, I had h-, I had an appendectomy. And, uh, uh, then, uh, I
37 recovered, uh, quickly and was soon back on duty. Another thing that
38 happened while we were on Guadalcanal, uh, one of our nurses had met a flier
39 from, uh, eh, while she was in New Zealand, and they were married – got the
40 permission to be married on Guadalcanal in December of 1944.

41
42 Betty Thompson: Sounds like fun.

43

1Harriet Jayne: And we left Guadalcanal in December – I mean January of 1945 and went to
2 Tinian, uh, eh, uh, in the, uh, and it took us 21 days to go because they, uh, the
3 isle-, the waterways and islands weren't too safe, and so we spent quite a bit of
4 time on Kwajalein and, uh, uh, but we were – weren't allowed too much off
5 the ship, so we stayed right on, on the ship most of the time.
6

7Betty Thompson: [6:42] [Inaudible 6:42] – excuse me – not safe because of mining or
8 because...
9

10Harriet Jayne: Yeah, the...
11

12Betty Thompson: ...of the enemy?
13

14Harriet Jayne: No. Min-, yeah, mining and enemy. Enemy as much as anything. But they, eh,
15 as I said, it took us longer to go from Guadalcanal to Tinian than it did from
16 the time that we went from the United States to gua-, eh, to New Caledonia.
17

18Betty Thompson: [7:01] Why were you moved around?
19

20Harriet Jayne: Uh, because of the, uh, uh, uh, enemy, uh, was farther north, and we were, uh,
21 following the troops, uh, where they were, uh, where we were needed.
22

23Betty Thompson: Oh. [7:15] Wherever there was...
24

25Harriet Jayne: Yeah.
26

27Betty Thompson: ...combat and...
28

29Harriet Jayne: Yes.
30

31Betty Thompson: [7:17] And you were a station hospital then?
32

33Harriet Jayne: A station hospital. And, uh, but in Tinian, we became attached and finally
34 were, uh, we were – our 48th Station was dissolved, and be became 379th, I
35 think, Hospital, uh, General. And, uh, we were at, uh, in Tinian when, uh, the
36 war was over, and it was just, uh, we had heard the atomic bomb had been
37 dropped, and, uh, we heard on the shortwave radio that there was something
38 going on. And we had blackouts on Tinian, but we did not know what they
39 were.
40

41Betty Thompson: [8:01] This was after V-J Day?
42

43Harriet Jayne: No. This was just before V-J Day.
44

1 Betty Thompson: Just before.

2

3 Harriet Jayne: And, uh, the B29s that were going out, uh, we could see them from our back
4 steps, and, uh, but we did not know that the atomic bomb was leaving from
5 Tinian until after the, uh, attack. And the Enola Gay and the Great Artiste
6 were from, uh, uh, the s-, uh, the, um, islands around Saipan and Tinian and
7 Guam, but the 2 that took off with the atomic bomb were, were stationed on
8 Tinea.

9

10 Betty Thompson: [8:37] What were the names again?

11

12 Harriet Jayne: The Great Artiste and, um, Enola Gay. And, uh, well we stayed there. Uh, uh,
13 everybody started going back to the United States, uh, in late, uh, August of
14 1945.

15

16 There was 4 of 5 of us left in October, and we said we wanted to stay in to be
17 regular army nurses in the regular army, and they left us there the longer than
18 any of the rest of 'em. And, uh, so we left there, uh, in October, uh, 1945 and
19 arrived in the United States October 23, 1945. We, uh, were stationed at Camp
20 Stoneman r-, after we got, uh, off the ship until we got orders to take – come
21 back to the Midwest. And due to the fact that Fort Sheridan was full, we
22 ended up at Camp Grant, and, uh, then we were sent to our destinations as our
23 home. And I had 45 days, uh, rest leave, and they extended it to 60, so I would
24 be with my family for Christmas. After that I, uh, was – went to p-, uh, to
25 Gardner General in Chicago for, uh, 6 months. I got there in early janu-, or
26 late December 1945 and stayed until June of 1946 when they closed the
27 hospital. And I went to Fort, uh, Hood, Texas, and, uh, arrived there in, uh,
28 late June of 1946 and left there in, uh, December 1948. While there, it was a
29 hot, dry place and no car, 40 miles from nowhere, and, uh, so it was a year and
30 a half was about all, uh, I wanted, wan-, wanted to be there.

31

32 Betty Thompson: [10:59] What was your rank then?

33

34 Harriet Jayne: Uh, my rank was r-, uh, captain. Uh, wait a minute, first lieutenant. I'm sorry.
35 First lieutenant at that time. I did get in to the regular army at th-, uh, while I
36 was at Fort Hood, Texas. I had to go to Fort Sam Houston for all
37 examinations.

38

39 Betty Thompson: [11:17] Did you, um, take a discharge and then...

40

41 Harriet Jayne: Uh...

42

43 Betty Thompson: ...were you sworn in again?

44

1Harriet Jayne: They – yeah. You sworn in again.
2
3Betty Thompson: Mm-hm.
4
5Harriet Jayne: Uh, right from the, uh, from the reserve to the regular, eh, in 1947. While at
6 Fort Hood, Texas, we did – 3 of us went on maneuvers to, uh, Panama City,
7 Florida, where the, uh, troops were landing, m-, uh, making practice landings
8 with their, uh, ships or, uh, boats, PT boats and different things like that. So
9 we had experience of, uh, going, uh, flying over there to be – to work with the
10 hospital at, uh, Panama City.
11
12Betty Thompson: [12:00] Did you have real injuries or...
13
14Harriet Jayne: No.
15
16Betty Thompson: ...simulated?
17
18Harriet Jayne: Simi-, well most of them were just, uh, eh, we didn't even have – we didn't
19 have a simulator. We just had, uh, whatever happened to be – happen. Like if
20 they got injured or if they were – had colds or if they got something like that.
21
22Betty Thompson: Oh, okay.
23
24Harriet Jayne: It was very damp and, and wet that year in November of 1947. From n-, from,
25 uh, Fort Hood, Texas, I came to Percy Jones, uh, Army Hospital in
26 Battlecreek, Michigan. Uh, from, uh, dis-, I arrived the after Christmas 1947,
27 and I left in June of 1953. Uh, during that time I worked mostly on, uh, on, uh,
28 the medical wards, and we did have a lot of veteran patients at that time too.
29 Uh, at the time that I left Percy Jones, they were closing it, uh, as an army
30 hospital. Uh...
31
32Betty Thompson: [13:03] It was the first time it was closed?
33
34Harriet Jayne: The first time it was closed. And when I left there, there was nothing but just
35 maintenance people there. And I left Percy Jones and – I think it's going to be
36 [repeated here 13:14] – uh, in June of 1953 and went to Fort Belvoir, Virginia,
37 and I was there until, uh, February of 1953. And from Fort Belvoir,
38 Virginia...
39
40Betty Thompson: [13:34] '54?
41
42Harriet Jayne: Wait a minute.
43
44Betty Thompson: [13:37] Because you were – you were at Percy Jones...?

1
2Harriet Jayne: Uh, until '50.
3
4Betty Thompson: [13:41] Until '50?
5
6Harriet Jayne: Yeah. Did I make – I may have...
7
8Betty Thompson: Oh, okay.
9
10Harriet Jayne: Until '50. I was at Percy Jones. I left there in June of 1950, and I went to Fort
11 Belvoir, Virginia, and I was there until February of 195-, eh, 53, and, um,
12 from, uh, from there, I went to, uh, Landstuhl, Germany, 2nd General t-, fr-,
13 uh, 'til July of 1955.
14
15Betty Thompson: [14:23] Where in Germany were you?
16
17Harriet Jayne: Landstuhl.
18
19Betty Thompson: [14:24] Oh, that's the name?
20
21Harriet Jayne: Mm-hm. Landstuhl, Germany.
22
23Betty Thompson: [14:28] With what...
24
25Harriet Jayne: Uh...
26
27Betty Thompson: ...kind of a unit?
28
29Harriet Jayne: It was a s-, uh, a general hospital, and I worked with, uh, pediatrics
30 [background noise] and, uh, orthopedics, then I came from, uh, went from o-,
31 uh, pediatrics to orthopedics and then, uh, in, uh...
32
33Betty Thompson: [14:50] Was th-, this kind of duty a lot different than during the war?
34
35Harriet Jayne: Uh, a lot more dependence.
36
37Betty Thompson: [14:58] You had more freedom did you to...
38
39Harriet Jayne: Yes. We could...
40
41Betty Thompson: ...travel and...?
42
43Harriet Jayne: ...y-, we could go wherever we wanted to go. Uh...
44

1Betty Thompson: [15:04] Did you have a car?
2

3Harriet Jayne: I had my car over there, and, uh, I drove to Berlin by myself. I also drove to
4 Basel, Switzerland, by myself, not speaking much German, just, uh, uh,
5 getting by with what, uh, little I could.
6

7Betty Thompson: [15:22] Did you find a lot of English sp-p-, speaking people or not many then?
8

9Harriet Jayne: W-, uh, in some areas there were quite a few s-, uh, that would, uh, b-, uh, you
10 c-, , uh, that would, uh, help you out. Uh, not too many English speaking. If
11 they didn't want to, they didn't speak it.
12

13Betty Thompson: Hm.
14

15Harriet Jayne: And, uh, the, uh, times that I was, uh, uh, t-, I took tours to Italy, France,
16 Luxembourg, Berlin, Holland, uh, while I was there. And, uh, we, uh, drove to
17 Luxembourg and saw the, uh, military cemetery there. And, uh, at the time
18 that we were there, this friend of mine, uh, talked to a taxi driver, and we
19 wanted to see, uh, Luxembourg area, and he wanted us to see Verdon, so we
20 ended up in Verdon, France, by taxicab, which was – didn't cost us as much
21 as you'd think it would.
22

23Betty Thompson: [16:31] It was not really too far?
24

25Harriet Jayne: No. It's not that far. But, uh, then in Paris, it was quite a place to drive in. I
26 didn't drive there. I drove there, but I didn't drive in the city. My girlfriend
27 drove in the city. And, um, but they'd take you for – with the, um, prices, uh,
28 if you, uh, don't know how to really talk to them, they can, uh. We got up and
29 walked out of a restaurant because they didn't have a menu and where they
30 should have had one, but, eh, they, uh, they, they had – get you, uh, why they
31 will on, eh, in eating like that way that way. But it was an enjoyable, uh, tour.
32 And, uh, but I was glad to get back to the United States, and I was, I was, uh,
33 among the first group to come back with 2-1/2 years in Germany where we
34 went over for 3, and the rest – the, uh, personnel coming after me were only
35 assigned 2 years.
36

37Betty Thompson: [17:36] Was that because they found out that 3 years...
38

39Harriet Jayne: Yeah.
40

41Betty Thompson: ... was a little much?
42

43Harriet Jayne: Yes. Because if you were married, it was a different situation, but single
44 people, they thought it would be better if they were over there 2 years.

1

2Betty Thompson: [17:48] Were you quite busy, um?

3

4Harriet Jayne: Yeah. We were always busy. Uh, and there was always – and a lot of, uh, of
5 course, uh, uh, we did have an evacuation p-, uh, uh, uh, plane that would
6 come in, but most of it went to Frankfurt and out, but, uh, they did evacuate
7 through Landstuhl some too. And, of course, as I said, our dependence was
8 our big pr-, biggest, biggest, uh, uh, problem there. Of course, they did have,
9 uh, the military too, but you did have a big, big, uh, deal of a lot of, uh,
10 dependence. Uh, when I left Germany, I, uh, thought I would like the East
11 Coast, and I asked for Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and I got there in
12 September of 1955, and I stayed until, uh, February of 1961. I, uh, was, uh,
13 worked with, um, pediatrics there in the, in the – on the ward, in the clinics,
14 and, uh, then other, other wards too, and, uh, during the time that – in 1960,
15 when they had the earthquake in saudi-, santia-, Santiago, Chile, eh, below,
16 uh, several field hospitals from Fort Bragg went to Chile, and I was one of
17 those that went down there for 15 days in May of 19, um, 60. We, uh, it was
18 fall there, spring in the United States, so it was wet and damp.

19

20Betty Thompson: [19:31] And you were sent there, uh, the US Government...

21

22Harriet Jayne: Yes.

23

24Betty Thompson: ...send you there to help out?

25

26Harriet Jayne: Yes. To, uh, uh, we went out into the field by helicopter and, uh, or into the,
27 uh, other areas of Chile, uh, to give typhoid, uh, and, uh, immunizations to the
28 people there.

29

30Betty Thompson: [19:54] What sort of uniforms were you wearing at...

31

32Harriet Jayne: Uh...

33

34Betty Thompson: ...peacetime?

35

36Harriet Jayne: Uh, we wore, uh, the, uh, white uniform. [Yeah 20:02].

37

38Betty Thompson: [20:02] Of your choice or something army issued?

39

40Harriet Jayne: No. It was an army, army uniform, and, and they were, uh, short sleeves, not
41 like the long sleeves that we had when we first went in the service. And, uh,
42 but we had the short sleeves. They were comparable to the, uh, oh, stripes that
43 we wore during the, uh, war, uh, only they were white uniforms, and they

1 were made just – well, the w-, the stripes part of them were like a, a, uh,
2 apron...
3
4 Betty Thompson: [20:33] You wrap it around [inaudible 20:34]?
5
6 Harriet Jayne: ...and it tied on – wraparound and tied on the side, but we did have other u-,
7 uniforms that were, uh, similar to that.
8
9 Betty Thompson: [20:40] What were your – what was your off-duty dress?
10
11 Harriet Jayne: Uh, after 19, uh, 46 or 1947, we could wear anything we wanted to, but up
12 until that time, I think it was a year after I came back from, uh, the Pacific that
13 we were not allowed to wear anything but uniform, and, uh, and that was quite
14 a treat to be able to, uh, get, uh, into, uh, civilian clothes.
15
16 Betty Thompson: Yes. It certainly was.
17
18 Harriet Jayne: And in 19, uh, in February of 1961, I left Fort Bragg with a retirement
19 ceremony, and, uh, came to my home in Foesland, Illinois.
20
21 Betty Thompson: [21:28] You retired as a...?
22
23 Harriet Jayne: As a major.
24
25 Betty Thompson: [21:31] And y-, are you now in the reserve?
26
27 Harriet Jayne: No. I'm not in the reserves. I'm just retired army, uh, nurse.
28
29 Betty Thompson: Very good. [21:40] Um, did you feel that you were treated differently because
30 you were a woman?
31
32 Harriet Jayne: No. We were t-, uh, at that time, we weren't, uh, there was no dis-, I didn't
33 feel any, any distinction.
34
35 Betty Thompson: [21:55] And you'd do it again?
36
37 Harriet Jayne: I sure would.
38
39 Betty Thompson: Thank you very much.
40
41 Harriet Jayne: The, um, advancement of the, uh, Women's Army Corps helped the nurses as
42 far as pay is concerned in early 1942.
43
44 Betty Thompson: [22:13] Do you mean in and out of the army or...?

1
2Harriet Jayne: Uh, in the army.
3
4Betty Thompson: That's good.
5
6Harriet Jayne: Because, uh, as I said, they, they helped, uh, because at the time I went in
7 service, we were making \$70 a month.
8
9Betty Thompson: [22:29] And when you went – you got out, you were doing – getting what?
10
11Harriet Jayne: Uh, we were getting the same as a male, uh, officer.
12
13Betty Thompson: I probably have the chief nurse to and thank in part for that...
14
15Harriet Jayne: Yes.
16
17Betty Thompson: ...in, in Washington. [22:44] Was that Colonel Lee at the time or do you
18 remember?
19
20Harriet Jayne: I don't...
21
22Betty Thompson: [22:48] [Some of the 22:48] time?
23
24Harriet Jayne: I don't remember.
25
26Betty Thompson: Harriet Lee at one time was...
27
28Harriet Jayne: Mm-hm.
29
30Betty Thompson: ...Chief Nurse.
31
32Harriet Jayne: Yeah. I don't remember. They, uh, the, uh, when I was down at that, uh,
33 Retired Army Nurses, uh, Association Commission in Orlando, Florida, uh,
34 recently...
35
36Betty Thompson: [23:09] [That's 23:09] just this spring?
37
38Harriet Jayne: ...why there was some nurse-, uh, nurses there that were chiefs, eh, at the – of
39 the Army Nurse Corps, but I, you know, can't quite remember the names.
40
41Betty Thompson: [23:19] Did you get a roster at that convention...
42
43Harriet Jayne: Yes, I did.
44

1 Betty Thompson: ...so that you can review?

2

3 Harriet Jayne: Yeah.

4

5 Betty Thompson: Well thank you very much. This was recorded, uh, May 10, 1984, in

6 Battlecreek.

7

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9/lo