

Dorothy M. Harrison describes the efforts of the Louisville Unit of the Women's Overseas Service League to collect and persevere the histories of its members and then talks about the life of Mildred Stutzenberger who served in the American Red Cross during WWII.

The Louisville unit of the women's Overseas Service League decided some 15 years ago to make and to take interviews or make interviews of their members. So that they could give them in written form to the Louisville Free Public Library and to the Filson Club as a permanent, uh, reminder of their service during the various wars in which they took part. All of the people interviewed knew that this would be a matter of public record. We have a number of women who have died since those interviews were taken. And I, Dorothy M. Harrison, President of the Louisville unit. I am making a point of recording what information we took at that time from those deceased members. Since we cannot have them sign a release, this is a statement to the effect that they fully expected what they said to be seen and heard of by the public.

The first person I want to mention is Mildred Stutzenberger. Mildred was a long time member of this unit. She came from a Louisville family. The Stutzenberger's lived out in the suburbs on a farm off Hitt Lane, H.I.T.T. I have a portion of an interview that we began with her and then tape recorder broke down so we never finished it. But I also have copy of the current history of Anchorage High School class of 1936, er, written by Vincent [Finelli]...a little blue sheet which was prepared in 1961. And I'm going to read from that 1st. Mildred Stutzenberger entered Bryant Stratton Business College in 1936. Upon graduation she went with a municipal bureau of social services [in audible] and later transferred to a Jefferson County Health Department working in conjunction with the United States Public Health Service.

After observing her present state of apparent good health I would say she took her work seriously. During this time she took some night courses at the University of Louisville. As since I can't see her mind I can't comment on its state or how seriously she took this work. Meanwhile back in 1944 she went overseas with the American Red Cross.

To the C.B.I. theater of operations. She started out in hospital work but her unit the 260 third Surgeon General Hospital staff was moved to the Philippines and she elected to remain in the C.B.I. She transferred to club work where she remained for the rest of her tours. In parenthesis the EDITOR'S comment, "She's smarter than the average bear, everyone knows clubs are more fun than hospitals."

Mildred was stationed at the Bengal Air Depot about 18 miles from Calcutta for her longest period of duty. She says she got, quote up country unquote into the wilds of

[inaudible], pronounced mut cina and Kunming, China. She became ill and returned to the Calcutta area where she spent the balance of the tour at a rest camp. Parenthesis working naturally, close parenthesis.

She spent one leave in Srinagar, the Venice of India. EDITOR'S comment all I can say as it should be underwater. Unquote. She says quote, of course Srinagar is in the northern part of India and just south of the U.S.S.R. and separated by the Himalayas from Tibet.

Later says the editor, she spent a week in the Himalayas at a rest camp. I should think so after all just pronouncing the names of the places would demand a complete rest. She also got a side trip to one of the Maharajah's palaces at the seashore at Udaipur and a flying trip to Bangkok, Siam.

In 1946 she returned home for 60 days leave then back to the Pacific with the ARC. Oh Boy, comments the editor, here we go again. This time out she was in Honolulu for one month and then on to Guam [...indecipherable] and to places West. In Guam she worked with the 20th Air Force until the club was blown away by a typhoon. Too late to save us from these air bustin' and tongue twisters. Oh Yes she did manage to get to Saipan and Japan with stops in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Mt Fuji. Most people would have flown on but not Mildred great she had to stop at them all.

In 1948, after her return from overseas, she went to work for Tube Turns, a division of Chemitron Corporation as a legal secretary. And, I hope they never let her out of their sight as is single. And the editor puts in parenthesis, naturally she never stopped long enough for the necessary time to provide minute mandatory question and answer period, unquote.

She reports no children's activities etc., I should hope not says the editor. Hobbies: this paragraph I should like to quote verbatim if I may. And then the editor does quote, I cannot classify my liking of traveling a hobby but I would rather be planning a trip, traveling, or returning home from a trip, than most other things I can think of. Unquote. The editor's final remark is, Mildred I would never have guessed.

The small segment of report which Mildred gave us in the interview was regarding her initial coming into the Red Cross and her arrival at her 1st station. We asked her when she got to Calcutta and she replied August 26th, 1944.

Then she continued on to talk about what had happened just before that time. She says we were delayed a couple of months because of the invasion. I was sent up to Springfield, Massachusetts at the end of June as was only there about a week when I got orders to return to Washington. I planned to go home the following weekend and the field director said I should just go on home as long as I was in Washington the following Tuesday it would be all right.

Travel was terrible. I offered a porter \$5.00 in Buffalo to put my bag on the other train and he refused: imagine \$5.00. I stood up in the corridor between carriages all the way from Buffalo to Cincinnati. It suddenly struck me that not a soul knew where I was I mean I'd just taken the 1st thing available and had taken my chances.

I got into the Louisville on Sunday morning at the Baxter Street Station. And I thought this is fine: I've got 24 hours at home that is if my family's there. I called home on the phone and mother said, I can't hear with all the noise in the background. Shh, it's Mildred talking. I said, Mother I'm at the Baxter Avenue station send someone for me. And she said, where are you? And I said, I'm at the Baxter Avenue station send someone to come pick me up. Where are you, she said? I'm at the Baxter Avenue Station mother would you tell my daddy to get on the phone. Where are you? Be quiet, it's Mildred. I was... I was waiting to clean up my face. I was so dirty from riding between those cars. You can just imagine all night long there were several who did it, several boys. Well, at any rate, my family did finally pick me up.

Then we questioned her after this leave Mildred where did you go? And, Aunt Mildred answered: I went to Washington. I left on Monday. And, we asked then after Washington, where did you go? And then she said, I went to Camp Anza California. You may remember that it was there an Army officer had gone berserk and killed his girlfriend and a couple of people in the officer's club as well. We were almost scared to go there. The place was so tense. Shot them or stabbed them, we asked? Shot them, Mildred answered. Somebody piped up with, happy day.

And we said where did you leave from then, San Francisco? Mildred replied, no Los Angeles. Where did you make your 1st landfall? And she replied, Australia 30 days. She'd gone by ship. And that is all the information we had from Mildred. She continued to work at Tube Turns until she retired, about 1978. In the spring of that year she did come to a meeting and complained of having her legs feeling very swollen. She died following a lung operation, later that year during the summer time. She had lung cancer.