MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS

Denver, Colerado Unit

Transcript of an Oral History Interview

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Margaret Patricia Phillips

PREFACE

This transcript is the product of a tape-recorded interview conducted on 1 March, 1986, 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

1 May 1988

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| 2 |  | MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS  Denver Unit |
|  | MB: | When did you Join the Denver Unit of WDSL? |
| 4 | MP: | I believe I joined in about 1969. |
|  | MB: | What branch of the service did you serve in? |
| G | MP: | I served in the Army Nurse Corps. |
|  | MB: | What influenced you to go into the Army Nurse Corps? |
| B | MP: | I graduated from nurses training in 1944, and I joined |
|  |  | for patriotic reasons. |
| 10 | MB: | What did you do prior to enlisting in the Army Nurse Corps? |
| 12 | MP: | I graduated in ’43, and then I worked on staff duty at |
|  |  | Grace Hospital, Northwestern Branch, in |
| 14 |  | Detroit, Michigan, prior to coming into service. |
|  | MB: | What did you do in the Army Nurse Corps? |
| IG | MP: | I had varied positions. I came in a second lieutenant |
|  |  | and did staff duty and later worked in the 91-C courses |
| 18 |  | and after that became chief nurse at various hospitals. |
|  | MB: | What do you mean by the 91-C courses? |

MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS, Denver Unit **2**

**2***O* MP: A 91-C course is very similar to a licensed practical nurse course. When students graduate From this Army

*EE* training school, they’re eligible to take a licensure in

the state.

24 MB: How long were you in the Army Nurse Corps?

MP: I was in the Army Nurse Corps thirty-two years, ten

26 months, and seven days.

MB: How many hours? (Laughter) Where did your travels take

28 you?

MP: My travels took me to Hawaii, Europe for seven years and

30 two different assignments, Korea, Uietnam, and various stateside assignments. I think I had about seventeen

32 different assignments within the USA.

MB: What kind of housing did you have when you were in the

34 Army Nurse Corps?

MP: My housing varied. When we started out, it was barracks

36 with many people in one room. Then, we graduated to two in a room. Then, later, it was share-a-bath; then we

38 were able to live out on the economy.

MB: What was your uniform dress?

40 MP: That, too, varied. I ’ve worn fatigues, the brown seersucker uniform (wrap-around): Then we had the

MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS, Denver Unit 3

42 starch-white uniform and up to the present day uniform, which is more of a polyester drip-dry, along with the

44 slacks.

MB: What was the nature of the medical care that was

46 available to you?

MP: I always had very adequate care from the Army, and I

40 still appreciate anything that I get from Fitzsimmons.

MB: What were your memorable experiences?

50 MP: Memorable experiences were numerous. The one that comes to mind is when I was in Uietnam. We were supposed to

52 leave early in the evening from Bien Hoe, and at that

time we were being bombed. We didn’t get out till about

54 five o ’clock in the morning, and I always remember when the plane went up, everybody started clapping. They put

56 off the lights on the plane; we knew we were on our way home.

58 MB: Can you compare service careers then with the present time?

60 MP: Yes, there have been many, many changes in the medical profession— including nursing. I think the nurses of

62 today are very technical-minded, and are certainly very proficient in montoring and doing a lot of technical work

64 that wasn’t even available in our time. However, I do

MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS, Denver Unit 4

think there is good and bad. I do think that the nurses GG of our time were more patient oriented.

MB: What required the greatest adjustment For you when you 6B came into the Army Nurse Corps?

MP: Probably community living, but I can’t say that was a

70 great problem because I didn’t have that much trouble adjusting; but I ’m sure it was very difficult for some

7E people.

MB: When you came into the Army Nurse Corps, did you plan on

74 staying in the Army Nurse Corps? or did it Just sort of grow into a career?

7G MP: It actually grew into a career. I had no intentions of joining the Army Nurse Corps. I knew very little about

78 it. I ’m sure when I came in, in 1944; if the war hadn’t been on, I never would have made a career of it. I came

80 in, and then in 194G, everybody was left out of service because they didn’t realize how large the nurse corps

8E would be; nor did they have the funds.

I had no sooner got out of the service than I got all

84 kinds of information in the mail, asking me to come back in. Although I hadn’t seen much of the world with the

8G exception of Okinawa and Japan, I thought: Well, I’ll come in for another two years, and perhaps be fortunate

88 enough to go to Europe.

MARGARET PATRICIA PHILLIPS, Denver Unit **5**

MB: What did you do after you retired From the service?

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MP: Actually, after I retired from the service I really enjoyed my civilian life as much as I enjoyed my military life. I ’ve been involved with all kinds of organizations, most of them patriotic and I have enjoyed that time very much.

MB: What does being a member of WOSL mean to you?

MP: I ’ve enjoyed being with WOSL because I think it’s a patriotic organization, and it’s very interested in doing activities to help society.

MB: Thank you very much.

Transcribed by Patricia Siggers

10E Lansing, Michigan