

HISTORY  
OF THE  
WAVES

NO. 45

EMILY STONE COCROFT

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

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NEWPORT, RI

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THE HISTORY OF THE WAVES

Interviewee: Emily Stone Cocroft

Interviewer: Evelyn M. Cherpak

Subject: The History of the WAVES

Date: September 24, 1996

C: This is the first oral history interview with Mrs. Emily Cocroft, who served as a WAVE in World War II. I'm conducting the interview at her home in Wakefield, Rhode Island. Today's date is September 24, 1996. Mrs. Cocroft, I'm pleased that you've consented to spend some time with me this afternoon and be interviewed for the WAVES in World War II Oral History Project at the Naval War College. I'd like to begin the interview by asking you some personal questions about your background before we get into your WAVES service. I'd like to know where and when you were born?

E: I was born in Providence, Rhode Island, October 8, 1916.

C: What did your father do for a living?

E: He was an executive in the Grinnell Company.

C: And your mother?

E: Was a homemaker.

C: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

E: Yes. I had two sisters and a brother.

C: Did any of them serve in the war?

E: My brother was in the Navy and one sister was in the Red Cross, R and R in Hawaii.

C: That's great. Did you spend your growing up years in Providence?

E: Yes.

C: Where did you graduate from high school and when?

E: I graduated from the Ethel Walker School in Connecticut in 1934. And from college, Vassar College, in 1939.

C: What did you major in at Vassar?

E: The history of Art.

C: Did you work at all after graduation?

E: I worked a little bit in a retail gift shop. I didn't do very much. I took art courses. That's one reason I didn't make it into the first officer class. I hadn't done anything significant. I thought I wanted more to be in the art world. But then when the navy came along that seemed like just the thing.

C: Did your family have any navy connections at all?

E: Yes, my father was in the navy. First World War.

C: Did he ever speak about that to you and his experiences there?

E: Not too much. A little bit. It's my fault for not asking more about it. Yes, he went in toward the end of the war. He didn't have any exciting experiences that I can remember.

C: Were you in Providence when you decided to join the WAVES?

E: Yes.

C: Do you remember how you heard about the WAVES organization?

E: Oh, it was in all the newspapers, with pictures of the uniform, and the WACS had just finished being organized and this was the next thing.

C: What was attractive about the Navy, let's say, vice the WACS or the SPARS?

E: Oh, well, we were much more interested in the navy here. We were in Rhode Island and my family was Navy, not to mention the uniform, of course. The whole thing sounded like a much more exciting and interesting set up.

C: <sup>7</sup> So you enlisted. Where did you enlist and when?

E: In 1942, in Boston. I went up there with every intention of applying for officer training and was told I would have to wait for a few more classes because the classes were full and there were people who had more qualifications than I. So they said, "but we are recruiting for the first enlisted class. Would you be interested in that?" I had got my self all geared up to do this so I said, "yes, sure." We were all a little apprehensive about what it would be like to be enlisted, but it turned out to be a good decision.

C: Oh, well, that's great. What procedures did you have to follow to enlist? Did you have to take tests and a physical?

E: Oh, yes, fill out forms and tests and all kinds of physicals.

C: Where were you sworn in? Was it in Boston?

E: I can't seem to remember. Yes, I guess so. We were put on a train and went out to Madison, Wisconsin.

C: In Madison, right. Was there any publicity about your joining the WAVES in the local papers, The Providence Journal, let's say?

E: I don't remember any. There might have been mention. I don't know. I don't have any clippings or anything.

C: How did your parents feel about your decision?

E: They were delighted. They liked it.

C: So they were very, very supportive of it, that's good. Well, I was going to ask how you traveled to the radio school in Madison, Wisconsin, but you said you went on a train. Did you leave from Boston and did you leave with a group?

E: Yes, the group from Boston, I think. Boston, yes. I don't remember if we changed on the way or whether we went all the way to Madison. I just don't seem to remember.

C: Well, how were you selected for radio school vs. the other two?

E: Because I didn't have any background in any of the other things. And everybody who didn't have a background in anything at all ended up with the radio school. So we had a very interesting group because of that.

C: You did. Were there any other college educated women in this group?

E: Oh, yes, a lot of people like me who hadn't made it into the first cut for the officers school and just decided to do this. Subsequently, just about everybody with college training who wanted to get accepted and was sent to Smith, as I was, finally.

C: Right, right, you did mention that in our initial conversation. Well, do you remember what time of year it was when you arrived in Madison, Wisconsin, at the radio school?

E: October.

C: And how long were you going to be there?

E: Well, the regular training course was two months, and then we had to have two months extra for communications. Just communications. It was four months in all.

C: Where did you live when you were in Wisconsin? Did you live in the university?

E: The University of Wisconsin was very cooperative and they gave over two of their big dormitories to the WAVES. They had stripped them right down to the bare barracks and so we lived in those. We went to classes in the various places on campus and we marched from one place to another. It was a very healthy life.

C: Oh, I'm sure it was. You were there in the winter.



E: Oh, yes, they had to issue ear muffs to us and boots and everything.

C: How many roommates did you have at Wisconsin? Do you remember?

E: One or two at most. Some were in the double decker bunks. I think, we had, I'm not sure.

C: That's okay.

E: I remember that we had just a few, a couple in a room. We had plenty of space.

C: That's good. Did you have to keep your room in ship shape. Were you inspected?

E: Oh, yes, yes. You had to take everything off the tops of everything. You weren't allowed to have one single thing showing. Bare bureau and bare desk.

C: Your beds had to be made correctly, I imagine?

E: Oh, yes, exactly.

C: Was this a weekly inspection that you underwent?

E: Yes, you had to have all your clothes in the closets buttoned up and shoes tied and all that.

C: Did your group pass all the time?

E: Yes.

C: That's good.

E: Well, you had to. You just did it. If not, you had to go back and change. They were very nice about it. They wouldn't be too severe, but they had the white gloves.

C: White glove inspections, right.

E: Yes.

C: Do you remember how your day was structured?

E: It was classes.

C: Do you remember the types of classes that you had?

E: Yes, we had a lot of classes in typing. A lot of classes in Morse Code, radio, and we sat with earphones and a typewriter. You see, you had to learn to type and learn the code, both at the same time. But you had special typing classes also. And then we had naval procedure and naval rules and regulations and naval communications offered in classes. There was lots to learn.

C: Oh, there certainly was. It was kind of challenging, I would think, to learn the codes.

E: Oh, yes, it was.

C: And then to translate it.

E: That's why it took four months.

C: Yes, that would seem to be. Did you have any homework in this situation?

E: No, just text books, fill in the dotted lines, the navy way. We had to learn about radio, too. What a radio was and how it worked. Nobody really understood it too well, I'm afraid.

C: That's right.

E: We had to pass a course in it, though.

C: It's components, I guess.

E: Yes. It was modeled on what the radiomen in the navy had to know. Pretty much the same thing.

C: Yes, you got to know the same thing. If you were doing the same kind of work. Did you have any tests or exams at the end?

E: We had tests all the time, right along. We had, of course, a test at the end to see how fast you could do the code. I got it up to twenty-two words a minute, a third class rating. Otherwise, you didn't get a rating. A lot of people graduated with no rating. I got the third class. It was all you could get. You had to get up to sixty words a minute typing speed.

C: Well, that was challenging, at least you met the standards.

E: It's a great skill to have. I have been glad that I could type ever since.

C: Yes, it is important. It is a good skill. Did you like the marching and the drilling?

E: Oh, yes, yes. It was very interesting. Something new. I did like it. We marched around in that Wisconsin weather in the snow; it was very healthy. We had the benefit of the weekends. We loved the freedom of the campus. And the student union was a great big place to sit around, and they were very, very friendly to the WAVES, the whole college.

C: Oh, that's good. Did you ever interact with any of the students there?

E: No, I never did. But I think some of the girls knew some of them.

C: Because of your freedom on the weekends.

E: Oh, yes, you could have. I didn't.

C: They were younger than you.

E: They were younger, yes.

C: Did you take to the discipline of military life easily?

E: Yes, I didn't have any trouble.

C: I was going to ask you what you did on your time off during the four months in Wisconsin.

E: We didn't have much time off during the week. Weekends we would go to the movies and you could just wander around town or go out in the snow and that was all we did. Also, as I say the student union had lots of activities.

C: Activities. Did you have your own special dining hall?

E: Yes, it was a cafeteria style. It was in the basement of the dormitory so we were right there. There were two dormitories side by side. We stayed there. We didn't go out for meals at all.

C: Totally segregated. Well, when it came time for you to graduate, did you or were you able to express a preference for your next duty station, or were you merely assigned?

E: No, they asked you if you would like to be on the east coast or the west coast. That's about it. I certainly wanted to go to the west coast. I wanted to go somewhere, see something new. A lot of girls put in for Washington. They wanted to be east coast so they got stuck in Washington all the time.

C: But you put in for the west coast.

E: West coast. I got Naval Air Station, North Island, San Diego, which was on the island of Coronado, a beautiful island with a bridge going over. It was isolated and it was beautiful. The famous Coronado Hotel was there.

C: It must have been great.

E: Yes, it was. We were lucky. The weather was wonderful everyday for two years.

C: Well, how did you get out there?

E: On a train. They wouldn't tell you where you were going. They gave you sealed orders. And they put you on a train going somewhere out west. You could open the orders up when we got to Pittsburgh or something like that far. I didn't know where I was going.

C: Oh, you really didn't. Oh, that's interesting.

E: I didn't know anything about anything out there. This was California. In those days, for easterners, California was not a familiar place, absolutely not.

C: It's true, it wasn't that populated and it wasn't that touted.

E: So lovely. It was just a beautiful place.

C: Yes, I can imagine. When you opened your orders up what was your reaction?

E: Well, I still didn't really know where San Diego was, but that was okay.

C: Were any other gals on the train going to the same place?

E: Oh, yes, a lot of us. Oh yes, our group was together. I didn't know who was going to San Diego and who was going to Beeville, Texas. Bibi was sent to Texas. She went to Corpus Christi. I guess we separated around Chicago or something. So you didn't know. She put in for the west, too, and she got Corpus Christi and I got San Diego.

C: Yes, and you got San Diego. Well, when you arrived there were you met at the train station?

E: Yes, and we were taken out to the island by boat. It was so dark because of the blackout. I remember how it was dark and we couldn't see where we were. We were taken to the air station. And put in BOQ barracks. That's all they had. They were really struggling to prepare for us. I had that feeling all along. They hadn't built any WAVE barracks, so we had to use officers quarters for a while.

C: Single rooms? Double rooms? So you had a roommate?

E: Yes, double rooms.

C: Well, you were stationed there in communications and do you remember for whom you worked? Who was your superior there?

E: Well, we had a regular hierarchy. There was an officer in charge and then there was a chief. The chief was really in charge of our office and he had a really hard time adjusting to the WAVES. He'd had these seventeen year old sailors before that he could just boss around and they made a lot of mistakes. And we didn't make many. We were much better at the work. I think a lot of the girls were more emotional about things. He had a hard time with that and he had to get used to the WAVES. I think we did a lot better job in the office. It was much cleaner, I'll tell you that. That's something we had to do - field day.

C: What was that?

E: I really didn't like field day, you had to go in with our blue jeans and scrub the place constantly. We had a rotating time. Once a month or something, your turn would come up. You'd have to go in there and just clean it. Clean the windows and clean the floors just like the sailors always did. We had a rotating work schedule, four on, four off, then eight on, two days off. It was a four section watch set up.

C: Oh, you had to do maintenance then?

E: Oh, yes. The sailors have always done it so we did it. Once it got clean, it wasn't that bad.



C: No, but that's interesting.

E: I didn't enjoy that part.

C: How many women were in that office with you?

E: About forty, but we were on a four section watch. Ten to a watch. And they changed watches now and then. They changed and they moved us around to different positions in the office.

C: And what exactly were you doing there?

E: That was the headquarters for the whole air station. So all the messages that came in for anybody on the station had to be routed and taken, and messages would come and we'd have to send them out. It was very busy constantly. It was the center of a very large air field and there were about six satellite airfields around the desert, so we sent messages to them and to several squadrons stationed at North Island which were coming in and out. There was plenty to do.

C: Was this all in Morse Code?

E: Oh, no. We didn't really use the Morse Code after all our training. We really didn't have to use it; we had to use everything else, the typing and the procedures, but tele-type had just come in and they used that. There was something called the "Fox" schedule which got sent out from Washington all the time to all the navy stations and you had to sit there and take that down. It was in code so you didn't know what you were taking, but it was in Morse Code so different people took turns doing that. That's the only time, I hardly

ever heard Morse Code. Once in awhile some message would come in on the radio in Morse Code, but the whole thing was really run by tele-type. It was just changing.

C: Just coming in at that time. Well, you were there for a full two years, you mentioned. Did you move from this temporary barracks during this time frame?

E: Yes, they built barracks. They built one barracks on North Island and they built some more barracks in a different place on Coronado.

C: Did you have to move to these new ones eventually?

E: We moved twice to two different barracks. I was in barracks and then we had a little place in Coronado, an apartment, something that we were allowed to stay in and use, but we were still officially in the barracks.

C: Oh, so you had this as kind of a .....

E: A place for time off.

C: Time off. A pied-a-terre or something on weekends.

E: Well, there were no weekends. We had a revolving schedule.

C: Schedule.

E: All the time.

C: Once in awhile. Your days off.

E: Your days off could come at any time during the week.

C: Right. What did you do for recreation there?

E: We were right there on the waterfront. We had the beach, we had tennis, and that was it, just life on the beach, really. A lot of time at the Hotel Del Coronado.

C: Did you have an opportunity to meet any of the pilots at the air station?

E: Oh, yes. Our whole social life was with the pilots. As an enlisted person you were not allowed to go to the Naval Officers Club at all. And it so happened that the Hotel Coronado, at that time, was a bachelor officer's quarters and it was opened to all, so that was our club and we met many people over there. The Hotel gave us special beach membership for thirty dollars. It was wonderful. You hardly believed you were in the navy sometimes.

C: Right.

E: Yes, we met lots of pilots and I never really saw a ship at all when I was out there. They were there, but you just didn't see them.

C: Right, where you were. So you socialized then with the pilots.

E: Yes. There seemed to be no restrictions on that. And I was enlisted, of course, you know.

C: Oh, I see, so obviously they were officers and they were . . .

E: There was no official Officer's Club on Coronado so there were no restrictions for us.

C: Right, right so . . .

E: They had an Officer's Club on the North Island Air Station.

C: Yes. Did you feel that in your work there was any pressure or any crisis mentality, in your day to day work?

E: No, but crises would come up. Such as messages that got sent to the wrong place. Yes, it was quite hurried lots of times, but a lot of times it wasn't. A lot of times nothing went on during the night. Some of the watches at night were very slow. Very easy.

C: You mentioned that the enlisted chief that worked in your office, or was in charge in the immediate sense had difficulty adjusting to the WAVES. Did the officer in charge have any difficulty?

E: We had some WAVE officers in the code room who were technically our superiors. I don't think the WAVE officers really knew quite what to do. You see, they hadn't too much training on how to handle enlisted WAVE personnel. I think they got it later. See, this was the first class, everybody was new. We were, too.

C: Feeling their way through this whole process.

E: It was a male officer who headed the whole thing. As I said, we were on this revolving schedule so we had one officer for each watch, so we didn't have just one.

C: Right, you had different officers.

E: The chief was only there in the daytime.

C: Did anybody ever complain about any harassment or any discrimination or any ill treatment?

E: No, I don't think so, unless they got balled out or something. Not because they were a WAVE. I don't remember anything. We were accepted.

C: That's good. What did you like about this assignment at North Island in communications?

E: Well, I had nothing to compare it to. It seemed wonderful to me. Just a very exciting time to be up there on the airfield. It was wonderful. Recreational life on the side, too. We had a very congenial group of girls to know.

C: Oh, that's great.

E: So, it was fine. I can't think of a better assignment.

C: Did you have much time off to explore or travel while you were at North Island and around California?

E: Yes, you had leave. You had to take it in the form of leave.

C: Right.

E: The leave that I took to come home. Another time I took leave, this was later on when we were in San Francisco, to go down to Monterey or some place like that. We didn't do a lot of traveling. There weren't any facilities for traveling.

C: Right.

E: You didn't have a car. You just were there.

C: Yes, just in that region.

E: It never occurred to you to travel anywhere.

C: I guess I'm bringing to this too many late 1990's point of view rather than wartime '40's. Was there anything you didn't like about this assignment?

E: No, not really, looking back on it I think I had a very good one. I've compared notes with other people.

C: Do you remember what your pay was?

E: It was very easy to manage on, I remember that. I don't remember.

C: Did you feel you could survive on it?

E: Oh, yes. We had no expenses, no clothes, no food. You could buy food, I guess.

C: Yes, but it was all taken care of.

E: The entertainment was very inexpensive.

C: Great. When did you apply for a commission? And how did this opportunity come up?

E: Well, I applied as soon as they opened it up. I applied as soon as they said everyone who graduated from college could apply. They were very slow at our base at sending people to officers school. Hardly any got sent. I don't know if they wanted to hang on to us in the office, not to lose us, but I don't know. I didn't go until the very end of the war. I was almost the last class at Smith.

C: Oh, really.

E: Yes. I guess they just had it on file and finally I was told I would be sent.

C: You went to U.S. Naval Midshipmen's School (Women Reserve) at Smith College in late '44. Did you travel there by train?

E: Maybe not by then.

C: Because you mentioned some airplane trip that you took.

E: Oh, that was just recreation, going back from leave.

C: Oh, okay.

E: It was just bumming a ride, getting a free ride in a Navy plane.. Because by that time you could fly.

C: Well, if you don't remember, that's okay.

E: It didn't make much of an impression one way or the other.

C: But you arrived at Smith College and you said you were one of the last classes going through. What kinds of classes did you take there in preparation for getting a commission?



E: Well, it was really quite much of a repeat of Wisconsin, except for the coding. We had to learn how to operate the coding machines, which were classified. And we had to learn how to do that which, of course, we never did as enlisted personnel. How to be an officer, a lot of that.

C: Protocol.

E: Yes, yes, which we had learned.

C: Did you find these classes challenging?

E: No, I didn't because they were so easy. But I enjoyed Smith; it was interesting. I liked it, but some of it was a waste of time. We had a lot more drilling and a lot more marching and it was very healthy there again. We lived in the inn in downtown Northampton. The WAVES took it over and took all the regular furniture out. Then we moved for the last two months up to another house on campus, just communications.

C: You were there for a good four months then.

E: Again.

C: Again, right.

E: And I went in November.

C: So it was probably November '44 through February '45, toward the end of the war.

E: Yes, it was coming on toward the end.

C: Well, after you graduated from there and got your commission were you again given some choice in where you wanted to be sent?

E: I can't remember. I guess we were. I must have said California again because that's what I got.

C: Yes, the west coast again.

E: West coast. I probably said west coast.

C: Were you given leave before you went out there?

E: Yes. For a while.

C: Do you remember whether you flew out there or took a train with a group again?

E: No, I was almost the only one in the class that got sent there, I remember. Nobody else did. A couple of them, I guess, not a lot; we didn't have a big group.

C: And you were sent to San Francisco and where in San Francisco?

E: In the federal building downtown, which is communications headquarters for the whole 12<sup>th</sup> Naval District. It was a big place. Many, many, many WAVES and we weren't in barracks. We had to get our own housing. That was hard. You were in a strange city. Of course, they helped you. I didn't know anybody or didn't have a group as I remember.

C: So did you live with somebody?

E: Yes, I finally met up with a group. I knew other people who were in the WAVES and I got to live in a house, an apartment. I had a room.

C: Oh, so you moved around there.

E: Yes, and then I lived with some girls on California Street. I moved a couple of times in San Francisco. It was great. It was a very interesting place to live.

C: Why do you say that? What was interesting about it?

E: Oh, just the whole city was exciting. The formation of the UN was happening at that time, for example.

C: So, a lot was going on.

E: But there wasn't any beach life at all. There was an air station, Alameda. We would sometimes go out there. It had a big swimming pool. It was a city situation.

C: Right.

E: I never went into summer uniforms at all.

C: No, that's true. It's kind of a temperate climate.

E: Even in San Diego, we never wore whites or anything.

C: Well, they had that seersucker uniform.

E: Yes, we had that seersucker. Yes, we did have that. But the dress uniform was all white and gold which we rarely wore.

C: Well, in this assignment you were still in communications and what exactly were you doing here? Was it the same kind of thing that you did in San Diego?

E: No, it was just coding. A desk where you routed messages and that was quite a hectic position. Our desk was very busy, finding where the messages came from and where they should go. A lot of it was more congested than the code room. Having messages come in and decoding. If they said top secret, you were supposed to get somebody higher up to come finish it. You were not supposed to look at it. I probably wouldn't have understood it anyway.

C: Did you like this assignment?

E: Yes, oh, yes, it was different. I liked San Francisco. It was a very interesting city, especially to somebody from the east coast.

C: Oh, absolutely. Did you have much social life here? Did you date Navy men? Your group?

E: Yes, yes, at that time we could go out with Navy officers - anyone - with no question about it. I met quite a few people.

C: Those were the people you were associated with. Did you keep up with the war news during the war, throughout the course of the war?

E: Yes, yes, we could, of course, being in communications, we did hear what was going on.

C: So you were kind of briefed through that.

E: Yes, well, they did that especially in the training school. They gave you a current events class. For almost four months we had classes on what was going on in war and world affairs. Afterwards, I think we picked it up from the newspapers.

C: Right.

E: We were in school, officers' school.

C: Did you find that the naval officers treated the WAVES with respect and courtesy and appreciated what they did?

E: Yes. The ones that I came across.

C: Did you ever have any contact with civilians? Could you comment on how they reacted to the WAVES in uniform?

E: They were interested. We were just another one of the services like the WACS.

C: Did any groups in San Francisco, like they did in New York City, make special provisions for the WAVES and the service men, like giving them free tickets or setting up canteens or giving them dances or things like that. Because the gals in New York mentioned that.

E: No. Not for the officers.

C: Do you remember the events surrounding VJ Day in August '45 in San Francisco?

E: Well, I had the duty that day so I was in the office. I never saw any of the action going on in the streets. Oh, yes, I heard about it. Actually, I was on duty that evening, the big evening, VJ Day. I was on from eight until midnight. I didn't get out to see anything.

C: You didn't have a chance to celebrate then?

E: I didn't have a chance to go out and see it, no.

C: What was your reaction to the end of the war?

E: Well, it was a big let down. I didn't have any immediate plans next, so I did stay in San Francisco a couple of more months. I got a job with the Red Cross, just typing or something, just to stay there. I had a few friends there.

C: When did you muster out of the Navy?

E: November '45. I came home for Christmas. I got out before Christmas. I stayed about a month or so afterwards. I didn't go right home.

C: You were working for the Red Cross?

E: Yes, but I did go home just before Christmas.

C: And did you stay in Providence after that?

E: Yes.

C: Did you ever have a chance to meet Mildred McAfee Horton, or to see her, the director of the WAVES?

E: I don't think so. I've seen so many pictures of her. I don't think I ever did.

C: She died a couple of years ago, in September. What was the highest rank you achieved during your service?

E: Ensign.

C: Do you remember what the discharge process was like from the Navy?

E: It was very brief. You just went in and had a physical, I think, and signed some papers.

C: And that was it?

E: Yes, that's all I remember.

C: Did you receive any medals?

E: No. I'm not sure if they gave out any WAVES medals. Do any others say they got medals?

C: Well, some of them did, yes, American service or Victory Medal or something. The enlisted gals got the ruptured duck, that kind of thing.

E: Yes.



C: Did you find that the WAVES had a strong sense of esprit de corps?

E: Oh, yes, I think they did.

C: Did you feel that it was a smoothly run organization?

E: Yes, I did, I think so, yes. Though I think the Navy made us do some silly things, like drilling. In San Diego we had to go out and drill on the airport once in awhile. I just figured that it was navy rules to do that. It wasn't the WAVES idea. That was back when I was enlisted, so overall we all just laughed.

C: Took it in your stride.

E: Yes.

C: Did you know anyone that was discharged from the WAVES for disciplinary reasons?

E: Only in training school. In training school, a couple were discharged for bad attitudes.

C: Did the WAVES experience change or redirect your life in any way?

E: It was all a very interesting experience, very valuable. I don't know in what way, but it was such a different experience and such a different place. It was a great experience for me.

C: Did you like meeting people from all parts of the country?

E: Yes. All kinds, you to know all kinds of persons.

C: Did the war make you more independent and self reliant?

E: I think it made you less fussy. You just had to accept all these things for no reason, except that the Navy said you had to do it. No use being fussy about anything. I got over any of that. I think it's true of all Navy WAVES.

C: You just kind of roll with the punches. Did you have any career ambitions as a result?

E: No, I didn't, unfortunately, Morse Code was a strange field. Typing was a very helpful thing. I didn't do much after that I got married.

C: Did you get married after the war?

E: Several years after.

C: Oh, several years after. Did you meet your husband in the service?

E: No, he was in the service. I met him in Providence before.

C: Because I talked to him and he said he was in the Navy for quite a few years.

E: He's a big Navy enthusiast.

C: Oh, that's great.

E: He was on a Destroyer Escort. . .

C: Was he in the Pacific?

E: No, he was in the Atlantic Ocean, minesweepers. He was commanding officer of a DE, finally, at the end. So that was a great experience for him.

C: Well, it sounds like he should write his memoirs, too.

E: Oh, yes, he just loved it. It was just so much more exciting than anything he ever did before or since. I think that's true of all the men in the Navy who had any kind of action at all.

C: Yes, in World War II. That's fascinating. Did you feel that what women were expected to do and to be changed when the war was over?

E: I don't know. It's hard to say. They fitted right in.

C: Did you maintain any service friendships when the war was over?

E: Yes, several. I still see them.

C: Did you ever hear of or attend any WAVE reunions after the war?

E: I never heard of any. I might have but I wasn't aware of any. Nor was anybody I knew aware of any.

C: I think, perhaps, the enlisted group had a couple of reunions in Boston or New York after the war.

How would you sum up your experiences as a WAVE and the significance of your naval career for your life?

E: It was just a different experience and a different place and with that kind of discipline which was different from what I ever had at school. Just meeting different people and the excitement of being part of something big like that.

C: Do you think that patriotism was a motive for many women joining at this point?

E: I think so. At that time everybody was joining up to something. All the men were joining up and everybody was doing something, wanting to do something. Going in a factory, doing something, so it was a natural feeling that you know you're doing something for the war effort.

C: Right, for the war effort. Exactly. I know a lot of people felt that way.

E: It was the motivating force, really. You wanted to do something and this came along, a good thing to do. There were other things to do before that. I'm glad I didn't get into the WACS. But I waited long enough to get into the navy. I think we heard the navy was going to start something. I think it was in the

papers. I wasn't married; I was the right age. I'm glad it worked out the way it did. I had a little bit of everything. I think if I had just been an officer, I would have missed a lot.

C: That's interesting. Several women segued into the officer corps, that I interviewed, from the enlisted, because the quota was filled for that state, so that was a natural transition. Do you have any other comments to make about your experiences, or anything unusual that you remember, or particularly exciting or dramatic?

E: I can't think of anything just off the top of my head. I didn't know you were going to ask that question. Thinking about it, there's nothing that comes right in my mind, except it was a great experience overall.

C: Well, thank you very much for your comments. I appreciate that and we'll get this transcribed and off to you for editing. Thank you, Mrs. Cocroft.

E: Editing. Do I have a chance to edit this?

C: Yes.

E: Cross it out?

C: Cross it out, right.

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