

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

HISTORY OF THE WAVES

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MARGARET HALL PEASE

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THE HISTORY OF THE WAVES

INTERVIEWEE: MARGARET HALL PEASE

INTERVIEWER: EVELYN M. CHERPAK

SUBJECT: THE HISTORY OF THE WAVES

DATE: AUGUST 21, 1998

EMC: This is the first oral history interview for the WAVES in World War II program with Mrs. Margaret Pease of Jamestown, Rhode Island. Today's date is August 21, 1998 and the interview is being conducted in my office at the Naval Historical Collection at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. Mrs. Pease, I'm very glad you were able to make it over today.

MP: So am I.

EMC: --for this interview on your career in the WAVES and also your life as a Navy wife! I'd like to begin the interview by asking you where you were born and when you were born.

MP: On October-- Where you asked first?

EMC: Okay, where?

MP: Indianapolis, Indiana. On October 20th, 1920.

EMC: What did your father do for a living?

MP: At that time he was working on recording, oh, I won't say it right so I'd better skip that. Ask my brother to define it. But his principal job came just after that, for Allis Chalmers, as a flour mill designer.

EMC: Oh, interesting. Very interesting. Did your mother work?

MP: No. Not after she was married.

EMC: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

MP: One brother.

EMC: Did you spend your growing up years in Indianapolis?

MP: No, we left at seven. Allis Chalmers bought the company my father worked for, and we never went back.

EMC: Where did you go?

MP: Went to Milwaukee.

EMC: Oh, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

MP: With Allis Chalmers.

EMC: Okay. So you spent most of your growing up years there. Did you graduate from high school in Milwaukee?

MP: In, well, I'd say Milwaukee, but it was really West Allis. My father wanted to walk to work and be near the company.

EMC: And when did you graduate from high school?

MP: 1938.

EMC: Did you attend college?

MP: Yes, I won a scholarship playing the piano and went to Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin.

EMC: Oh! How nice.

MP: For four years.

EMC: What did you major in?

MP: Public School Music.

EMC: Oh! How interesting. You planned to be a teacher?

MP: Yes.

EMC: When did you graduate?

MP: 1942.

EMC: Well, the war had started already, hadn't it? Were any of your friends or relatives in the service?

MP: My cousin was. I don't know what you'd call his title or anything, but he was aboard ships.

EMC: He was in the Navy then.

MP: His entire naval career.

EMC: Do you remember where you were and what you felt when--

MP: And our son was in the Naval Reserve.

EMC: Oh, well that wasn't during World War II. No, I'm asking did you have any relatives in the service in World War II, your

brother, for example?

MP: My brother was physically not a good specimen for the service. But he was one of two men who ran the naval ordnance plant.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting.

MP: In Indianapolis.

EMC: Oh, very interesting. Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked and what was your reaction to that? Do you remember?

MP: Oh, let's see. I was teaching school, and that was '41.

EMC: Yes, December 7th, 1941.

MP: Right. And I was in Appleton.

EMC: No, you couldn't have been. You were in Appleton because you graduated in '42.

MP: Right, right. My reaction, I guess was startled- startling. In fact, back in those days-- if it happened now-- It's just like what is happening-- You're grievous, and you hate it, and all. But I think we were a lot less understanding of what was to come

on that day.

EMC: Absolutely. After you graduated from Lawrence College in 1942, did you go to work as a teacher? Did you get a job?

MP: Right. I was in Indiana and started looking for a job, which my mother didn't like. But I right away got hired in Lawrenceburg down on the Ohio River near Cincinnati. I had a very strenuous year because all the men had been taken into the service and the new teacher caught all the jobs: directing the band, and the mother's course teaching all the instruments to the kids. I inherited a prize winning junior high school band. So, to be frank, I was worn out after that one year, and my mother begged me to find a job in Wisconsin, which I did.

EMC: Oh, you did.

MP: In Waupaca. Second year. I supervised vocal music for two years--for one year--and then joined the Navy.

EMC: Well, yes, you had two years in teaching.

MP: Only two years in teaching.

EMC: Well, what inspired you to join the WAVES after two years of teaching? This must have been 1944?

MP: Yes. I was in regiment in '44.

EMC: No, I mean joined in 1944. What made you join?

MP: Well, it just seemed like the thing to do and I wasn't as excited about the job as maybe I could've been if there hadn't been rules about getting so far along.

EMC: Did you feel a sense of patriotism? Did that motivate you to join?

MP: Oh, definitely. I was a patriotic person anyway. Oh, one of the patriotic things I was doing at the end of that year was driving through the countryside, picking up everybody's old paper, Sears Roebuck catalogs and all that, because we were asked to do that. And so, you know, unmarried teacher, I got the job all day and half the night and one night ended up in rolling a car over all the-- I call 'em Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward catalogs, hit me on the head. I didn't make the curve properly and the car rolled over.

EMC: Oh, for heaven's sake!

MP: That's really what made me want to stop teaching there. It was a good place but, that accident was a little earth shaking.

EMC: So you decided to enlist?

MP: Then when you start thinking of looking for a job and the urge to-- other people joining the service, it all fit together.

EMC: Why did you choose the Navy over, let's say the Army or the Coast Guard?

MP: I don't know. It's just always been my favorite service.

EMC: Oh!

MP: Don't ask me why.

EMC: Where did you go to enlist?

MP: Just in Milwaukee.

EMC: Did you take your tests and physicals there in Milwaukee?

MP: Everything.

EMC: Was there any publicity about your joining the WAVES in your home town paper?

MP: No.

EMC: How did your parents feel about your joining? Were they pro, con, supportive?

MP: Well, my mother was supportive. But in the local Presbyterian Missionary Society, they kind of made her feel like I had jumped off something. "'Why was I doing this'?"

EMC: Did they feel--

MP: I used to play the piano in the Church whenever I was there, you know it was sort of, "'why is she doing this'?"

EMC: Did they feel it was an improper thing for someone to do?

MP: I think they mistakenly weren't used to it. What motivated people to do it, and someone that was well attached to the church, didn't seem to fit.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MP: You know, they made her feel bad. She supported me, nevertheless.

EMC: Good. How did your father feel?

MP: Said very little. Not part of the-- He never had to discipline anybody, and he was a quiet, hard-working man.

EMC: Okay, so you joined and where did you have to go for basic training? You joined as an enlisted person.

MP: Enlisted rates were available much sooner than officer training. I went to Hunter College for basic training.

EMC: Now, did you get there by train?

MP: Yes.

EMC: Did you go with a group? Or did you go by yourself?

MP: Large group of-- it was all women.

EMC: Right.

MP: An all night trip.

EMC: To Hunter?

MP: Yes. We were to Hunter.

EMC: Had you ever been to New York City before?

MP: No! How come you've asked me that?

EMC: I just wondered because--

MP: It was a--

EMC: Thrill or overwhelming.

MP: It was a thrill in itself.

EMC: Yes, because many of their women hadn't traveled much in those days and hadn't been to New York. You arrived at Hunter College in the Bronx for at least six weeks of training and indoctrination, what was your reaction to Hunter College and to the boot camp that you went through there?

MP: This is silly to say, but one of the things that bothered me was that the people in charge were younger than I was.

EMC: Oh, and you were about twenty-four then, weren't you?

MP: Well, yes, yes.

EMC: Right. But the people who were in charge were younger.

That's interesting. Can you comment on your living conditions?

MP: Well, the original boot camp was-- Everybody was treated exactly the same, two bunks and daily inspections, and enjoying it. The experience of taking a steel tray and beating it very fast on one side, then we'd all whirl it around and try the other side. We thought that was a good joke. That's it, nothing to tell you, but--

EMC: Did you find the classes there challenging that you had to take?

MP: Intelligent?

EMC: Challenging.

MP: Oh, challenging.

EMC: Challenging. Did you find them challenging at Hunter?

MP: Not overly difficult but different. But I was in a program where I was going to become-- be in charge of other women and it was a rate. We were going to earn a rate that nobody knew anything about. It was new.

EMC: And what was the name of that?

MP: Specialist S.

EMC: Do you know what that stood for? The S?

MP: Nothing. No word.

EMC: Just the letter.

MP: There were eighteen of us chosen for that program. And we went to classes. I can't remember whether it was two or three months. I could be wrong, but I'm--

EMC: Was that at this time?

MP: At Hunter.

EMC: Right at this time?

MP: After boot camp. .

EMC: Oh, after boot camp. Okay. After boot camp you were selected. Why do you think they selected you for this specialist rate? Do you know? Did they tell you?

MP: Age and the fact you were a college graduate.

EMC: Oh, so you stayed out at Hunter for another couple months?

MP: Yes.

EMC: Oh, okay, and what kinds of classes did you take for this rate?

MP: We had lectures by doctors and psychologists and actually, I don't remember all their credentials. They discussed how to deal with women in large groups. What you had to watch out for and what you could do.

EMC: Oh, that-- Oh, interesting.

MP: And it was totally new and interesting for us all. And we all, to this day, are pretty good friends.

EMC: Oh, that's great!

MP: All six of us--

EMC: Yes. Oh, that's fantastic!

MP: --continued seeing each other and writing.

EMC: So that's wonderful because the WAVES formed a bond?

MP: Oh yes! Camaraderie. That's not like anything else. You're in it together and respect what we're doing.

EMC: That's marvelous!

MP: Thank you. That was great.

EMC: Yes, that sounds great. So, when you were studying for this Specialist S, how did your living conditions change? You weren't roommates were you?

MP: I'm sure we must have moved into different quarters. I don't remember that part.

EMC: You told me before though that you had your own room and--

MP: Well, this was after we moved to Washington.

EMC: Oh, okay. Okay. Sorry.

MP: For the S training, I think there was no need of getting set up in a special room. I know we didn't have to.

EMC: Oh, okay. I'm sorry, I thought that's what you meant. When you were in boot camp you had to march and drill a lot. What was your reaction to the marching and drilling? Did you enjoy that?

MP: We enjoyed it and we had-- because of our new jobs, we had to learn to conduct and drill people.

EMC: Oh, that was part of it.

MP: Part of it.

EMC: So you led the drill and lead the marching in the new job. Oh, that's fantastic! Did you feel that you adjusted easily to the discipline of military life?

MP: That was no problem for me.

EMC: Okay.

MP: Of course, I didn't smoke. I didn't have to squelch any habits. Call that lucky.

EMC: Yes, right! How did you feel about the uniform? Did you like the navy uniform?

MP: Yes, we all liked it.

EMC: Did you have any limited time off during your training in New York?

MP: Not much.

EMC: Did you have any chance to see the sights in New York City?

MP: Not while we're going to classes.

EMC: Did anything amusing or noteworthy happen during your training period? Either in S training or the boot camp training?

MP: Well, the only thing noteworthy from my point of view was the, I won't get the number right, but it was a bond drive which called for all the military people to march up Fifth Avenue. I'm trying to think, did we go up the hill or down the hill? I think we were going up, and we were taught so well that we couldn't twist your head either way. Everybody was straight ahead.

EMC: Straight ahead.

MP: If you know, this was good marching. Particularly if you see a good marching group, you notice it. Here I was seeing Fifth Avenue for the first time, and I was thinking how expert I was becoming at rolling my eyes without moving my head. So, it's

about all I can say about the sightseeing.

EMC: Yes.

MP: But it was fun to try to see the top of the tall building.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting!

MP: We walked for many, many blocks. I don't even remember the number, but it was a march. It was long walk.

EMC: Yes, trying to inspire people to buy bonds. Well, after you finished your S training, did you express a preference for a specific assignment or place to be assigned? Did you have any input into where you were going to go?

MP: No.

EMC: They just assigned you?

MP: We were all sent to the same WAVE quarters which was WAVES Quarters K. Across the street from BUPERS in Washington, Arlington. In walking distance of the Pentagon.

EMC: Oh, fantastic.

MP: Eighteen barracks and eighteen of us. And we opened those barracks and a little over a year later we were ordered to close those barracks.

EMC: Oh, for heaven's sakes! So, was it a barracks for enlisted WAVES, basically?

MP: Yes.

EMC: And you must have been in charge of one building.

MP: One building.

EMC: Do you remember what your building was?

MP: Yes. I was so lucky. I had number eight which was also a housing dispensary and that gave me less people but I always made a big noise about the behavior of the medical people.

EMC: Oh, why? What were the--

MP: --Isn't that terrible I would even say that to you? No, because they had unusual hours and privileges and they deserved everything they got, eventually.

EMC: Now, what were your responsibilities as head of this

building? What were you supposed to do?

MP: Make sure everybody lived within the rules. When to be in and how to go out. And keeping their quarters neat and clean. Oh, one of the things about this particular group, I had some Yeomen, too. We would be awakened in the middle of the night to wake up certain people to go run over to BUPERS, and they'd find the people that were on a certain ship was just sunk, and that you know was-- Some days were more exciting than others, and maybe a little gruesome sometimes.

EMC: Yes, right. So, you had to make sure everybody obeyed the rules?

MP: Yes.

EMC: Basically.

MP: And we kept a log. Constant log.

EMC: Of people in and out?

MP: What happened. Anything. Everything. And the people went out.

EMC: How many women were in this barracks that you were

responsible for?

MP: Eighty.

EMC: Did you have any assistance? Anybody to help you? Any subordinates?

MP: Well, I think, strange that it doesn't jump into my mind, I didn't have an Assistant Master at Arms, no. You were the Master at Arms.

EMC: Oh, that was your title, 'Master at Arms.'

MP: And, then there were people-- yes, there were people that helped you with the log that couldn't be there awake twenty four hours.

EMC: Oh, no. You must have had rotation.

MP: There was help, but they also had other jobs.

EMC: So, did you have to sit at a certain place or did you have a certain office?

MP: I had a private room and the office was just the next place.

EMC: Did you ever have any problems with the women in your barracks?

MP: A few.

EMC: Anything you want to comment on?

MP: No.

EMC: Oh, okay. You're protecting these ladies.

MP: Well, I don't know whether it's my moral obligation to do that.

EMC: But I guess where there's a group of people there will always be problems. Did anything amusing or noteworthy happen during your year at Barracks K, Building A? Anything funny?

MP: Gee, I don't know. No, I can't think of anything that's worth telling at this time.

EMC: Or amusing or outstanding?

MP: Yes. And among the Masters at Arms, we could easily get a pass to leave the base and go hitch-hike to Washington or hitch-hike to New York and stuff like that, yes.

EMC: Oh, so you had a little more freedom--

MP: --down to the ATC terminal. We were very near Washington Airport and the ATC terminal and three or four hours off. We would hitch a ride up to New York. We felt that was some kind of thrill. That's where I got my first airplane ride.

EMC: Oh!

MP: And my best friend, we didn't know enough to fasten the seat belts, and we had a fast ride down all the bucket seats.

EMC: Did you have any other opportunities for recreation in Washington D.C.? Did you go out and about occasionally?

MP: Yes.

EMC: And, if so, what did you do and where did you go?

MP: Well, we could always go downtown and go to the Pepsi-Cola center and have free food.

EMC: Oh, fantastic. What a bargain. Did you go to movies or art galleries or concerts?

MP: Yes, I guess we did. I don't think too many concerts. I'm trying to get in place, I can't remember the dates of how long we stayed at K. And then we were transferred to-- well, I was in four different WAVE quarters at some time or other.

EMC: Oh, really. Oh, I see.

MP: And probably I was the luckiest one of all being a music student. I tried out for navy chorus and this goes all the way into August of 1945.

EMC: Did you get into the chorus?

MP: We tried out. I mean, several of us tried out, but not got in.

EMC: Oh! And what did you sing?

MP: I sang "The Last Rose of Summer." And I remember the leader of this was a man called Thera Hubbard on the male voice channel in Oklahoma. And he was going to direct us for a quarter of the year, thirteen weeks? And that was the usual time that people-- radio programs were scheduled-- you know, a new show or something. But they would be given that moment to make it or break it. I'm skipping over a lot of time there anyway.

EMC: No, that's alright. We'll get back.

MP: Anyway, about thirty-six people were chosen for that chorus, enlisted men and women. We had a couple of rehearsals and somebody by the name of Fred Waring no less, called us up and criticized how we were singing and then each program was to have a special guest. So we had thirteen guests lined up. And I won't be able to remember them all: Tallulah Bankhead, Gene Kelly, Greer Garson, Henry Fonda. Oh, I can't remember.

EMC: Yes, well, that's a good representation.

MP: Yes. And I still want to find out-- we were doing our performance at-- Oh! It's a university.

EMC: George Washington University?

MP: I guess it was George Washington and-- I wish I could write to somebody who would say, "could you give me the dates and the performers that were there?"

EMC: Yes. That was quite an opportunity.

MP: But anyway, the very first program we sang and the guy came on who was in charge had said, "ladies and gentlemen, the Japanese have just surrendered!"

EMC: Oh! Fantastic! That was V-J Day.

MP: V-J Day.

EMC: In August '45.

MP: And, so it took us four hours, or it took me four hours to get back to K.

EMC: Oh wow! Yes, all the celebrations!

MP: But then they said that the radio people were going to cancel the remaining shows. A new contract, but they would honor the remaining shows. That was the very first one and we did all the rest.

EMC: Oh, that's good.

MP: So that was good.

EMC: Well that was quite an honor for you to be selected.

MP: I guess. I didn't have a solo voice, but what people don't realize is that that's what they don't need is a solo voice.

EMC: Right, you need to go on with the others.

MP: That was one of the real fun things. Especially when I stood next to Henry Fonda backstage.

EMC: Oh! Oh, yes.

MP: And I had my mouth open, I wanted to say something nice 'cause I really liked-- he always reminded me of my brother, especially in "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine." And here I'm standing there with my mouth open, and looking so nervous.

EMC: Oh, you met somebody famous then!

MP: Oh, every one of them was so famous and so nice.

EMC: Oh, that's great! That's most unusual--

MP: Yes.

EMC: --for somebody that was in your position. Did you date at all in Washington?

MP: No. Just at the end, when I met my husband.

EMC: Oh, okay. We'll get to that a little bit later. Did you

have many women friends in D.C.?

MP: Well, mostly our group.

EMC: Right, your group of Masters at Arms. Did you find the work that you were doing as the Master at Arms routine, interesting, boring? How would you characterize it? How did you feel about it?

MP: Well, I think that, never boring, but marginally routine. You know, we didn't have any murders or anything. Really, really tough. Yes, there were plenty of people that did the wrong thing and they were. I suppose the hardest ones were the very young-- youngest ones who came from farms and they didn't know how to deal with this sophistication of the city and the people they would run in to. Then they took a bus downtown and then come home with the wrong people. They weren't allowed. They didn't have any-- we had one lounge. I don't remember that as being bad, some of it.

EMC: Would you say you enjoyed this position as a Master at Arms?

MP: Yes, we really loved it.

EMC: Oh, good.

MP: We wouldn't have loved it if we hadn't had a private room!

EMC: Oh yes. Of course, you needed that. Did you have any contact with civilians during that time?

MP: Yes. A little bit.

EMC: How did they react to or treat the WAVES?

MP: Well, let's see. One of the things that we all loved was the nylons. And we wore issue. They were not as nice as some of the ones you could buy. We'd go stand in line at Jobs Department Store in Washington, Garfinkels. And sometimes no. In fact, about every time we did that somebody would turn around and say, "why are you here? You get your stockings."

EMC: Oh yes. Navy issue.

MP: I greeted them with silence. I didn't want to say anything ugly. But that was--

EMC: --provoking. You mentioned you were in four different barracks when you were in D.C. Where else did you transfer to after you were in Building 8?

MP: Right across from a cemetery, a cemetery it was. I think

that was called Arlington Farms. Boy, I have to get my friend up in on this. She kept a log, and she's a statistician, and she could tell me anything I want to know. But, I think that was not the next thing.

EMC: Well, that's alright.

MP: WAVES Quarters D was the biggest one of all. They had about eight thousand people there or something. And you didn't have that watching. You had your own place. And so, I remember going out and baby-sitting in the room I stayed in. And that was kind of fun. Two of us went, and they didn't talk and listen to the radio or something.

EMC: So you had a stint at WAVES Quarters D and you had a stint at Arlington Farms?

MP: And then the last, the very last one-- Oh, we became-- I no longer had barracks. Of course at D, and these other places, wasn't the same. You just had your room and went out to a huge desk and there were two or three of you doing that. Logging things out and doing whatever. Chasing the rats from time. There were things-- were going down the basement to find some food they left us for snacks. Oh, I could tell a lot of stupid, funny, not nice, things. But it was horrible, horrible. At the last one, they made me a Chaplain's Assistant to all the Chaplains because

I could play the piano, I can type, and I could talk in Sergeant.

EMC: Oh, so after you were a Sergeant or Master of Arms--

MP: --closing down. We folded up and we took care of all the things that we _____ and left there.

EMC: Oh, I see. So then you were a Chaplain's Assistant. Now, where was this?

MP: That was just next to the Lincoln Memorial, and I'm trying to think of what we called it.

EMC: Did you enjoy that assignment?

MP: Yes. I enjoyed it. I complained about some of it. You don't want to hear all of it.

EMC: So, that's basically what you were doing. You were playing the organ--

MP: Piano.

EMC: Piano. Were you assisting at services, is that it?

MP: There always had churches.

EMC: Oh, so you only assisted at that? Well, you must have liked that.

MP: Well, you were always glad if you fit into something that's needed.

EMC: Do you remember how you felt and what Washington was like when Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April '45? Do you remember your reaction to that?

MP: But didn't we all know he was a candidate to go? And-- I forget what his age was, but if I can skip over that and say we were not in shock, and I don't know how come I'm feeling like that now but it was easily accepted.

EMC: Well, there was a big parade in Washington at his funeral, or a cortege and parade and some of the WAVES that I interviewed marched in it.

MP: Really? Well, I didn't march in that parade and I couldn't remember probably because I was exempt being busy. But I did march one place right after that either when he was sick. I can't remember-- Truman had taken over, but we had a Drum and Bugle Corps organized by a member of Sousa's band. Chief Manganaro and three or four of us. We talked and we marched in Arlington

Cemetery, put out a flag, and then on this particular day-- I'll say it wrong 'cause I don't know the ball people-- but the Washington Senators, and I'll say the Brooklyn Dodgers, was it possible to say now, were playing each other and we were told to get down there and play for the game.

EMC: Oh, for heaven's sakes!

MP: And, so here's this little piddley bunch and about ten of us with our drums and bugles and bass drum, and we had to march all the way across the field right up to President Truman where we finished, and everybody clapped, and we were awful! 'Cause one of us had gone to music school for a long time and wasn't thrilled with our performance. But it was fun.

EMC: Oh good. Well, that's interesting that you did have a chance to see him.

MP: I wasn't always doing what everybody else was doing and just two other members of the Drum and Bugle Corps were my friends.

EMC: Good. What was the highest rate you achieved?

MP: First class. First class, Specialist, S.

EMC: Good. How did you feel about the end of the war, about V-J

Day? What were your feelings on that day?

MP: Well, I didn't have anybody that was killed and so that, I suppose, makes it easy on me. And my cousin, Bob, was on a Destroyer Escort that was hit by a Kamikaze and I was glad that he was alright and survived that. And, I don't know, I never had the built up hatred of the country or the people. And when we left Lisner auditorium that night after the singing, we got on street corner to rest for a minute, then we walked a few feet and when we got to White House-- people climbing on top of the statuary-- and there was no damnation of the ones who had lost. It was just happiness. It was at an end.

EMC: Oh, yes. I was just asking you how you felt about leaving the Navy. Would you have stayed in if you could have?

MP: I think if I could have gotten my stripes.

EMC: But it wasn't until 1948 when the Women's Armed Service Integration Act was passed. Would you feel that the WAVES had a strong sense of esprit de corps?

MP: Well, that's hard for me to say.

EMC: Do you think that the groups that you were in functioned as a unit?

MP: The groups that we were in were-- are you telling me about my little group or the--?

EMC: Yes, your little group. The people that you had experiences with.

MP: Well, being as early as it was, there were some things that bothered you that happened to other people. Like a couple of friends had doctor's degrees. They washed dishes. They got misplaced and nobody would demand for them a proper place, and I really felt sorry for them.

EMC: Okay.

MP: And the fact that that can exist, and there are other things that I can't really even talk about. I could write it though.

EMC: Did you feel that the WAVES were a smoothly run organization?

MP: Smoothly run?

EMC: Smoothly run? Well organized?

MP: Yes and no. Really, I think knowing how much it takes to

organize and maintain something like that. It's got to be given praise, but there were other things that I really can't talk about.

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

MP: Well, I think I learned a lot.

EMC: Well, what do you--

MP:, --How to get along with no family, small salary, just on your own. Well, we learned to be with people just like going out to the airport and sitting on the bench and seeing where you could have so many hours working. Where can we go?

EMC: Do you think that it made you more independent and self reliant?

MP: Yes.

EMC: Did you have any additional career ambitions as a result of your being in the WAVES? Did you want to go back to work after that? Go back to teaching?

MP: Not really, no. I always had a desire to perform, and I was

supposed to play the year I was graduating from college. My teacher decided I should play the concerto with the orchestra and she didn't tell me until October of my last full year, and then I got an enrollment in December, and nearly died. And, so that was a chance that I--

EMC: Missed.

MP: Just what I would've loved. She wanted to fail me and make my parents send me back so I could do the concerto. I said nothin' doin'. I can't afford it!

EMC: Did you feel what women were expected to do and to be changed when the war was over? Do you think the war had an impact on women and their career ambitions?

MP: I can't really say that I know of anything on a case like that. I don't see how it could help, but it can give you a broader sense of your own skill and how much easier it is to have the confidence that you build up being in the WAVES.

EMC: Did you attend any WAVE reunions after the war?

MP: Only this group.

EMC: Oh, did they have a reunion, the Specialists, S?

MP: No, just six of us. We were all S's. I haven't been to any big reunions.

EMC: When did you meet your husband?

MP: No, wait a minute! Last-- Was it October? Went down to the dedication of the memorial.

EMC: Oh, you did? For the WIMSA Memorial?

MP: For that.

EMC: How nice!

MP: And that was a great experience. My husband was driving around and he was gonna pick us up and it was kind of a maneuver. There was so many thousands of people and we weren't used to the roads in Washington. But he did it by timing it and we, Sal and I and her husband, got up and we set about to go find her husband. We had on pieces of the uniform.

EMC: Oh, they did?

MP: They told us to do that.

EMC: Oh yes, yes.

MP: Any piece you can wear. And people got up and hugged us and did this and a genuine show of affection.

EMC: Oh, that's marvelous!

MP: And we had our pictures taken by newspaper people. I'm from some small town and someplace and-- if I just had your address, I'd send you a picture! And there was no time.

EMC: Well, isn't that great. Well, I'm glad you went to WIMSA.

MP: The feeling that they all had was very--

EMC: --Very supportive then.

MP: Yes. They shouldn't have been there, if they weren't.

EMC: Absolutely. Yes, it was quite an occasion. When did you meet your husband and where?

MP: Met him in-- it was on a blind date.

EMC: In where?

MP: In Washington.

EMC: Oh, in Washington. And what was he in the service?

MP: He was a Lieutenant Commander at that time.

EMC: In the Navy?

MP: In the Navy. He was flying in the Pacific and I sent him dates-- and took me for a ride in SMJ.

EMC: Oh!

MP: Training plane.

EMC: Oh, how interesting.

MP: And we landed up at Squantum.

EMC: All the way from Washington to Squantum.

MP: Yes, and we went out. We had-- well, there were four of us: his friend and my friend, but only two of us in the airplane. But we all had dinner and we got together a couple of times. Funny experiences, you know, walking down Connecticut Avenue and bump into famous men walking.

EMC: Nimitz?

MP: Name?

EMC: Nimitz?

MP: Probably.

EMC: Or Admiral King?

MP: Yes, must've been Nimitz. 'Cause we almost bumped him out of the air when we landed. And, oh, let's see, they put me in charge of the Armed Guard for Admiral Halsey.

EMC: Oh, that's great.

MP: And, I had to get all these women out in a big room, and he was given an honor with the military men. I was escorting him from his hotel room down to the place. He's going around the room shaking everybody's hand and I got a kiss!

EMC: Oh, nice! Well, that's quite something.

MP: Well, that stuff was big fun!

EMC: Oh, yes, big fun. Did you ever have a chance to meet Mildred McAfee Horton, the Director of the WAVES?

MP: Never did, no.

EMC: Well--

MP: I liked to have.

EMC: Yes, that would've been great. Well, you got out of the service in August '46 and where did you head after that? Where did you go?

MP: I went to Milwaukee and to Kansas.

EMC: And were you teaching there?

MP: No, that's when I got married.

EMC: Oh, you got married. When did you get married. Do you remember the year?

MP: In August 19-- What'd I say?

EMC: '46?

MP: '46?

EMC: Oh, so it was right after you got out?

MP: Oh yes. He had a choice. He was going to be sent to the Pacific if he stayed in, and I had to do it or not do it, right then and there or go.

EMC: Oh, so was he sent to the Pacific after that?

MP: No. And in the end the orders got changed.

EMC: Was he career?

MP: So then I forget what--when we went to Newport.

EMC: Was he Career Navy?

MP: Career Navy? Oh, no.

EMC: And he was a pilot?

MP: Right.

EMC: And so you transitioned from being a WAVE to being a Navy wife, which is most interesting.

MP: Yes, big deal, you know? They put out the commissary bags. Did you ever see one? "The Navy wife. The toughest job in the Navy."

EMC: Oh, yes. Yes, it is. It was a tough job. Well, you must have had many different assignments during that time frame.

MP: Yes. Line school in Newport, Norfolk and Jacksonville. And there he got into this very elite squadron, 'AJ's'. It was the one carrier base, three engine bomber that take it to Russia.

EMC: Oh! For heaven sakes!

MP: I actually had a ticket all ready to fly over to Casablanca, see him there, and then go to my-- somebody got in the way.

EMC: Oh, so you couldn't go. Did you live abroad at all during your Navy career?

MP: Japan, just before he retired.

EMC: When did he retire?

MP: 19-- I don't remember.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MP: And he was Chief of Staff to Naval Forces, Japan.

EMC: Oh, that must have been an interesting assignment.

MP: Real nice. In fact, just got a letter from-- Oh, I shouldn't tell you-- one of our friends is coming in the 15th of September.

EMC: Oh, from Japan.

MP: Her husband was secretary to the-- I can't talk.

EMC: Well anyway, if you can't remember, that's alright. That's okay.

MP: Anyway, her husband died in our aircraft carrier, "Independence." Took her out to bury his-- She put down his bones.

EMC: Oh, remains. Yes.

MP: And its coming to the West Coast, and she's been invited to the decommissioning of that ship.

EMC: Oh. Oh, I see.

MP: All by herself. But her husband was Secretary to Speaker of the House of Representatives.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting.

MP: And, we got to be really close friends and they visited us so many times here. And we finally-- Her husband was falling out, got his boss to come out to the War College and Naval Academy graduation. And afterwards he was having lunch with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and they said, "now Mr. Fujama where are you going from here?" He says, "I'm going to visit Captain Pease, in Rhode Island." And, whoever was leader of the gang said, "why you going to visit Captain Pease?" He was painting his house last year. But the truth was, we learned from a friend, his secretary, nobody of all these nice guys, invites him to go home. It's his own state dinners. And so we had Mr. Fujama at our house and that was a real blast. But then when we were invited out to Japan.

EMC: Given the royal treatment.

MP: Nice experiences.

EMC: Oh yes! Can you comment at all in general about being a Navy wife? The pluses and the minuses? What do you think the advantages are and are there any disadvantages?

MP: Well, I suppose the higher you rank, the more advantages. And if you played it all right and you want to take advantage of it, enjoy it, you can do it. It takes some effort. Sometimes you get-- like I was Chief of Staff wife to three admirals, one after the other in Japan. One dog, Spiff, used to come up and says, "watch out for this man." Some Japanese girl. He could never remember the Japanese, but--

EMC: Was there any downside to it? Any negatives?

MP: Oh, it's hard, you know? Sometimes in the early days you get a terrible place to live and so you did what we did. We thought Norfolk was a terrible place. So we bought some land on one tour. And build a house on the next tour. And I still don't want to sell that house because of so much love went into it.

EMC: Oh, do you still own it?

MP: Yes. And what we told everybody was that we built it there to make sure that we didn't ever go back, and it worked. We were never sent back.

EMC: Oh, but do you rent it now?

MP: Yes.

EMC: Oh. Well, that's a responsibility, too. How did you end up in Jamestown, Rhode Island?

MP: Oh, he was given a-- Let's see, where did we come from? Oh, we were in Washington, and he was working in the Pentagon and I had a big old--we had General Chambord's house that he rented to us. It was huge and it could hold-- you could see the Washington Monument-- and he was to go on board a carrier staff in Newport. And so we had to choose how to get a house up near or stay in Washington. I wanted to stay down there. I told you this. I remarked about find a big house and I'll move. So Narragansett Bay we think it was the most super spot anybody could live.

EMC: Oh, that's great! That's great. Did you ever talk to your children about your career as a Navy WAVE?

MP: Oh, sure.

EMC: Did any of them join the service?

MP: Just our son. He joined the Naval Reserve.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MP: And, when we were in Japan he spent his six years there.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MP: Aircraft.

EMC: Was he on aircraft carriers?

MP: Yes. He was on the--

EMC: Independence?

MP: America?

EMC: Oh, good. To finish up, can you tell me what the significance of your time in the WAVES was for you and for your life? What impact do you think it had on you?

MP: Oh, probably the best thing I ever did! You know?

EMC: Why do you say it was the best thing you've ever did?

MP: Well, the broadening experience. We didn't have a lot of money. They stretched it to send me to a good school, even though I had a scholarship and, I don't know. If I hadn't done that, what I would've been doing I might have been in some school I didn't like trying to teach the kids to sing.

EMC: Well, it opened an opportunity. That was the way you met your husband, wasn't it?

MP: Yes, the way you meet your husband and the travel which you might not get. I don't know. I would encourage any gal to join. Even in the time that I got out of school, it seems like you either had to teach school or work in the dime store. And I had a small taste of teaching and the things I did and learned to do in the Navy, I wouldn't have reached any other way.

EMC: That's true. Those are very good comments.

MP: A lot of my friends said you were luckier than the rest of us. You got into the Navy. You played in the band. That's what I could do. I didn't have any special favors.

EMC: I want to thank you for coming in today and telling us about your interesting career as a Specialist S. We'll have this transcribed and then send a copy to you for editing.

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