

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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NO. 74

ROSETTA FUREY DESROSIERS

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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

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NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
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THE HISTORY OF THE SPARS

INTERVIEWEE: ROSETTA FUREY DESROSIERS

INTERVIEWER: EVELYN M. CHERPAK

SUBJECT: THE HISTORY OF THE SPARS

DATE: MARCH 17, 1999

EMC: This is the first oral history with Rosetta Desrosiers. It is being taped at her home at 106 Almy Street in Warwick, Rhode Island. Today's date is March 17, 1999. Rosetta was a SPAR, a member of the Coast Guard in World War II. Rosetta, I would like to begin by asking you where you were born and when you were born?

RD: Providence, Rhode, Island, January 25, 1923.

EMC: What did your father do for a living?

RD: My father and mother had a fish and chips store.

EMC: So your mother worked there too?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

RD: No I didn't. That's one reason I went into the Coast Guard, so I would have all those sisters.

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

RD: No, mostly in Warwick. We moved to Warwick when I was seven, shortly after my father died.

EMC: Oh, I see. Did your mother continue with the store then?

RD: No. Well, she did for awhile, but then she found it was too much.

EMC: Did she have to go to work?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Where did you graduate from high school?

RD: At Aldrich High School, class of '40, in Warwick.

EMC: What did you decide to do after you graduated from high school?

RD: Well, I wanted to go to college but it wasn't financially feasible at that time, and then after I went into the service. Of course I took advantage of the GI Bill.

EMC: So where did you work after high school?

RD: Oh, I did a lot of things. I worked at Monowatt assembling sockets. I did housework; I worked in restaurants, Howard Johnson's and different ones. I did a lot of different things.

EMC: I see. Were any of your friends or relatives in the military in the 40's?

RD: No.

EMC: Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941?

RD: It was a Sunday morning and I was at home.

EMC: What was your reaction to that?

RD: Oh, I was very upset. I thought that this soldier I had been dating would have been sent immediately and I was very upset about that.

EMC: Yes, losing your beau! Did you keep up with news about the war once it started?

RD: I don't think particularly, no. At that age you're very self-centered and you're not paying that much attention to what's going on in the world around you.

EMC: How did you hear about the SPARS?

RD: Well, I was working at Davisville down near Quonset. I was a typist and there were two twin boys office boys that were working there. One was Ted, who was the one in my office, and then his twin brother Paul worked in another office in the same building. They had enlisted in the Coast Guard and they were waiting to be called for active duty. We used to have lunch together at the back of the room, with different ones that worked in the office, so we were always talking about the

Coast Guard. They taught us how to box the compass and they used to talk about rescues at sea and everything. I said that I was really more interested in the Coast Guard than some of the other services because of that.

EMC: Very interesting. When did you decide to enlist?

RD: Well, as soon as I was 20 I enlisted. I made up my mind before then, but I had to wait because that was the age you had to reach.

EMC: How did your mother feel about your decision to enlist?

RD: Well, she signed the papers. I had to have permission, but she didn't say yes or no. She didn't have anything to say about it. She signed it for me though.

EMC: She was supportive then?

RD: Yes.

EMC: She didn't encourage you not to enlist. Where did you go to enlist?

RD: Boston, Mass.

EMC: And when you got there what procedures did you follow and go through to enlist?

RD: Well, we had, I believe, interviews and a physical exam and then we were told to go home and wait for the call to be activated.

EMC: And how long did you have to wait to be activated?

RD: A couple of months.

EMC: And then you were ready to go. Was there any publicity about your joining the SPARS in the local papers?

RD: Not that I can recall.

EMC: Did you know anybody who was joining the SPARS at the same time that you were from your area?

RD: No.

EMC: So it was quite an independent decision. Now, I know you said you had found the SPARS attractive, but why did you find joining any branch of the military service attractive in 1943?

RD: Well, I had never been out of Rhode Island and I wanted to see the rest of the country.

EMC: See the world. So that was one motivation. Were there any other motivations for your joining?

RD: No. I just felt I wanted to do something different and as long as I couldn't afford to go to college, I figured at least that would be educational to see other parts of the country.

EMC: That's a good reason. When you were off to basic training, how did you travel to get to your training, which was at Hunter College?

RD: Well, it was May 18, 1943, and I went to downtown Providence to get on the train with all the other people who were going to Hunter that day. They had quite a trainload because I guess it came down from Boston, so there were a lot of people on there I had never seen before, and some of them are still my very good friends.

EMC: That amazing, just from that initial train ride, you kept in contact with them. You were domiciled at Hunter College in New York. Had you ever been to New York before?

RD: I think I had been once. You know, they used to have a boat that used to go down Providence River and you could go down overnight. I went with my aunt and my mother when I graduated from high school. That was about the only time I did.

EMC: What was your impression of Hunter when you arrived there?

RD: Well, the first thing we did was start marching. We had to wear oxfords that lace up, and I wasⁿ used to wearing that type of shoe; I always wore pumps. When we were marching, the drill instructor said there was a young woman there who had untied shoelaces and she was perhaps going to trip and so I was looking all around to see who this klutz is, and she came up to me --

EMC: So she was pretty "eagle eyed" to single you out among the whole group. How did you like the marching? Did you like that?

RD: Oh, I didn't mind that so much. That was o.k. Then we went to a big gym and had a meal over there. I saw that they had this big line with three sides to it, and I thought "well, that's pretty good." We got in the line and we got tin trays and I didn't see anything that I really cared for, and I thought I had two more sides of the line to go through, but that turned out to be wrong. It was three different lines, so when I got to the end I didn't have any food. One of the other girls shared something with me.

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EMC: So you couldn't go through the line again?

RD: Right.

EMC: What did you think of their chow?

RD: Well, as I say, I didn't see anything I liked, but after that I wasn't so fussy.

EMC: How long were you at Hunter?

RD: I think it was about six weeks.

EMC: Did you share a room with other SPARS?

RD: Yes. We were in apartment houses, and they were pretty barely furnished. There were no rugs or anything, just the bare floors, and we had double decker bunk beds, and I had to sleep on the upper bunk. I laid with my eyes open all night thinking I was going to fall out.

EMC: Did you share a room with anybody you knew?

RD: Well, I didn't know any of them before.

EMC: Was there one girl from Rhode Island that you knew, at that point?

RD: No. I did know Evelyn at that point. She was not right in my room, but she was in the same area more or less. She was not from Rhode Island. She was from Massachusetts at that time.

EMC: I assume you took classes at Hunter during the day as part of your training and indoctrination.

RD: I believe we did. I don't recall exactly what we were into at that point, but we did do a lot of marching, and it rained a lot.

EMC: You were there in the summer then.

RD: Well, we were there about six weeks, so summer would be just about starting. Then I was transferred from there to Palm Beach where I went to Yeoman's School.

EMC: Just to double back a little bit -- did you adjust easily to the discipline of military life during your training and indoctrination at Hunter?

RD: I think so .

EMC: Did you have any limited time off at Hunter?

RD: Yes, we did. We had a little time off over the weekends.

EMC: Did you go into the city?

RD: Yes.

EMC: And was there any recreation in the city for military women?

RD: I don't recall any specifically, no.

EMC: USO?

RD: They may have had them and maybe I did go there, but I don't recall it. I know I did go to the USO in Chicago later on when I was stationed there.

EMC: Did you get a new uniform when you were at Hunter and can you describe the SPAR uniform?

RD: Yes, it was the same thing as the WAVE uniform with the exception of the lapel devices. We had brass lapel devices and the WAVES had embroidered anchors on theirs, but everything else was the same -- navy blue jacket and skirt and white blouse and black tie.

EMC: And was the summer uniform the same as the Navy's as well?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Just the insignia was different. When you were commissioned out of Hunter and finished your training did you have any choice as to where

you wanted to be assigned? Did they ask you what you wanted to do or where you wanted to go?

RD: Yes. They did ask us what we would like to do and I did want to have more training in stenography and so forth, so that's when I was sent to Palm Beach.

EMC: That's where the Yeoman's School was?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Did you have any time off between Hunter and going to Palm Beach?

RD: I don't think so. I think we were sent directly there.

EMC: How long were you at Palm Beach at Yeoman's School?

RD: I'd say a couple of months.

EMC: Where did you live during this time frame? Did they have barracks?

RD: Yes. The Coast Guard had taken over the Breakers Hotel, so that's where we were. We had bunk beds there too.

EMC: Kind of luxurious surroundings, but stripped down for military use. Did you have any time off then?

RD: Very little. I think it was because there were so many service men in the area, and I think they didn't want us to have lots and lots

of time off in case we would get into trouble. That's my own opinion. We had a few hours off on Saturday and a few hours off on a Sunday and that was it. We had to be back on board around 7 p.m.

EMC: So did you have any recreation during that time? Where did you go, what did you do?

RD: Well, we used to go to the Sun and Surf Club to swim and that was a couple of times a week. We would march down and march back.

EMC: In a group ...

RD: Yes.

EMC: Now when you said there were lots of servicemen there, were they just Coast Guard servicemen that were there?

RD: Oh, no. In the South there were lots of Army men, Navy men, Coast Guard, whatever, Marines...

EMC: All stationed down there... How did you adjust to the heat?

RD: Well, I always liked the heat, so it didn't bother me too much.

EMC: That's good. How many roommates did you have when you were in Palm Beach?

RD: Well, it varied because sometimes people would finish their training and we didn't all have the same length of time there. One interesting thing happened with Evelyn and I. We are both very short

and in the service, they like to put all the tall girls at the front of the line. They said it looked more military, so she and I ended up at the end of the group and they were putting six girls in each room, but we were leftover so we got a room to ourselves.

EMC: That was fabulous. Now, how did you happen to room with this woman who was from Massachusetts and is now a good friend?

RD: That's Evelyn. As I say, we're both short. In fact, we still argue a lot about who's the tallest.

EMC: That's interesting, and you're still in touch too, as a result, and she lives in Rhode Island. Did anything amusing or noteworthy happen during this training period during Yeoman's school.

RD: One thing I thought was kind of funny was that we had an ironing board that was on the back of a door and it was attached, and for some reason it kept falling down. You'd walk by it and it would fall down. Somebody said, "I hope it doesn't do that during Captain's inspection," and, of course, it did. I thought it was very funny and I laughed about it, but one of my roommates was furious with me because she thought we'd all get restricted and not be able to go out, and, as I say, we had very little liberty as it was, but anyway, they didn't do anything to us.

EMC: Well, that's good. So you had to endure those "white glove" inspections as well as the Navy did. What kinds of classes did you take in Palm Beach? Do you remember what you studied in particular?

RD: Mostly typing, shorthand, and a little bit about history of the Coast Guard and various rates that the commissioned officers had.

EMC: That's good, so two months of that and you were prepared to take off on your first assignment. Where did they decide to assign you?

RD: Chicago, Illinois.

EMC: And what was there, what office?

RD: It was called "The Captain of the Port".

EMC: How did you travel there? By train? Did you go alone?

RD: Yes. From Palm Beach I had liberty, that is, leave. That's longer than liberty. I had leave for a few weeks and went home, and then went to Chicago from home.

EMC: Now were you excited about this first assignment? Looking forward to it?

RD: Yes.

EMC: When you arrived there, did you have quarters you had to stay in?

RD: No, there were not enough of us in Chicago, so we had to go on our own to get apartments and what not, so we did get together, two or three of us and rented an apartment. They gave us an allowance called subsistence and quarters.

EMC: So you were living on the economy then? What type of work were you doing at the Port in Chicago?

RD: I was doing typing.

EMC: Who was your immediate superior?

RD: He was a chief warrant officer. I would say he was an elderly man. At least he seemed so then, but maybe he wasn't. His name was Otto Fricke.

EMC: Were you the only girl in the office?

RD: I was at first. There were other offices on the same floor with other SPARS, personnel, public relations and so forth, but I was in where they were doing the fingerprinting of people who wanted an ID card. If they wanted to go down to the waterfront of the Great Lakes, they had to have some kind of identification because there was a lot of shipping going on, vital supplies and all that. They used to say that even if Adolph Hitler had applied for a card they would have given him one, but it would have been a red card to show that he was an enemy alien.

EMC: But he could have gone down to the port ... so they weren't too careful then.

RD: But they did fingerprint these people who came in for the card, but the men in my office did all the fingerprinting. They said they didn't think it was a good job for a girl.

EMC: Were you well treated in that office?

RD: Yes, I would say I was most of the time.

EMC: Did you suffer any harassment at all?

RD: Well, there was just one incident which I wrote about. One day when Mr. Fricke was away and there were all these young men that I worked with. A lot of them were newlyweds so they kept talking about their bedroom activities, and they kept kind of looking over at me to see what my reaction would be. I was trying to ignore them, but they kept getting more and more specific and everything, so finally I got annoyed and I walked out of the office and slammed the door behind me and I stayed away for about two hours. When I came back everything was calm.

EMC: Did you report that?

RD: No, I didn't, no. I think they might have been afraid that I might say something to the old man, but I didn't.

EMC: So that stopped that. That was your only incident?

RD: Yes, that was the only time.

EMC: Well, you had time off in Chicago, because you probably worked a standard eight hour day.

RD: That's right. We went to the office, I think it was like 8:30 to 4:00 or something like that.

EMC: Did you work on Saturdays or Sundays at all?

RD: No.

EMC: So it was a five day week. What did you do in your spare time?

RD: We went to the USO and we used to date.

EMC: Coast Guard people?

RD: Yes, we really didn't know anybody else, except if we met somebody at the USO we might go out, with other servicemen, you know.

EMC: Sure. Did you enjoy Chicago?

RD: Yes, I did. There was lots to do and people were very good to us. We'd go to see different plays and things like that.

EMC: So you were transported from kind of a small town environment to the big city which was very interesting. How long were you in Chicago?

RD: I say a good year.

EMC: Did anything noteworthy happen there? Anything that's outstanding or amusing or interesting or unusual?

RD: I can't recall anything. I know I enjoyed my stay there.

EMC: Did you like your work?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Did you find it challenging or just merely routine?

RD: I would say it was routine.

EMC: After a year you were sent to another duty station?

RD: Yes, I was sent to Duluth.

EMC: Duluth, Minnesota?

RD: Yes. It was the week before Christmas and it was very, very cold. People would say, "well, wait until it gets to be 40 below."

EMC: That's way up in Minnesota. Now what's there that the Coast Guard was involved in?

RD: I would say that it was about the same type of thing that was in Chicago, in that they were concerned about the shipping on the Great Lakes. It was a small office.

EMC: What was the Great Lake that you were on?

RD: That would be Lake Superior there, in Duluth.

EMC: Yes, Duluth is right on Lake Superior. What was your job there?

RD: I was doing office work again.

EMC: In the port?

RD: In the office building. This building was not right at the port. It was across the street from the Post Office and it was up on a hill.

EMC: Was it a one girl office or did you work with other SPARS?

RD: Well, I worked with other SPARS. There were lots of little tiny offices, and there were maybe a dozen of us working in there. We had to get our own apartments in Duluth also.

EMC: Did you get an apartment with some of the other girls in your office?

RD: Yes.

EMC: So it was yeoman work, again, a five-day week?

RD: Yes.

EMC: What did you do on the weekends in Duluth? What did you do for recreation?

RD: I think mostly we went to the American Legion and had a few drinks and did a little dancing and stuff like that.

EMC: So then it probably wasn't the greatest place to be assigned, but did you like your work and did you like your surroundings?

RD: I liked my work all right. The surroundings could have been better. I mean, it was very cold, the time of year that I was there.

EMC: How long were you stationed there?

RD: I'd say about eight months or so.

EMC: Well, that's long enough. Were you well treated by your superiors there?

RD: Yes.

EMC: No discrimination or harassment. Was there anything that you disliked about this assignment?

RD: Only the climate.

EMC: You liked everything else. Was there any pressure in this billet or the previous billet?

RD: No, I wouldn't say so.

EMC: It was all kind of relaxed. Did you feel you could survive on your pay. Do you remember what your pay was?

RD: I don't remember what my pay was, but I didn't have any difficulty getting along financially, and, in fact, I did send home \$20.00 a month to my mother.

EMC: Oh, that's good. Did you write letters home to your mother?

RD: Occasionally, but I didn't save any of them and she didn't save any of them.

EMC: That's too bad. It would be a great record of your service in the Coast Guard. Did you have any chance to make any contact with civilians during your service in the Coast Guard?

RD: I don't recall any except when I was in Chicago I met my cousin's cousins out there, because one of my uncles had come from Chicago to begin with and then he lived in Rhode Island with my aunt, and my cousins grew up there. He had relatives back in Chicago and I did look them up.

EMC: I just wondered if any civilian you encountered on the street reacted in any way to the uniform and your service in the SPARS. Did you notice any positive or negative reactions?

RD: When I was first in the service it seemed as though you'd go into a restaurant and people would stare at you the whole time because they weren't used to seeing women in uniform. That was the thing I missed most when I got out of the service was nobody turned around to look. I got used to it.

EMC: You stayed in Duluth, you said, for eight months and then you were transferred to where?

RD: Cleveland.

EMC: And that's on Lake Erie. What was your job there and who did you work for?

RD: In Cleveland I did office work again. We had barracks in Cleveland, so that was something to get used to again. It wasn't too bad.

EMC: Freedom was a little curbed. What kind of barracks were they? Were they quonset huts or buildings?

RD: It was called Quad Hall and it was on Euclid Avenue. I'm not sure what the building was used for before then.

EMC: But it was a standard building?

RD: Yes, it was a brick building, a couple of stories.

EMC: Did you have your dining facilities there?

RD: Yes.

EMC: And did you have to share a room with someone?

RD: Yes, I shared a room with Ann Niznick whom I had known in Duluth and also in Palm Beach.

EMC: So you kind of moved around with some of the same people. How long were you in Cleveland?

RD: A couple of months.

EMC: Oh, that was a short term assignment.

RD: Well, it was after the war. The war ended when I was in Duluth, so then I was transferred to Cleveland for a couple of months, and from Cleveland I went to Detroit. When I was in Detroit I was discharged and went home.

EMC: I see. Well, let's double back to V-J Day. You were in Duluth then. I didn't realize that. How did you hear about the end of the war?

RD: I guess everybody was talking about it.

EMC: And what was your reaction to that news of the end of the war?

RD: Oh, I was happy that it was over.

EMC: Did you go out and celebrate?

RD: I think we did. I can't recall.

EMC: Do you remember what or how people were celebrating in Duluth in August, 1945?

RD: Yes, my roommate came home and she said that everybody on the street was milling around, and everybody was hugging and kissing everybody. She had a bag full of eggs that she had bought at the store and they were all smashed. She said " I guess we'll have to have scrambled eggs for supper."

EMC: People were very elated by the end of the war. So, after that, as you said, you were in Cleveland for a short time, for two months; were you sent on another assignment to Detroit, or were you just sent to Detroit to be discharged.

RD: I worked in Detroit, so I guess it was an assignment. I worked there for about two months before I was discharged.

EMC: Oh, I see, and where did you work in Detroit?

RD: We worked in large rooms with long tables and what we were doing was making out stubs for the various discharge papers, and that's what we did all day.

EMC: Preparing the men for discharge from service.

RD: Yes.

EMC: Did you have to live in your own apartment then?

RD: Yes, we had an apartment there, too.

EMC: You were busy running around getting places to live.

RD: Yes.

EMC: When were you actually discharged from the Coast Guard? What month and year?

RD: It was December of '45.

EMC: O.K., so you stayed a little bit after the war ended. Did you receive any medals for your service?

RD: Yes, I received them recently, but I don't know where they are at the moment.

EMC: Oh. Did you have to put in a requisition for the medals?

RD: Yes I did. I sent in a form a long time ago and finally they showed up.

EMC: Do you remember what they were?

RD: The American Campaign Medal and the WWII Victory Medal.

EMC: Whether it was victory medal or whatever, but you did receive them. How did you feel about leaving the Coast Guard, about being discharged? Were you happy, sad, or would you have stayed in if you could have?

RD: No, I didn't want to stay in. I felt as though it was time to leave and do something else, and then they had this GI Bill coming up and I really wanted to go to college. While I was in Chicago I had visited my cousin; that's Doris's sister who was going to the University of Wisconsin.

I went up and stayed with her one weekend and I really loved the place, so I decided that's where I wanted to go.

EMC: Good. So did you go there after you were discharged?

RD: Yes I did.

EMC: Did you enroll in the winter term?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Oh, that's great. What did you want to take up and major in?

RD: I wanted to major in journalism, because I was always interested in writing?

EMC: Did you do any writing while you were in the Coast Guard?

RD: No I didn't.

EMC: You didn't have the opportunity for that?

RD: No.

EMC: So you stayed there which was quite adventuresome, and how long were you at the University of Wisconsin?

RD: A semester and a half.

EMC: And then you left?

RD: Yes. I got married and I thought I'd continue but found that it was just too much.

EMC: Just to double back with some questions about the SPARS during the war and your impressions of them. Did you feel that the SPARS had a strong sense of esprit d'corps; that there was a lot of loyalty and camaraderie?

RD: I think so. Yes, I would say so.

EMC: Did you have any preconceived expectations when you entered the SPARS?

RD: No. I was a little bit nervous the day that I left, thinking "what am I getting into," "what kind of girls will these be," and "will I have to hide my money," and, you know, I talked to my girlfriend's mother that day by phone, and she knew exactly how I felt and she reassured me.

EMC: That's good. Did you feel that the SPARS was a smoothly run organization once you were in?

RD: Yes, I felt so.

EMC: Did you ever meet Dorothy Stratton who was head of the SPARS?

RD: I didn't at the time, but I did meet her when we had a reunion in Washington, DC

EMC: Was anybody discharged, that you know of, from the SPARS for disciplinary reasons?

RD: I think there was one young lady who was discharged while we were in Palm Beach. She was quite promiscuous, I think.

EMC: How would you assess the type of women who went into the SPARS? What would you have to say about them, the quality of the gals and their character and their reasons for going in? Did anybody ever discuss those things?

RD: They didn't usually say much about their reasons for going in. I found that most of them were pretty nice to get along with.

EMC: Did the SPAR experience change or redirect your life in any way? Did your experiences in the Coast Guard have any lasting impact?

RD: Well, I've always been happy that I did that. I think it's one of the best things I did with my life.

EMC: Well, that's great. Do you think that the war made you more independent and self reliant?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Do you think that it broadened your horizons?

RD: Oh, yes, definitely.

EMC: Did you have any career ambitions as a result of your service?

RD: You mean to go further in the service?

EMC: No, just career ambitions on the outside, or was that more something that you always wanted to do even before you went in the service?

RD: I always wanted to do something more with my life.

EMC: Did you feel that what women were expected to do would be changed when the war was over? Do you think women felt more independent, more career oriented?

RD: Yes, I believe so.

EMC: Did you maintain any service friendships after the war was over, any of the gals you met?

RD: Oh yes, I'm good friends with quite a few of them.

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

RD: Yes, I did.

EMC: Where was the reunion and when?

RD: Well, the last one I went to was in Washington, DC, and I believe it was in 1982.

EMC: And that was strictly a SPAR reunion?

RD: Yes, it was.

EMC: What kinds of activities did they have there? Was it mainly social?

RD: Yes, well they had speeches, of course, and they had programs at this hotel. I can't recall the name of it now, but we did stay at a very nice hotel in Washington, DC We did see the points of interest in Washington and that's about all I recall.

EMC: Did you meet up with any other people that you had known during your service career there? Was there anybody that you served with that was there?

RD: Yes, quite a few, especially from around this area, you know, New England.

EMC: Oh, good, great. Do you belong to any military organizations?

RD: The American Legion. I'm not very active in that, but I do belong to WAVES National and I was the president of Unit 118 when we first started.

EMC: That's the Ocean State WAVES?

RD: Yes.

EMC: When did that begin?

RD: In 1991 for our unit. I guess the organization itself has been in effect since 1979.

EMC: WAVES National, since 1979, and the Ocean State since 1991. Well, it's made great strides in the last eight years. Were you on the ground floor organizing that?

RD: Yes. My good friend, Evelyn Cohen, was the one who nominated me for president, and Dorothy Midgeley seconded it, so I named her as vice president, Doris Nemitz as treasurer.

EMC: That's great, first officers. Where did you finally settle after the war was over and after the University of Wisconsin and your time there?

RD: Well, we lived in Madison, Wisconsin for a while, and after I had dropped out of college we moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin and we lived there, I can't recall just how long, but my daughter was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Then we moved to Rhode Island while she was still a baby.

EMC: And you've been here ever since?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Back to Warwick?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Did you work after you returned to Rhode Island?

RD: Yes.

EMC: Where did you work and what did you do?

RD: Well, I've had various jobs. I worked at the Outlet Company in the store manager's office, and I have worked at Leesona.

EMC: What was that?

RD: I was a secretary at Leesona.

EMC: What is Leesona?

RD: Oh, Leesona? It used to be called Universal Winding and they made machinery for textiles. In fact, their plant is still over here on Strawberry Field Road. I worked at Rhode Island School of Design in the publications office and I worked for the State of Rhode Island after that. I was a fact finder in the department of employment security.

EMC: You've had quite a career in different areas. Was that the job you retired from then?

RD: Yes, it is.

EMC: Did you ever talk about your SPAR days to your children?

RD: Not very much.

EMC: Did any of them join the service?

RD: Well, my son was in the Marines for just a short time many years ago. After injuring his knee and requiring surgery, he ~~was~~ given a

medical discharge. He recovered and served with the Peace Corps in Nicaragua.

EMC: What would you say was the significance of your military service for you and your life?

RD: That's a tough one.

EMC: A thought question -- how would you sum^u it all up?

RD: How would I sum it all up? Well, it was the place to be at the time, because we felt that we were doing something for our country, that we relieving a man for sea duty by doing his particular jobs on shore, and at the same time we were seeing things that we ordinarily did not have a chance to see. We were making good friends. My childhood had been lonely, so I really appreciated all that contact.

EMC: Oh, that's good. Do you have any other comments to make about your service in the SPARS? Have I missed anything?

RD: I don't think so. I think it's been very thorough.

EMC: Thank you very, very much, Rosetta, for contributing to our program and being interviewed. Thank you.

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