

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

HISTORY OF THE WAVES

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OF THE
WAVES

NO. 80

DORIS CARR BALL

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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
THE HISTORY OF THE SPARS

INTERVIEWEE: DORIS CARR BALL

INTERVIEWER: EVELYN M. CHERPAK

SUBJECT: THE HISTORY OF THE WAVES IN WORLD WAR II

DATE: MARCH 28, 2000

EMC: This is the first oral history with Doris Ball. The interview is taking place at her home in Warwick, Rhode Island. Today's date is March 28, 2000. (Today's date is March 28, 2000, and the interview is taking place at her home on 18 Deacon Avenue in Warwick, Rhode Island.) Doris, I am very grateful that you are interested in being interviewed for our WAVES in World War II Oral History Program, and I'd like to begin the interview by asking you some background questions about your life before you entered the WAVES. Can you tell me where you were born and when you were born?

DB: I was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, March 6, 1922.

EMC: What did your father do for a living there?

DB: My father was in the plumbing and heating business in

Woonsocket.

EMC: Did your mother work, or did she stay home?

DB: No, my mother did not work. She stayed home.

EMC: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

DB: I had two other sisters, one older and one younger. I was the middle daughter.

EMC: Did you spend your growing-up years in Woonsocket?

DB: Yes, I did.

EMC: Did you graduate from high school there?

DB: Yes, I did.

EMC: And when was that?

DB: I graduated in 1940.

EMC: Nineteen forty, okay. That's before the war began! Yes. What did you decide to do after you graduated from high school? Where did you work?

DB: Well, I worked for the U.S. Rubber Company making barrage balloons to send to England for their protection.

EMC: What were barrage balloons? I've never heard of them.

DB: They were built so enemy planes could not get into the cities to bomb. Planes could get tangled up in these balloons. They were huge.

EMC: Oh, I know what you mean--like the huge balloons they send up now--you know, the gas balloons--zeppelins?

DB: Yes. That's what I worked on for over a year.

EMC: Well, that's amazing.

DB: And it just made me think of the war overseas, and when war began here that's when I decided I was going to do something about it! And I joined the WAVES.

EMC: Great! Did your family have any Navy connections at all?

DB: No, my family did not.

EMC: Were any of your friends or relatives in the service?

DB: No, no one.

EMC: Your sisters didn't join?

DB: No.

EMC: Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked? Do you remember what you were doing and what your reaction was?

DB: Yes. The family had gone to visit my grandmother. Mother, Father, and us three girls--when we got home, the woman next door came running out of her house, and she said, "Well, we're at war, we're at war!" And of course we ran in the house and put the radio on and listened to what was happening. And then we found out, Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

EMC: What was your personal reaction? Do you remember how you felt?

DB: Felt sad.

EMC: You were telling me about your reaction to Pearl Harbor.

DB: I guess I was stunned--everyone was stunned.

EMC: Yes, it was a shocking attack.

DB: Right.

EMC: Did you keep up with news about the war?

DB: Oh, yes! But the only thing we had in those days was the newspapers and radio. That's how you kept up with what was going on around the world.

EMC: Well, you mentioned when you were working for U.S. Rubber that you wanted to do something for the war effort once you heard about it.

DB: Right.

EMC: How did you hear about the WAVES? Do you remember?

DB: Well, maybe because Newport was nearby.

EMC: Do you remember how you heard about the WAVES?

DB: I think--living in Rhode Island--and when war was declared, so many sailors were coming to Rhode Island and also seeing Navy Recruiting signs all over. I just felt I had to go into the service too. I really knew I didn't want the Army, and the Navy

was the best thing for me. I thought maybe I'd be near home, and whatever! Because in those days we didn't get out of Rhode Island too much.

EMC: Right! People stayed very, very much at home [laughter] in those days. Well, how did your parents feel about your decision to join the WAVES?

DB: Oh, my parents were very much against it!

EMC: Why?

DB: Oh, who knows? I don't think I ever really found out. I really don't know. I think they thought I didn't know what I was getting into, and that's the only reason I can think of.

EMC: Yes. That's a fairly good reason, I would think, because it was a fairly new service established in July of '42. Would you say your motivation for joining the WAVES was patriotism?

DB: I would say yes, definitely.

EMC: Did you have any other motive for joining, other than patriotism?

DB: Well, maybe it was to get out of Woonsocket. You know, the

opportunity was there for factory work and factory work was plentiful. I did work during the summers in a cotton mill, and I knew that it was hard work. And in those days my parents didn't have the money to send me to college.

EMC: That's true. That's very true. So you selected the Navy. Where did you go to enlist?

DB: Woonsocket. Then I had to go to Boston, Massachusetts, to be sworn in.

EMC: And what did you have to do there to enlist? Did you have to fill out papers, take tests?

DB: Yes. I can't remember too much, but I think in Woonsocket I went to the recruiting office--they probably did a lot of the paper work--and then I went to Boston, I know, for the physical and swearing in. That I'll always remember.

EMC: Right. And tests--you probably had to take tests there, too.

DB: Probably so. I can't remember.

EMC: Were you sworn in, in Boston?

DB: Yes, I was.

EMC: Was there any publicity about you joining the WAVES in the newspapers of the day?

DB: Could have been. If there was, I can't remember. But I know I had come home on leave, and my sister had put it in the local paper that I was going to be home or I was home on leave.

EMC: Good. How did you travel to basic training? Did you go with a group, or did you go alone to New York?

DB: I went--that's a good question! I really can't answer that. I can't remember how I traveled and with whom. No doubt by train.

EMC: You probably left from Providence, I would think.

DB: Yes and I think there was a Coast Guard girl with me, but I don't know where she went. She probably went to Hunter College, too.

EMC: She went there, too, because part of their training was there.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Well, had you ever been to New York City before?

DB: Never!

EMC: So going to Hunter College was quite a new experience for you at the training center there.

DB: Yes.

EMC: What was your initial reaction to New York and to Hunter College? Do you remember how you felt? Were you overwhelmed?

DB: Yes. Oh, gee, that's a hard question! Really, I can't remember that, either. I do know, when I got to Hunter, all those women! Oh, my! --that was overwhelming to see so many women in the same age group and place.

EMC: Right, thousands--

DB: Yes.

EMC: --thousands of them!

DB: Yes.

EMC: Well, can you describe your living conditions during this

training period of eight weeks or so?

DB: Yes.

EMC: Where did you live?

DB: I lived right at the college in barracks then. I can vaguely remember that. The grounds were well kept.

EMC: Do you remember where any of your roommates were from?

DB: No, no.

EMC: How was your day structured at Hunter?

DB: You mean the--

EMC: What did you do?

DB: I can remember going to classes, to someone telling us how to identify planes and ships and etc. I also remember the entertainers who came on the stage there--to entertain us.

EMC: Oh, for entertainment!

DB: Yes--for our entertainment.

EMC: Do you remember who came?

DB: No.

EMC: They were popular entertainers at that time?

DB: Yes. Singers, a banjo player and comedian. They were great. We really enjoyed them all.

EMC: Hollywood stars?

DB: Yes.

EMC: That's great! How did you react to the marching and the drilling?

DB: Oh, boy!

EMC: Did you like it?

DB: Yes. It was better than sitting listening to a lecture-- being out in the fresh air drilling was good.

EMC: And you had enlisted in May '43, isn't that correct?

DB: That's right.

EMC: So you were at Hunter in the spring?

DB: Right, and the nice weather. Yes. I never remember it being hot--but always great weather for marching.

EMC: That's good. Did you adjust easily to the discipline of military life and regimen of it?

DB: Yes, because my mother and father were very strict. It didn't bother me.

EMC: No problem for you.

DB: No.

EMC: What was your opinion of the Navy uniform?

DB: I thought they were rather nice. Yes. I liked them.

EMC: And were you wearing the navy blue that summer, or did you have the seersucker?

DB: I think it was the navy blue uniform. After we got to Washington, that's when we had to have the dress and the whites,

and we could go without the jackets.

EMC: Yes. Did you have any time off in New York City?

DB: We just had--I think it was one week end. If it was even a weekend--probably it was a day. I can remember going into the city, but I can't remember who I went with--or how many of us went. Probably two or three of us went together.

EMC: To the city?

DB: Into the city, yes. I can't remember what we did. No doubt we went to the movies and had something to eat.

EMC: That was popular entertainment then.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Did anything amusing or noteworthy happen during your training period?

DB: No. Not that I can think of or remember.

EMC: Were you tested for the kind of assignment or billet you wanted, or were you just assigned to one?

DB: I was just assigned. No doubt was tested too.

EMC: What was the billet that you were assigned to when you were leaving Hunter? Where were you assigned to?

DB: I was assigned to Washington, DC, and we went to WAVE quarters D; the WAVES' quarters were across from Arlington National Cemetery.

EMC: Well, what was your job in Washington? What bureau were you with?

DB: Oh, I went to Bureau of Naval Personnel, and I was a file clerk--one of a hundred of us.

EMC: Oh, really?

DB: Yes--we would put pages into folders (or jackets) for the sailors and WAVES that came from their commanding officers. We just had the enlisted personnel's records to file in our department.

EMC: Jackets.

DB: Yes. And then I went on to the mail desk where we sorted out mail for different departments in the bureau. And after that I

know I had another job, but I can't recall what the job was--it didn't last long. I got married 6/8/45 and the war was over.

EMC: Oh, okay. We'll just double back a little bit. So you had two jobs, basically, in Bureau Pers. You were a file clerk, and you worked in the mail room.

DB: Yes.

EMC: I assume you did not need any additional training after Hunter for this.

DB: No, I didn't.

EMC: What was your rating when you were assigned? Everybody got a rate.

DB: Yes. That was yeoman.

EMC: You were yeoman. Do you remember what class?

DB: Yes, I think it was--

EMC: --third class, wasn't it? yeoman third class?

DB: Were we called something else first, and then we--

EMC: You were a seaman.

DB: Seaman. Okay. Yes.

EMC: You were a seaman and then you were a yeoman.

DB: Yes, then a yeoman--

EMC: That's third class--a little bit later on. After you left Hunter, did you go directly to Washington, D.C., or did you go home first?

DB: I went directly to Washington.

EMC: Did you go as a group?

DB: Yes, by train.

EMC: Yes, must have--and you mentioned you were domiciled in WAVE quarters. Now, where were they located?

DB: The WAVES' quarters were in Arlington, Virginia, just over the line from Washington, D.C. I was in WAVE Quarters D.

EMC: Did you have a roommate there?

DB: I had two or three roommates. You know, they either got transferred or left the Navy. Normally there would be two to a room, and I can't even remember who my roommates were.

EMC: Did you have to undergo white-glove inspections there?

DB: Oh, yes.

EMC: Do you remember how those went?

DB: I'm sure it went fine. I never heard anything bad.

EMC: How did you get to your job from Arlington Farms? Did you take a bus?

DB: Must have.

EMC: Yes. You probably did. Did you--how many days a week did you work in the Bureau of Naval Personnel?

DB: We worked the five days.

EMC: So you never had to work weekends at all.

DB: No.

EMC: Do you remember what you did on your spare time in Washington since now you had weekends off?

DB: Yes. Oh, we were out to the USO canteen in Washington where we would meet other service people. Once in a while they'd have a dance. We also went to a Navy base in Maryland where there was a dance. I can remember going there to a couple of the dances. The base commander would send a couple of buses to pick us up. And, oh how we enjoyed them. I loved to dance, still do. Went to the movies, too. That was big. Every time we went to the movies, though, I'd fall asleep. Then, too, my younger sister and her girlfriend came to visit. Also had visits from a couple of male friends who were in the service and on a weekend pass.

EMC: Did you date anyone when you were in Washington?

DB: Yes. One of the fellows that worked with us in the filing department. I went with him for about a year.

EMC: Oh, really?

DB: Yes. Then after that one of the girls in our wing was looking for someone to go out on a blind date with her--the fellow she was going with said, "Bring a friend, I got a nice friend." So I went.

EMC: Oh, is that fate!

DB: Right. Yes.

EMC: Oh, so that is how you met your husband?

DB: That's right. Yes.

EMC: And what was he doing in Washington?

DB: He was going to gunnery school there.

EMC: Was it in Washington or outside somewhere?

DB: I want to say Arcadia, but it's not. It's something like--

EMC: Anacostia?

DB: Anacostia, yes.

EMC: Oh, that's nice.

DB: Yes. Then he got transferred to Norfolk, Virginia, and that's when we decided we would get married.

EMC: So you had a courtship with him.

DB: Yes.

EMC: And how long was that?

DB: Oh, about six months.

EMC: Whirlwind courtship!

DB: Yes, right.

EMC: And then you decided to get married.

DB: Right.

EMC: And what year were you married in?

DB: In '45--June of '45.

EMC: And I saw the picture. You were married in your uniform.

DB: Yes.

EMC: And where were you married?

DB: In the chapel in Norfolk, Virginia. Chapel in the Pines, on the base.

EMC: Oh!

DB: Yes. I think it was called The Chapel in the Pines on the base.

EMC: Oh, that's great! So you met your husband during your WAVES service.

DB: Which a lot of other girls did, too.

EMC: Yes, absolutely! What did you like about your job with Bureau of Naval Personnel?

DB: Well, I enjoyed it because we would get the reports in from the ships or bases, and sometimes it was very interesting. Like the fellows--it would tell what ship they were on and what happened to them. It was their records. It went into--we called them jackets--their records went into these jackets. Sometimes you had a minute and you kind of glanced at it and read where he was injured or killed.

EMC: Well, did you find it tedious or boring?

DB: No, because there was always something happening in handling records.

EMC: Did you enjoy the camaraderie of the office--

DB: Yes, but didn't have that many officers to come in contact with. We had civilians in charge of the work place.

EMC: --all the other WAVES?

DB: All the others, yes.

EMC: Did you have a military or a civilian supervisor?

DB: I had a civilian--yes.

EMC: And about how many WAVES worked in your office?

DB: Oh, there were about five floors of files--records for every enlisted person in the Navy. Oh, I couldn't even imagine how many WAVES there were, but I know there had to be a hundred, anyway. We never met each one. We also worked with the sailors in our job. That's why WAVES were going in, to release the men to go on ships and wherever they were needed.

EMC: Did they resent your presence there--the fellows?

DB: No. Not that I ever ran into. I think they loved it--us being there. We all got along great.

EMC: Oh, so they weren't annoyed with you because you were taking their jobs and sending them out into harm's way?

DB: No.

EMC: Well, that's good!

DB: No. I never found it that way.

EMC: Now, did you request a transfer to the mail room, or were you just automatically sent there?

DB: Automatically sent there.

EMC: Now, in the mail room, what was your job?

DB: Well, any mail that came into the Bureau of Personnel we would have to open. There were two of us that worked in this particular section. But most of the time, if you got an envelope, it would say "allotment division" or "survivor" or something, so we got the allotment mail. And some that were in question we could open. We opened and we read. And we directed it to whatever

department like the Red Cross, or if it happened to be an officer that somebody was writing about, to find out about him, we would direct it on to the right department. It didn't belong in our department. There we handled enlisted mail only.

EMC: Did you get any letters that were censored? Because they did a lot of censoring.

DB: No.

EMC: Yes, some of them were blacked out. So you got official correspondence coming in with inquiries about people?

DB: No there wasn't any official correspondence in our department.

EMC: Oh, okay. Did you like that job?

DB: Yes, I thought that was very interesting.

EMC: Was there anything about it that you didn't like?

DB: No, not that I can recall, no.

EMC: And did you work with another WAVE?

DB: Yes.

EMC: Well, you sound like you had some interesting jobs!. Then you mentioned you had another job--a third job? After the mail room? In BuPers.?

DB: You know, that's a blank spot there. I know I did something else in the same area. I cannot remember it. It was a very short work period.

EMC: Right. How were you treated by your civilian supervisors?

DB: Had only civilian supervisor. She was an elderly woman, and I think she was ready to retire, and of course she couldn't retire. With the war on, she was much needed there to keep things going. She was a kind person, but she never missed anything that went on in our department.

EMC: Fault finding?

DB: Yes. One never did anything right by her standards.

EMC: Oh, I see.

DB: No talking--no--

EMC: Oh, dear!

DB: Yes.

EMC: So that wasn't a fun place.

DB: But she didn't stay there in our section, thank goodness-- because we had big high files. You know, she couldn't see what we were doing back there. We did our work! That was one thing. But, you know, once in a while you like a little free time.

EMC: Sure!

DB: Or you tell your co-worker what you did over the weekend and etc.

EMC: Yes, right. Oh, so that wasn't too much fun to have somebody like that! Did you ever encounter any discrimination in your time in the service?

DB: No, no.

EMC: Or any harassment?

DB: No.

EMC: That's great. Were you in Washington when President Roosevelt died in April, 1945?

DB: Yes, I was.

EMC: Now, do you remember what your reaction to that event was?

DB: No, no.

EMC: Did you attend the funeral services and events?

DB: No, I didn't.

EMC: You were in Washington in August '45 when the war ended.

DB: Right.

EMC: Now, do you remember how you celebrated then? On August 15, 1945.

DB: I'm trying to remember if we got out of work early. But I do remember a couple of us girls going into Washington, and how everybody was--oh, kissing and hugging, and just everybody was in, you know, a very good mood!

EMC: Yes. Were the streets filled with people?

DB: Yes, they were.

EMC: Well, that was quite a momentous event!

DB: Oh, yes!

EMC: Did you have any other contact with any other civilians-- other than your supervisor--when you were in the WAVES?

DB: No.

EMC: When you were out on the street in Washington or, you know, in any of your socializing, did any civilians ever congratulate you on your service?

DB: No.

EMC: Make any positive remarks?

DB: No.

EMC: Did you keep up with news about the war when you were in the WAVES?

DB: I'm sure I must have. Yes.

EMC: Did you write to your parents or friends regarding your WAVE experiences?

DB: Yes, I'm sure--yes.

EMC: Do you have any of these letters that you wrote to your parents?

DB: No.

EMC: Or to your sisters.

DB: No.

EMC: Did you ever have the chance to meet Mildred McAfee, who was the director of the WAVES?

DB: No.

EMC: Do you remember whether you were able to survive on your pay?

DB: Yes. I'm sure. Yes.

EMC: Did you save any money at all?

DB: No, but at our age and the time we were very frugal--I don't know that I ever expected much. I was always able to buy stockings and eat. So, when you are able to buy stockings and eat--things must have been all right. We were very lucky. Stockings would come to the Navy exchange. We'd be able to go to the exchange and get stockings and etc.

EMC: So you had an exchange program.

DB: Yes.

EMC: You stayed in the Navy--you said you were married in June '45, and you were discharged from the Navy in December '45. Now, after you were married in June, did you return to Washington to your billet?

DB: Yes, I did.

EMC: Where was your husband?

DB: My husband at that time had gone on a ship, the USS WARE.

EMC: Oh.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Oh, so this was at the tail end of the war, and he was on a ship.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Where was he headed for, did you know?

DB: No.

EMC: But you found out later?

DB: Oh, yes.

EMC: Where did he go?

DB: I really can't remember. Probably to Cuba. That's where a lot of ships used to go, to Cuba.

EMC: Well, in June, I mean in December, you were discharged from the Navy. Were you happy or sad to leave the WAVES?

DB: I was very sad!

EMC: Well, why were you sad?

DB: I don't know--going out in the new world, I guess. You know, we were clothed, fed and someone telling us what to do and what not to do--and being married. What was next?

EMC: You were protected!

DB: That's right. Yes.

EMC: Would you have stayed in the WAVES if you could have?

DB: I certainly would have, yes.

EMC: Oh, that's very interesting because in 1948, you know, the legislation was passed that women could serve in the regular Navy and in the reserves.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Did you receive any medals for your service.

DB: No.

EMC: Did you get the ruptured duck, that little pin?

DB: Oh, yes.

EMC: Did you feel that the WAVES had a strong sense of esprit de corps? Of camaraderie, a feel of bonding?

DB: I suppose. Yes.

EMC: Did you have any preconceived expectations when you entered the WAVES--of what it would be like?

DB: I must have, because I was not afraid--I mean I went alone, by myself through it all.

EMC: Did you know anybody who was discharged for disciplinary reasons?

DB: No, no.

EMC: So everybody that you knew behaved themselves?

DB: Right. Yes.

EMC: That's good. As I mentioned before, the WAVES were just established on July 31st '42. So when you joined, you know, it was a relatively new organization. Did you find it a smoothly run organization--

DB: Oh, yes.

EMC: --by that time?

DB: Yes.

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

DB: I think it did. Oh, gee, I--I can't tell--how, the only thing I knew I didn't want to go back to Woonsocket to settle down.

EMC: Oh, really?

DB: Because, like I said, there was only textile mills in Woonsocket. No future for a husband.

EMC: That was one thing that changed for you, you didn't want to go home.

DB: That's right.

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

DB: Oh, yes.

EMC: Do you think that it broadened your horizons?

DB: Yes, I'm sure it did. But in those days, like I said, you didn't go out of Rhode Island, and when I got in the service, I wasn't afraid. I'd come home on the train from Washington, DC, and think nothing of it, and I'm sure before that, my goodness, I wouldn't leave Rhode Island!

EMC: Right! You were more worldly--

DB: Yes. I'd say that. I don't know about "worldly" but--

EMC: Well, you knew your way around.

DB: Yes, that's right.

EMC: You'd been around.

DB: Yes. It's always stuck with me. I can still do things alone.

EMC: That's good. Did you enjoy meeting women from all from all over the country?

DB: Yes, I did.

EMC: And you mentioned you kept in contact with one woman.

DB: Yes.

EMC: How did you meet her?

DB: She wasn't a roommate, but she had a room (a cubicle)--we called it a cubicle--a few doors away, and we just seemed to click. She was from Texas.

EMC: Now did you meet her--in Washington?

DB: Yes.

EMC: And did she work in the Bureau of Naval Personnel?

DB: I can't remember where she worked. Because we were housed with other WAVES who worked all over Washington.

EMC: Do you still keep in contact with this woman?

DB: Right. Yes.

EMC: Oh, that's great!

DB: Yes.

EMC: Fantastic. And where does she live now?

DB: She lives in Texas now.

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

DB: No. You marry, have your children, and then you take care of the husband. And live happy ever after! That's what I thought. I know after he came out of the service, and we went back to New York, out on Long Island where his home town was, he couldn't find a job. We talked things over, and I said, "Go back in the Navy." And he said, "You really mean it?" Yes. So that was that. And he put in 16 more years in the Navy.

EMC: Oh, so in '46, he got out of the service?

DB: Right. He got out, too. Yes. I think it was in June, or something like that. Yes, very shortly after I left the WAVES.

EMC: Oh, and then you settled in Long Island?

DB: Yes--well, we really didn't settle.

EMC: Oh, then he went back into the service?

DB: Yes, he went back in the service.

EMC: So you were a Navy wife.

DB: Right. Yes.

EMC: For how long?

DB: Let's see--well, not the nineteen years, probably seventeen years.

EMC: Oh, that's quite a stretch.

DB: Yes.

EMC: That's amazing. Now, what did your husband go back in as? What was his rate?

DB: His rate was gunner's mate 1st class. Yes.

EMC: So where did you live during this seventeen-year-period that you were a Navy wife?

DB: Well, we went to--we lived in Brooklyn for a short while, while his ship was in for repairs. Then after we went to Newport, Rhode Island, and then we went down to Oceana, Virginia, and

Charleston, South Carolina, and then to California. That is where he retired--in San Diego, California.

EMC: Then you had seventeen years, roughly, until 1962 as a Navy wife.

DB: Yes.

EMC: That's quite a long time. Now, during this time frame when you were moving, did you work at all?

DB: No.

EMC: Did you have any children?

DB: Yes, I had one son.

EMC: So you had to raise him.

DB: Right.

EMC: Did you enjoy your life as a navy wife?

DB: I loved it!

EMC: Why did you love it?

DB: Well, you never had time to get bored, I guess. You'd up and move after a year or two. Other Navy wives I would meet were friendly, and I enjoyed the company while the men went to sea. They'd go overseas, or wherever, and we'd be with one another as friends to help when needed.

EMC: Yes. So you had some support.

DB: Right. Yes.

EMC: When they were gone to sea. Did they go to sea for six months?

DB: Well, I think six months was the most, yes.

EMC: That's a long deployment.

DB: Yes. Well, he had two tours of shore duties--three years--two of them, in Newport and shore duty in Oceana, Virginia. Then in California and South Carolina he was on a reserve ship, a reserve training ship. So he was home often. They'd go out for two weeks, (away one week end) and back in port for two weeks.

EMC: Yes. Did you find it difficult to cope with the responsibilities that you were left with when your husband was

out at sea?

DB: No, no. My son was a healthy child, and I was a healthy woman; so, you know, things went very well. We did whatever we had to do.

EMC: Well, you didn't have any stresses of that kind, of too much responsibility and too much decision-making on your own. Well, that's great. Did you meet any WAVES who were Navy wives that you may have known?

DB: Isn't that something! No, never did.

EMC: Yes, because a lot of them did marry--

DB: Oh, yes. I think most of them are in Florida now.

EMC: --married Navy men and then continued in the Navy just like you did--

DB: Yes.

EMC: --which is interesting. Did you attend any WAVE reunions after the war?

DB: No, I never did.

EMC: Do you belong to any WAVE organizations now?

DB: Yes.

EMC: Which one?

DB: Yes--WAVES National--for WAVES present and past.

EMC: That's the national group out of Washington.

DB: I also belong to the Fleet Reserve Association. I've been a charter member of that organization since 1957.

EMC: Is that for women only?

DB: They have their ladies' auxiliary and the men's branch.

EMC: Oh, I see. So that's Navy wives, isn't it--more or less?

DB: Yes.

EMC: And do they have a chapter here?

DB: Yes. They do have a club in Newport.

EMC: Yes--I would think, in Newport. Well, that's great. Now what inspired you to join WAVES National? Why did you join it?

DB: I suppose I wanted to hear the latest and hoping maybe somebody from out of the past would have something published or some news, and I'd say, "Oh, I knew her when." But never did.

EMC: But you do get the newsletter? "White Caps."

DB: Yes.

EMC: And they have conferences and reunions every couple of years.

DB: Right. Yes. Probably if I had somebody to go with, I would have gone, but never have I attended a reunion.

EMC: Do you have anything else to add about your training at Hunter or the jobs that you did with Navel Personnel--anything exciting, amusing, interesting, different that happened to you?

DB: No.

EMC: What would you say was the significance of your naval career for you and your life? What meaning did it have for you, or importance did it have for you?

DB: Well, I don't think there's really any--I was just proud, I know, like when I'd come home. That's it!

EMC: When you came home on leaves, did you encounter any of your neighbors or town's folk in Woonsocket, and how did they react to your service?

DB: I don't know. They just kind of took it like-- We were so used to seeing sailors around town that I really can't say on that.

EMC: I just wonder how many went from Woonsocket--how many women.

DB: I don't know. I often think of that myself, how many women from Rhode Island went into the service at that time.

EMC: Quite a few went from Rhode Island, actually. Yes. Let's get back to your final years. Now you were a Navy wife for seventeen years, and once your husband got out of the Navy in California, where did you settle?

DB: We settled here in Warwick to be near the Navy base Quonset.

EMC: Did your husband work then--after he got out of the Navy?

DB: When he got out of the service, he went to school, New England Tech, in refrigeration and air-conditioning. And while he was there, they asked him to teach, so he taught for them. Then he left New England Tech. He was with them, I'd say, about a year. He then went with Sears as an air-condition-- refrigeration/air-condition technician, and that's when he had his heart attack, while he was working for Sears.

EMC: That's a shame. Did you work after he passed away?

DB: Yes. After he passed away, I did.

EMC: Where did you work?

DB: I worked for J. F. Moran Company, and they were located in downtown Providence.

EMC: What did they do?

DB: They dealt with import/exports, helping companies in their import/export department.

EMC: That's interesting--didn't know there was something like that in Providence. Did you enjoy that work?

DB: Oh, yes. Yes, I worked there for 27 years in the accounting department.

EMC: A long time.

DB: I think if I'd only spent it in the service-- Now women can have children, but in those days out you go!

EMC: Out you go, yes. Did you ever talk about your WAVE days to your son?

DB: No. I'd say not much. Maybe if I had a girl child. I would like my granddaughter to go into the service. Time will tell!

EMC: Have her join the Navy, you mean, after college?

DB: Yes. Have her think of going into the service. But the opportunities that the young people have today, the military is not that appealing.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Did your son join the Navy at all?

DB: Yes. My son was in the Navy.

EMC: Oh, so there's a tradition there. How long was he in for?

DB: It must have been four years. Yes, that was it. He got into submarines, and he didn't care much for that. He was away too long and a newlywed.

EMC: Oh, I see. Then he got out. Well, that's kind of interesting. But he was influenced, I guess, by being a Navy child--to join.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Well, do you have any other comments, Doris, on your service or anything that I've omitted?

DB: I think you were very thorough. No, there's really nothing to add. The years have passed by so quickly and you kind of push that part of your life to the back of your mind.

EMC: Yes, it's a long time ago.

DB: Yes.

EMC: Fifty plus years ago. Fifty-five years ago! Well, thank you

very much for the interview. We'll have this transcribed and return a copy to you.

[End of Interview]

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