

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

HISTORY OF THE SPARS

HISTORY
OF THE
SPARS

NO. 270

MARIE PURCELL BEDDOE

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

2001

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: MARIE PURCELL BEDDOE
INTERVIEWER: EVELYN M. CHERPAK
DATE: JUNE 5, 2001
PLACE: 21 CEDAR POND DRIVE, WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND

EMC: This is the first oral history with June Purcell Beddoe, who lives at 21 Cedar Pond Drive, Apartment 10, in Warwick, Rhode Island. Today's date is June 5, 2001. The interview is being conducted at her apartment. This is Evelyn Cherpak, the Curator of the Naval Historical Collection. I should correct this and say that her correct name is Marie Purcell Beddoe, not June. June is a nickname.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: Would you like to be called that? I'm very grateful today that you consented to talk about your service in the SPARS in World War II. I'd like to begin the interview by asking you where you were born and when you were born.

MPB: I was born in Somerville, Massachusetts, February 17, 1919.

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

MPB: My father was in sales in the electrical field. He was with Graybar Electric and was eventually a manager for them.

EMC: And your mother?

MPB: My mother was a housewife.

EMC: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

MPB: I have one sister.

EMC: Younger?

MPB: She's a year and a half younger than I am.

EMC: Did you spend your growing up years in Somerville, Massachusetts?

MPB: No. When I was in grade school I lived in a small town north of Boston called Wakefield. And then I moved to Rhode Island when I was going into the eighth grade.

EMC: Was your father transferred?

MPB: Yes. This was early '30's, and he was in the position of

being forced out of employment and having to find something new. But he never was unemployed. He never was without income.

EMC: Oh, that's good.

MPB: I think it was three months before he found a situation.

EMC: That was the Depression era, which was very severe.

MPB: Yes, it was.

EMC: Did you move to Providence at that time?

MPB: Yes. We moved to Providence. We lived in the Elmhurst area of Providence, and I went into the eighth grade at Nathaniel Green Junior High School.

EMC: And from there, I guess, you went to the local high school.

MPB: Yes. I went to Classical. I graduated in 1936.

EMC: That was the heart of the Depression, too.

MPB: Yes, it was.

EMC: Did you have aspirations to go to college?

MPB: Yes, I did. From the time I was a little girl my mother had direction, at that time, for me. And I went to Brown. It was the women's college in Brown University, called Pembroke in those days. But we were always a part of Brown. We got our degree from Brown. I graduated in 1940.

EMC: And what did you major in there?

MPB: I really had basically a humanities background. I didn't want to be narrowed into one field, and my father persuaded the Dean that I shouldn't. He felt if I wanted a liberal arts education, then I should have it. And so they let me, and I took a variety of things--economics and psychology, even philosophy and sociology. And in those days, the first two years of college there were required liberal arts courses. It's the kind of thing they do today. I was very privileged to be able to do that.

EMC: Oh, yes.

MPB: Of course, then I wasn't equipped to do anything when I got out.

EMC: By the way, I just wondered, did you attend classes with the Brown students?

MPB: Yes. The first two years a lot of our classes were on the Pembroke campus and they were all women. These were the required courses of English and math and biology, and so forth. But even starting as a sophomore, we had classes on the Brown campus, mixed classes.

EMC: Oh, mixed. Good.

MPB: It was co-ed.

EMC: Oh, interesting. Well, you graduated before the war began. And did you seek employment once you were finished?

MPB: Yes, I did. There were no jobs in 1940. And we were still at the end of the Depression. And my parents would have liked to send me to Simmons to be a librarian. But I was fed up with studying, and so I applied and got a position with the city as a social worker, the city of Providence. And I worked for three months with no salary. They gave me a bus pass to get around. And then in the fall the first battery of Civil Service exams for social worker under the federal program were given. And I took those. And by February I had a state job. In the meantime, they had put me on the payroll in Providence for twenty dollars a week.

EMC: Sounds like nothing.

MPB: And I moved over to the state which was twenty-five dollars a week.

EMC: Well, that was a little better.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: But how long did you work for the state as a social worker?

MPB: Well, let's see. I'm trying to think. Maybe a year. And then I took another Civil Service exam and went to work in the Examining Department of the Civil Service itself, that would be making up the tests and administering the Civil Service for the state. And they were just bringing people under that umbrella.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MPB: A lot of it was all appointed until then.

EMC: Right. Oh, that's interesting. Did you enjoy these jobs?

MPB: Yes, I did. I worked with the elderly mostly in the social service jobs. And I had a friend from college days, and we worked together as social workers and then we worked together at Civil Service. So it was a very pleasant time. Now by 1941, and this is

before Pearl Harbor, the boys were just being taken. Even in 1940 they were being drafted and taken.

EMC: But anyway, that's what you did before you entered the SPARS.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: Well, Pearl Harbor came along on December 7, 1941. Do you remember what your reaction was to that surprise attack?

MPB: Well, of course, that was a Sunday. And I remember we were home--my family, my sister. And probably I had a friend there, too, for dinner, and we listened to the radio. And we just couldn't believe what we were hearing. But I was always very politically aware. That's another course I took in college, political science. And I had been paying attention to Roosevelt's Lend Lease plan and what was happening. The average person did not know what Hitler was doing in Germany. They did not know. Higher-ups did know. But the average person did not. It was not in the news. It was just a completely hidden thing.

EMC: Yes. The persecution, you mean, of the Jews.

MPB: Yes. The Holocaust.

EMC: Sure. So pretty terrible.

MPB: But we knew about, you know, his invasions of Poland and Czechoslovakia and all the countries, and we knew what was happening to France. We knew the English--what was it--the English Army--

EMC: Dunkirk?

MPB: Yes. We knew about that, that kind of news. But news from Germany itself, we didn't get any news from Germany.

EMC: Well, you kept up with news about the war before you enlisted in the SPARS in the Coast Guard.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: Did your family have any military connections at all?

MPB: No. Not at all. My father worked in the Brooklyn Navy yard as an electrician in World War I. He was 4-F. But there wasn't anybody in my family connected with the service.

EMC: How did you hear about the SPARS?

MPB: Well, the WAVES came first.

EMC: Right.

MPB: And there was a lot of publicity about the WAVES. And from the minute I heard about it I wanted to do it.

EMC: Why?

MPB: I just thought it would be so interesting, and so exciting, and so different. And I felt that if I didn't do it, I would always feel that I had missed something big. My father was encouraging. He was just fine about it. My mother was very upset.

EMC: Why?

MPB: Well, she just couldn't understand why. I had a good job and a good income, and I had a lovely home. And why would I leave it all and go away. And I think that she probably thought I was going to be sent to some far, far place.

EMC: And you were going into the unknown, you know, with a new organization.

MPB: Yes. And it was just so different. I had always been a very bookish person and not into sports or lots of activity. My sister was into them. But Mom just thought it was strange, a strange

thing for me to want to do.

EMC: Well, you said there was a lot of publicity about the WAVES.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: Because they came first--July 30, 1942. And why did you select the SPARS instead of the WAVES?

MPB: Well, I selected the SPARS because I could get in, because it was new, and I could get in as quickly as possible. And in the spring of '43, I started looking into it. It was kind of a little bit of a long process. And then I went in. In June of '43, I went to the Coast Guard Academy at New London for my training.

EMC: Oh, really?

MPB: Yes.

EMC: Now where did you actually enlist in the SPARS? Was that in Providence?

MPB: No. It was Boston.

EMC: Okay.

MPB: Yes. It was all done through Boston.

EMC: Right, the recruiting center there. So I guess you had to go up there, didn't you?

MPB: Yes. And went through, you know, a couple of physicals. I had never had that kind of physical. And then I think I got in maybe--I'll have to look at my discharge papers--because it seems to me I enlisted, and then I had to wait a little while before they called the class. And the training at New London was six weeks.

EMC: Did you enter the Officer Corps?

MPB: Yes, I did.

EMC: Okay. We want to make sure. You were not enlisted, but you entered the Officer Corps.

MPB: I was an Ensign.

EMC: An Ensign. And they sent you for training to the Coast Guard Academy in New London.

MPB: In New London.

EMC: Oh, that's interesting.

MPB: And it was very, very strenuous. We rowed those long boats.

EMC: Oh, you did?

MPB: Yes. And we ran up and down the hill. And we couldn't have any contact with families or anything for three weeks. And then at the end of three weeks the ones that were surviving, and there were a number of them that dropped out--

EMC: Oh, really?

MPB: Well, depending on your reason for being there. I know I had one roommate, she was married. And we always thought she got angry with her husband and did this or for some foolish reason.

EMC: Right.

MPB: But the rest of us, we didn't have that large a dropout. At the end of three weeks the families were invited to come to see us in a parade. We had our uniforms. And my mother who had been very sad about her daughter leaving said later that when she came and saw how well I looked and how happy I was she couldn't be negative about it anymore.

EMC: Well, that's good. Now you were domiciled on the campus, I assume.

MPB: Oh, yes, in the old buildings, you know. I think the males were still there.

EMC: They must have been.

MPB: They had to be. I think the dorms were blocked off and we had part of it, you know, just part of it. Let's see. How many roommates did I have? I think there were four in a room.

EMC: Probably.

MPB: Two sets of bunk beds. And, of course, we had everything regulation, which wasn't difficult for me because I'm a very organized person and, you know, making the bed to a certain standard and that kind of thing--that didn't bother me at all.

EMC: Yes. The admiral's corners, so they say, and the tight sheets and whatever. Well, I assume when you were there, besides the marching and the rowing and drilling, that you attended classes as well.

MPB: Oh, yes. It was a long day. We had classes. We were busy

from six o'clock in the morning until--I don't remember what our curfew was. We had to study. We had to pass tests. There was a lot of paper work. We learned, you know, the organization of the Coast Guard, and we learned the organizational chart for all the services, the admirals on down and so forth. I suppose this was just stretching our minds a little bit. And then there was part of the day that was given over to physical education, which I was not enthused about. But I wanted to be there and I wanted to pass and you had to--

EMC: You had to participate.

MPB: And I was--the women in my group. I don't know exactly when the SPARS came into operation first.

EMC: I'll have to check.

MPB: I mean the Navy was '42.

EMC: And the WACs were a little bit before the Navy.

MPB: They were first.

EMC: And the Marines were February '43.

MPB: Oh.

EMC: Yes. In November, but they really got underway in February '43.

MPB: See, I think that's right. The Coast Guard was in November 1942.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: I was not the first class down there, but I think I might have been even the second class. Because most of the women in the group were at least ten years older than I was.

EMC: Oh, really?

MPB: Yes. They were women who had come out of-- Well, one of my roommates had a big, big job in the State Department. And they were recruited. She eventually ended up in personnel in Boston. They were recruiting these experienced women. And then the younger women, let's see, 1943 I would have been twenty-four years old. Maybe five of us out of the class were in that age group and the rest of them were in their thirties.

EMC: That's interesting.

MPB: Because they were looking for really capable, competent

women to take over personnel and public relations and all that kind of thing.

EMC: Yes. So you had an older group.

MPB: And I have an idea that they would have had a quota system for the states. I was the only one from Rhode Island.

EMC: Oh, really?

MPB: I was the only one from Rhode Island in my class.

EMC: And people were from all over the country.

MPB: One of my roommates was from California. They were from all over the country.

EMC: That's interesting. Did you have white glove inspections on Saturday mornings?

MPB: Oh, yes. We certainly did. And when we wore our uniforms we had a uniform inspection also.

EMC: What was your uniform like? Was it similar to the Navy's?

MPB: Well, why don't I get the picture. Yes. It was based on the

Navy uniform. The hat was different and the insignias.

EMC: Yes. It looks similar to the Navy uniform.

MPB: Yes. I think only the insignia is different.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: And we had the white over cap that you had to keep starched for the summer, and then I had a white uniform also. Then in the winter time then we had the rain thing.

EMC: Oh, the Havelock?

MPB: Yes. It came down. What do you call it?

EMC: Havelock.

MPB: Yes. It came down over you.

EMC: Yes. Over your neck. Yes. It does look very similar--

MPB: That was wool.

EMC: Oh, really? How itchy.

MPB: It was wool. And it was a very tightly woven wool that really shed the rain.

EMC: Oh, that's good. Well, they planned well. Did you like the uniform?

MPB: Oh, I loved it. I never would go in the Army because I would never wear that khaki uniform. That was awful.

EMC: Yes. That's what some people say.

MPB: But the Navy uniform was very nice. And they fitted us pretty well. And, of course, the skirts had to be a certain length and we wore black kind of medium heel pumps. Those were the shoes that we were to wear.

EMC: Not the lace-up kind then.

MPB: No. They were just classic pumps. I remember one time being in Boston on Armistice Day and leading the SPAR contingent in a parade. And it was misty rain. We wore the covers, and the cobblestones were terrible on our feet. You know, I think now how sensible we are about shoes. Why did we have those then?

EMC: No. We weren't sensible in that time frame.

MPB: No.

EMC: I assume you had regimental reviews too, pass in review on a Saturday before the commandant or the head of the school.

MPB: See, I don't really recall. We must have, but I don't recall much about that. I was only there at New London for six weeks. Then they were so desperate for people they sent ten of us to Boston. We were the first large group to go to Boston. I think that made my Mom feel very happy that I wasn't going to go away. The only overseas places you could go were Alaska or Hawaii. Hawaii would have kind of appealed to me, but I didn't really want to go that far. I was perfectly happy. I grew up in the Boston area. I knew it well, I had family around there, and I've always loved Boston. And so I was perfectly happy to go to Boston.

EMC: Oh, that's great. Just to double back a bit, did you have a graduation ceremony or a commissioning ceremony?

MPB: Yes, we did. And I do remember we were passing in review then.

EMC: And you were commissioned an Ensign.

MPB: Yes, an Ensign. And then before I got out I became a

Lieutenant JG.

EMC: Yes. Ranks were kind of limited in those days. Well, you said you were assigned to Boston. That was your first assignment.

MPB: My only assignment.

EMC: Oh, your only assignment. Okay. You stayed there for the duration of the war.

MPB: Yes. I was there from the end of August '43 until June of '46.

EMC: Oh. Almost three years in Boston. And where were you assigned to? What command?

MPB: I was very fortunate to get a fascinating assignment. And the only reason I think that I got it was probably because I was young. There was another young woman from California who got a very interesting assignment also. I think we were given these assignments because we were young and we would be quick studies. And so I was sent to be Assistant Aids to Navigation Officer for the First Naval District. What that turned out to be was like an administrative assistant to the Commander in that office. And then there were twelve enlisted SPARS. And we had a chart room for Boston Harbor, and even the Navy used our chart room. They

were the first quartermasters in the Coast Guard. In the office when I was assigned there, the Commander was--he was really kind of aghast to see this young woman come in. He lost his men, and the last one was leaving when I was coming in. Commander Balzer was from Portland, Oregon, and he was a kindly man. And he had been an old lighthouse person in the Lighthouse Service which is, you know, part of the Coast Guard. And he had five daughters. And I think because he had that experience with daughters, he gave me a chance.

EMC: Oh, that's good.

MPB: He gave me a chance. And there was a civilian employee in the office. She was a maiden lady, as they said in those days, and she taught me everything I needed to know. There was a lot of correspondence. There was a certain amount of technical stuff I had to learn connected with the Aids to Navigation--lighthouses, buoys, and so forth. And within a matter of weeks Commander Balzer was able to leave me in charge of that office and go off on his trips to the bases and to the lightships, and so forth. I was in the office next door to the Admiral.

EMC: Oh.

MPB: And I had authority to make decisions about what to do about aides that were off track, and so forth, to a certain

level. And then I needed to go to the vice admiral to get permission to go higher than that. And I only remember having to do that a few times. And the first time I went into him--his name was Daniels--he said, "Well, Miss Purcell, what do you think ought to be done?" And I told him. And he said, "Well, do it." And he, you know, they gave you a lot of respect. And they presumed that I was trained enough by Commander Balzer that I would know how to make the decisions that I did. So it was a really, really exciting job.

EMC: So you had a lot of responsibility.

MPB: Yes. But I had someone there to back me and it wasn't that difficult. As I said, I really feel that's one of the reasons I got the job, because I would be a quick study for the technology that needed to be learned. It wasn't that difficult. We had all kinds of books to look in and all kinds of references. And when he was out of the office, I handled all the correspondence that came over his desk. His desk and mine were adjoined, you know, face to face. And then when he was there, there were certain things that he took care of and I got more routine things to do.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MPB: And then I supervised the secretaries. There were four, or maybe only three, and then the girls in the chart room also.

EMC: Well, they were the Coast Guard enlisted, weren't there?

MPB: Yes, Coast Guard enlisted. And they were quartermasters, the first women quartermasters in the Coast Guard.

EMC: Isn't that interesting.

MPB: And Boston First Naval District includes from Maine down to Connecticut. And then the Second Naval District starts in Connecticut. And I think my friend Mary Maguire was from--

EMC: She was at the Eastern Sea Frontier in New York City.

MPB: Yes. She was in New York City, I think.

EMC: Yes. Eastern Sea Frontier is where she was. Did you have an opportunity to travel at all? Did you have to leave the office?

MPB: No, not really. The first two years I was in Boston we worked a sixty hour week. We had the duty every third night. Now most of the young women that were sent up there with me went into communications. And I was always glad later on that I didn't get that because I wouldn't have enjoyed that at all. And one of my roommates was made Public Relations Officer. And another one, the one that had been in the State Department, she was made Assistant

Personnel Director. So, no, we didn't really do any traveling. We worked very long hours. But it was really fun.

EMC: You must have worked on Saturdays, too.

MPB: We did. We did. And I would go home on the train on Saturday. Sometimes had to stand part of the way, sometimes sitting on a suitcase because the trains were crowded on Saturday, say at six o'clock and go back Sunday night.

EMC: To Providence.

MPB: To my parents' home.

EMC: Right. Just for a little break. Now where did you live in Boston?

MPB: Well, that's another thing. This woman from the State Department--her name was Katherine Jones. She and I had decided we would get a place together. When we first went to Boston, the housing was terrible. My father had a connection with someone who belonged to the University Club in Boston. We got permission to stay there, but it was only for one week. And then we had to move out to the SPAR barracks in Brookline while we were searching for--

EMC: Oh.

MPB: We couldn't stay there indefinitely.

EMC: Sure.

MPB: And we didn't want to stay there indefinitely. It was very crowded conditions. So we walked the streets after work. There were no ads. It was like word of mouth. Somebody was leaving and they'd tell you about a place. And I wanted to live in the city, a few blocks up from the Boston Gardens because we could actually walk to work, you know, down through the gardens, through the commons and then down to the customs house building, if we wanted to.

EMC: Sure.

MPB: And many a time we did, especially in snowy weather. And we liked to do it. So we went into this building one day, it's condos now, on Marlborough Street--four blocks up between Dartmouth and Exeter. Do you know that area?

EMC: Not well.

MPB: No. It's a nice area.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: And in those days Storrow Drive didn't block off the Esplanade, and that was all available for us to walk, and so forth. There were four levels. And I think it had been an old mansion that had been made into apartments. And the landlord lived on the, it was slightly below grade, the first level. And he said, well, he did have an apartment coming vacant, these Navy men were going to sea. But he didn't think he wanted to rent to women. And I said, "Well, I don't understand that because we're going to be here for the duration and your men are going to be in and out." And he said, "I never thought of that." And he let us have the apartment.

EMC: Oh, that's good.

MPB: It didn't take us too long, a couple of weeks, to get an apartment. And it was furnished.

EMC: Oh, wonderful.

MPB: And it was on the fourth floor. But there was an elevator. It was better than here, nothing like twenty-eight stairs. So we stayed there the whole period of time.

EMC: Oh, that's great. So you lived on the economy, which was

good. Do you remember what your pay was during that time?

MPB: It seemed like it was an awful lot of money. I have a figure in my mind of maybe something like sixty dollars a week.

EMC: That would be a lot in those days.

MPB: But I think it was. And then because we were living on the economy, for two of us sharing the rent was really not bad at all. I don't remember the details. I don't remember the exact figures.

EMC: Sure.

MPB: But I know that it was a lot more money than I had been earning in the Civil Service.

EMC: And you certainly could survive on it.

MPB: Oh, yes. I saved money. I bought bonds.

EMC: Oh, did you?

MPB: Oh, yes. And I saved money. And when I got out I had a little nest egg.

EMC: Oh, that's great. Did they encourage you to buy war bonds in the office?

MPB: Oh, yes. There was always that push for that. And you could buy them, you know, through the payroll.

EMC: Deduction. Yes. Oh, that's interesting. Back to your work a little bit. Did you find the work challenging?

MPB: Oh, yes. I felt very important. Because Aids to Navigation is so critical to all Naval vessels, and Coast Guard vessels and even small boats. And the light ships were very important. I think there's a new book out about light ships that I saw reviewed the other day. They don't have them anymore.

EMC: No.

MPB: They were very important then, and the lighthouses, and so forth. And then the buoys in the harbor particularly, but all through the whole Naval district. And there was a routine for taking care of those things.

EMC: Did you have any crises or mishaps that occurred during this almost three year period that you remember?

MPB: No, I really don't remember anything.

EMC: No attacks or anything on Coast Guard ships by the enemy or whatever?

MPB: No.

EMC: It sounds as if you were well treated by your immediate superior.

MPB: Oh, yes, I certainly was. And the woman, a civilian employee, her name was Miss Hart. And I will never forget her, because she could have made things difficult and she didn't. She was my backup.

EMC: That's neat.

MPB: And we had lovely congenial relationships. Commander Balzer was just a fine man.

EMC: How did the other enlisted SPARS relate to the officers in the SPARS? Did they resent your authority?

MPB: No, they didn't. I think there was this, maybe even back that far, there was this women's lib attitude. Because I remember the enlisted girls. There wasn't even that much division between us in the office there. And I remember them all being just

lovely, just fun. And I think they were sort of proud that a woman was in the job I was in. And, of course, the quartermasters were doing a very responsible job. And I did have to learn a little bit about that. But I can't say that I was as skilled as those quartermasters, because I wasn't trained for that.

EMC: What exactly did they do? Do you know what a quartermaster did?

MPB: Oh, they kept all these charts. And every time there was a buoy that went off line or an obstruction to a navigation that was all plotted. All the traffic that came across my desk was passed on to them, and then all the secret traffic in the district came across my desk.

EMC: You obviously had a secret clearance.

MPB: Yes. And I don't remember any of it. But I remember thinking how extraordinary it was for me to be there, and to be having a good time and be well paid.

EMC: Enjoying what you're doing.

MPB: Enjoying what I'm doing. And there were some girls in my office who were all very friendly. We used to go out and have supper together occasionally. So, no, there wasn't any

resentment.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: It was a very small group.

EMC: Sure. To begin with. So you're lucky you had a good office. Was there anything about the assignment that you did not like?

MPB: I can't think of a thing.

EMC: Well, that's good.

MPB: It was the most satisfactory three year experience.

EMC: Now when you were in Boston did you have any chance to socialize with Coast Guard men or with any of the officers passing through?

MPB: Oh, yes. There were a number of Officers' Clubs in Boston. There was one that was open to male and female of any service. It was on Boylston Street. And then there was another one. You know, you think about what a chauvinist world I grew up in.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: On Commonwealth Avenue. And you couldn't go in there unless you had an escort. And they were fun places to go. And occasionally we would be asked, I remember one time chaperoning an enlisted dance someplace. There was a naval officer, a Coast Guard officer, male, and me. And we chaperoned this dance. I don't remember where it was. But Boston was a really fun place to be. And sometimes I look back on it now and I think about all the terrible things that were going on in the war. And we sort of were divorced from that because we were so busy. And then when we weren't busy we had fun.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: And towards the end when we were bringing the hospital ships back into Boston Harbor, I do remember seeing news articles about that. But there was only the radio, you know.

EMC: Right.

MPB: There were no pictures on television of any of this.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: So the reality of it was pretty far from our every day existence.

EMC: Certainly. Certainly the media wasn't as intrusive as it is today and all encompassing. So you had your radio and you had your newspapers.

MPB: That's right. And there was, in the building that I was in, an Army group. And I remember meeting a young man that had been injured and had been sent home and given shore duty. Well, it wasn't Navy, so it's not called shore duty. But I remember talking to him and a couple of his friends about their experiences. But, you know, they weren't inclined to talk about them.

EMC: Right.

MPB: They were out of it. They were home. They were safe. And that's the way they wanted to leave it.

EMC: That's what I've heard about. A lot of World War II vets didn't want to talk about their experiences at that time. So Boston was a fun place for you during that time frame.

MPB: Oh, it certainly was. And I knew Boston, because I had grown up around Boston, and I was well located in the apartment. I took public transportation and the MTA. Wouldn't call that luxury, but you could get around Boston very easily.

EMC: Well, good. Did you write any letters at all to friends or parents regarding your SPAR experiences?

MPB: I'm sure I did. And I had a correspondence with a Navy officer who ended up in Italy, a long correspondence. Because I had dated him when I was in college. I don't have any of those letters. I didn't save any of them.

EMC: Yes. Did you keep a diary?

MPB: No.

EMC: Oh, that's too bad. Of your daily experiences or anything. Well, when VJ day came on August 15, 1945, do you remember your reaction and how you celebrated?

MPB: Oh, I remember that vividly, absolutely vividly. A friend of mine who had-- No. In the meantime I had met my husband.

EMC: Oh, you had. Well, that's important. See, that's what I wanted to bring up, too, where and who was he and what was he doing?

MPB: He was a physician, and he had been trained as an Army psychiatrist. And he was at Camp Edwards on the Cape. I met him through a friend who lived across the hall from me in another

apartment.

EMC: Oh. Was she in the Coast Guard?

MPB: Yes, she was. She was from Indianapolis. And she was dating a doctor down at Camp Edwards. And that's how I met my husband through her. We had met in June.

EMC: Oh.

MPB: And this was August. And my friend and her husband had gone to visit his parents in Louisiana, and they were coming back on the train. And our plan was to meet them at the station.

EMC: Oh, so they were married.

MPB: No. They were engaged.

EMC: They were engaged. Okay.

MPB: They were engaged. And our plan was to meet them. And we didn't know about VJ day, of course, and we were going out someplace. And before we met them at the train, the news had spread. We were driving in Boston and the streets were filled with people, just like we see those pictures of New York City. Boston was the same way. Traffic was hardly moving. We wondered

if we were going to get--

EMC: Yes. We're all right.

MPB: We wondered if we were going to be able to get to the train to meet them. And at one point someone opened the car door and got in and, you know, did the hugs and kisses just like the New York event. And we did find our friends. And they had gotten the news on the train in Connecticut somehow or other. Maybe they made a stop someplace and the news was spreading. Oh, it was so exciting.

EMC: So did you go out and celebrate?

MPB: We certainly did.

EMC: What did you do?

MPB: And we had some favorite places in Boston. One of them was the Charlestown Navy Yard.

EMC: Oh, yes.

MPB: They had a wonderful Officer's Club and we were able to go in there. And then there was a particular restaurant. It would be down near the waterfront, near where Jimmy's is and Pier--

EMC: Pier One?

MPB: Whatever it is. Pier Three. Isn't that what it is?

EMC: Pier Three, whatever.

MPB: In that area. It was down in a basement, and we could always get beef there. That was the big sacrifice. But I did not suffer at all because we were allowed to eat at the commissary which was down on Atlantic Avenue on the waterfront. They had an officers' mess, and we had the best of everything. One of the commanders would even bring lobsters in there. We just had everything. And when I would go home on Saturday night my mother would have saved her coupons to have a nice roast on Sunday. I said, "Don't do this, because I have the best of everything." We could even go in there for breakfast if we wanted, but I don't remember doing that. So we had our main dinner at twelve to one. We had a little shuttle bus that took us down there. And then in the evening if we didn't go out we had a little kitchen in the apartment and we were well taken care of.

EMC: Oh, that sounds great. So did you go to this restaurant after you picked up the couple?

MPB: No, I don't think we did.

EMC: Or did you go to the Officers' Club instead?

MPB: No. I think we went to one of the hotels. And I don't think it's there anymore, but it's down on Tremont Street.

EMC: Not the Parker House? That's still there.

MPB: Yes. Well, that was a good place to go.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: But this wasn't the Parker House. It was another hotel. Because this couple was deciding whether they were going to marry. They thought they were going to get married. That's why they went to visit the family. But then when they got back and the war was over, then I think they finally said, "Well, we'll have to wait and see." And she did not marry this man.

EMC: Oh, she didn't?

MPB: No, she didn't.

EMC: That's interesting.

MPB: No. They finally broke up and she married somebody else.

EMC: Oh, for heaven sakes.

MPB: But not for two more years.

EMC: Oh, okay. Well, you said you were dating a doctor, a psychiatrist from the Army, serving in the Army at Camp Edwards.

MPB: At Camp Edwards. No. When he went in the service he was just out of medical school at Tulane. And then they sent him to Carlisle for the training in the psychiatry. And, you know, Camp Edwards was a psychiatric hospital.

EMC: Oh, was it?

MPB: Yes.

EMC: I didn't know that.

MPB: And the men that came back from Europe that needed that kind of attention were sent there.

EMC: Oh, I see. Now did you see him often? Could you see him often on weekends?

MPB: Yes. Because Camp Edwards is no distance from Boston. And

then he was transferred to Portland, Maine. I always remember the phone call when he said he was transferred to Portland. And he sounded so awful, I thought he meant Portland, Oregon.

EMC: Oh.

MPB: And he said, "No, Portland, Maine." I said, "Well, that's not so bad." You know, Portland's not that far from Boston."

EMC: No.

MPB: And he was there. And then the next year I got out of the service.

EMC: Well, you left you said in June of '46.

MPB: June of '46.

EMC: So they kept you on.

MPB: Yes. Because it took awhile to get the men back and in the positions. And Commander Balzer--I don't remember where he was transferred. But he was transferred, and a Captain Trestor came in. And in the spring of '46 he said, "You could be discharged at any time." And I said, "Well, I'd rather not be right now." Because I had plans to go back to school in the fall.

EMC: Oh, you did?

MPB: Yes. Under the GI Bill.

EMC: Oh, yes. Of course.

MPB: And then he said, "Well, when would you like to get out?" And I had a summer job at a hotel up in Maine. I had that all lined up through one of the Coast Guard Officers who had a connection. He was the one that used to bring the lobsters into the mess. So I got out in June and went and worked up there for June, July and August.

EMC: Well, I guess your prospective fiance was there, too.

MPB: Well, he was in Portland, which wasn't very far. And, you know, in those days people didn't get married until they had a little money.

EMC: Right.

MPB: And had a job, you know.

EMC: Exactly.

MPB: And in his case it would mean setting up a practice someplace. So we weren't planning to get married. I got out, and I went to the School of Design for that year.

EMC: Oh, The Rhode Island School of Design.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: And what did you major in there?

MPB: Fashion design.

EMC: Oh, how interesting. How did you become interested in fashion design?

MPB: Well, I had been involved with sewing since the time I was seventeen years old and loved it. Today you could go to Brown and RISD at the same time. They have a coordinated program. They didn't have that in those days.

EMC: I didn't know that.

MPB: And I think also I didn't know then that I really was very interested in interior and fashion design. So I went there for that year, and my husband-to-be was discharged before Thanksgiving. And he was from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and he went home

to Tulsa. And then he ended up setting up a practice with a friend who was discharged from the Navy in a small town in Indiana, and we were married the next June.

EMC: So you were married June of '47.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: And was that in Providence?

MPB: No. I was married out there in Madison, Indiana.

EMC: Oh, I see. Now did you get a Master's Degree for your work at RISD?

MPB: No. I didn't get any kind of a degree. It was just the year's experience, and it was a very, very valuable experience. They had a lot of consultants. And there was a woman who was a prominent fashion designer in Paris, and she came for three months. Most of the girls were very young, you know, because they were just out of high school.

EMC: Right.

MPB: I recently found out that one of my good friends now was there at the same time I was.

EMC: Oh, for heaven sakes.

MPB: She's young, much younger than I. Because we got to talking about those times. We had never gotten into it before. You know, you don't get much opportunity to talk about these things that we're talking about.

EMC: Right.

MPB: Because, you know, it's just your past. And it has to be somebody that's really interested to talk about it.

EMC: Oh, but that sounds fascinating.

MPB: Yes, it was.

EMC: That sounds fascinating. So you were apart for awhile from your fiancee.

MPB: Yes. For about six months.

EMC: And then you decided to get married out there. Well, just to double back a little bit. Finish up the Coast Guard and then we'll pick up some of the threads. Do you remember anything about the discharge process from the Coast Guard? Did you, when you

were separated, get any instructions on returning to civilian life or anything of that type?

MPB: No. I don't remember anything like that. I remember it being rather simple, you know, just kind of a routine.

EMC: Did you receive any medals for your Coast Guard duty?

MPB: No, I didn't.

EMC: Because some of the Navy gals were entitled to some.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: How did you feel about leaving the Coast Guard after almost three years in the organization?

MPB: Well, I was happy to move on, you know. I had this job at this lovely hotel for the summer. I was going to have a lovely vacation as well. And then I knew I was going to school in the fall. I could have gone back to my job at Civil Service. They had to hold those jobs. But I knew that I was going to be married the next year so I didn't want to go back.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: And I went under the GI Bill when I was living at home. The GI Bill just took care of all my expenses and there was a little left over.

EMC: Oh, that's great. Some of the ladies did take advantage of that, which was a plus. Did you feel that the SPARS had a strong sense of esprit de corps?

MPB: Well, we certainly did in Boston. I think that might be a fairer question for an enlisted person to answer. But the ten of us that were sent to Boston--we all lived sort of close by and we would see each other frequently.

EMC: Did you feel that the SPARS, a new organization, was smoothly run during the training period?

MPB: I know. Well, my experience was very smooth. And I think that was due to Commander Balzer and Miss Hart who gave me the training that I needed. And I always felt respected and valued. It was just a simply great experience.

EMC: That's wonderful. Wonderful comments. Did the war make you any more independent and self-reliant than you had been before your service in the SPARS and living away from home?

MPB: I don't think so, because I was always independent.

EMC: Well, that's good. You made an independent decision.

MPB: Yes. I was always independent. And my parents, particularly my mother, always thought I could do anything I wanted to do. And I had the ability, and all I had to decide on what it was.

EMC: Oh, that's a great attitude then when there were so many restrictions.

MPB: Yes. I come from a long line of independent women, even my grandmother.

EMC: That's great.

MPB: That would be my mother's mother, you know.

EMC: That strain. Did you feel that what women were expected to do and accomplish changed when the war was over? Do you think more women were impelled to go into careers, or do you think there was a retreat to home life?

MPB: There was a retreat. Because the men came back and they needed the work, the jobs. And women, you know, I've heard stories about women that worked in the factories--they were pushed right out. And then what you were supposed to do was get

married and be a homemaker and have children.

EMC: Exactly. A few of them pursued work but not that many, only those who had to. Did you maintain any service friendships with the SPARS that you knew once the war was over?

MPB: No, I really didn't. Wait a minute. One of my friends--I went to her wedding. That would have been probably--oh, let's see, spring of '47. She lived in Indianapolis, as I remember. In fact, my parents went to her wedding, and she had been at my home a lot. And I really lost track of my roommate that I had been with for three years. She went back to Washington, back to the State Department. And I did try to get in touch with her, but things moved so fast. I got out of the service and went back to school. I got married the next June. I left Rhode Island, and I did try to reach her a couple of times when I was in Richmond. And I remember one time being in Washington with a group of children for some outing of some kind. And, of course, her name was Jones. And I didn't have a good enough address to really find her. No, I didn't, except the other girl whose wedding I went to. And then after she was married, she moved to Massachusetts, and I did see her a little bit while I was still around.

EMC: Oh, good. Well, you mentioned there weren't any SPAR organizations that were formed after the war, and as far as I know there is not a national group for SPARS. They're kind of

allied with the WAVES at this point. Can you tell me what the significance of your Coast Guard career was for you and for your life?

MPB: That's kind of a tough question. I'll have to think about that a bit.

EMC: What did it mean to you?

MPB: Well, I think I was very proud of the job I did. I was pleased with all the associations that I had made. But I wasn't headed for a career at that point. It really didn't occur to me. I wanted to get married. And I did work in my husband's office for four years and, you know, was a business person and paid the bills, and so forth. I was very happy to be home. I had three children, you know, close together. My husband was recalled for the Korean War.

EMC: Oh, was he?

MPB: He had joined the Army Reserve just a month or two before this. And this was in '50. Well, the draft for doctors, for physicians had been enacted, but it wasn't going to go into effect until January of the next year. We had some company and I overheard the men talking. And my husband-- Oh, he was called up in the summer to do physicals. I think it was the 26th Division

for whom he was being called up. And I heard the men talking and I heard my husband say, "I know I'm going to be called." Because there was this gap, you know, for like four or five months, four months leeway. And they needed physicians desperately. But he wasn't sent to Korea.

EMC: Oh, that's good.

MPB: That was good. He was at probably one of the worst bases in the country, Camp Polk, Louisiana.

EMC: Hot.

MPB: It's got a terrible reputation. And I was in Tulsa. I had two little girls at that point and I stayed in Tulsa. And he was supposed to be gone three months. As soon as the doctor draft was in effect, then these men would be released. And that would have been the fall, let's see, October, November, December, and he didn't come home until June. What happened was once the Army got a hold of him, the base commander did not want to release him. He was one that saved everything. And he had saved his original orders. And he had to use those to push to get out. And his original orders said he was to be out in a short period. So he was gone nine months.

EMC: Yes. That's quite a long time.

MPB: Well, it was a hardship.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: Because he had just started his practice and there were people that had never served.

EMC: Right.

MPB: But, you know, I was always grateful they didn't send him to Korea.

EMC: Yes. That would have been awful. You seem to have moved around a bit. You got married in Madison, Indiana.

MPB: Yes. An old friend from internship days, he had done an internship at Southern Pacific Hospital in San Francisco with this man, and he had gotten out of the Navy and gone there and started practicing. And on his way home to Tulsa he had gone through Madison, a beautiful little historic town, and decided to go back there. But then when he got back there it was too small. I was from the city. He was from the city. And so then by the following February we had moved to Tulsa.

EMC: Oh, I see. That was his home.

MPB: His parents were there. And we moved to Tulsa and then, of course, he was just barely in practice and then the Korean thing came along. And in the meantime I had felt that my husband really wasn't happy in general practice. He just wasn't cut out for it.

EMC: Oh, so he was a GP.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MPB: And so when he came home we talked about it. And he looked in the journal and found this opportunity in Richmond for Forensic Pathology. And he was the first formally trained Forensic Pathologist in the United States.

EMC: Oh, for heaven sakes.

MPB: A new program at the Medical College of Virginia.

EMC: So that's what he went into.

MPB: Yes. Forensic pathology. And he had been to law classes in Tulsa. He had been interested in that. And they had a law school, and he had done some of that.

EMC: That ties in.

MPB: After his three years' training in Richmond, he became Assistant Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Virginia. And eventually we ended here in Providence in 1960, and he was the Chief Medical Examiner here for six or seven years.

EMC: Oh, in Rhode Island.

MPB: But he gave that up because of the political situation. It was just dreadful.

EMC: Oh, really?

MPB: Well, you know how political this state is.

EMC: Well, yes.

MPB: The department at that time was under the supervision of the Attorney General's office, which is not the right place for it to be, because that is really a public health function.

EMC: Right.

MPB: And in Virginia it's under the Health Department. In most

states it is. And the personnel at that time in the Attorney General's office--I'm not going to name any names.

EMC: I wasn't there then.

MPB: It just got worse and worse until he finally changed and went to Kent County Hospital, as a hospital pathologist.

EMC: Oh, that's better. Now a Forensic Pathologist, I assume, has to determine the cause of death.

MPB: Manner of death.

EMC: Manner of death.

MPB: And sometimes cause of death, yes.

EMC: Oh, I see.

MPB: And in those days when we first came--the only good thing about coming here was that my parents were here. And my sister lived in Massachusetts. That was good.

EMC: But it wasn't a great experience work-wise.

MPB: No, it really wasn't. My son and I were talking about it

the other day. My husband had a very good attitude because his work was not the be all and end all of his life. His family was the important thing.

EMC: Oh, that's great.

MPB: And it was too bad. He had to give up what he was really trained for. But in the end--he's been dead twenty-three years.

EMC: Oh, my. That's quite a long time.

MPB: He died at sixty.

EMC: Oh, for heaven sakes, very young.

MPB: And it was probably in the end a good thing he was there in County Hospital because he had wonderful care and support. He had illness for about seven and a half years before he died.

EMC: Oh, dear.

MPB: He was a young man.

EMC: Yes. He was a young man, relatively so.

MPB: I just want to say one more thing.

EMC: Yes. Sure.

MPB: In those days, as I told you, the department was in the Attorney General's. After my husband resigned, they had had a long period of time with no Forensic Pathologist, ten years before they got another one. They couldn't hire them. They had to change the department to the Department of Health. They had to build a facility for the Department of Health, and they made room for a medical center there. And the money they were offering-- they couldn't get anybody.

EMC: Yes. Right.

MPB: So it was ten years.

EMC: Isn't that something. Well, did you ever talk about your SPAR days to your children?

MPB: Yes, I have.

EMC: Well, that's good.

MPB: Particularly my older daughter. And my son in recent years has seemed to be more interested.

EMC: Did any of them join the military at all?

MPB: No. My son would have been in Vietnam.

EMC: That era.

MPB: In 1968, he was a sophomore in high school and the Navy was a natural. And he was marching in Providence with, you know, the Vietnam protestors. And then, of course, we had a rather rocky period in there because we both had served, and we felt my country, right or wrong. But he finally convinced us that the Vietnam War was wrong. And his number-- When they did the draft and the numbering system I think it was 356 or something like that. So he would never have been drafted.

EMC: Yes. Too high up.

MPB: His number was so high.

EMC: Which was good. Do your children live nearby? I'm just curious.

MPB: My son lives in South County.

EMC: Oh, that's good.

MPB: And I have one daughter in the Chicago area and one on Long Island.

EMC: Oh. So two of them are fairly close. Great. Do you have any other comments on your military service in the SPARS or any other incident of the war time that you want to comment on?

MPB: No. Except that I am just delighted to have this opportunity to reminisce, because it doesn't happen very often.

EMC: I know.

MPB: And it was a very interesting three year period of my life.

EMC: And maybe I can just ask one more question. Can you comment on the patriotism of that time frame? Because I think that's very interesting. You know, of the general population of the civilians and of your generation that joined.

MPB: In my experience the young men that were drafted, say 1940, '41, they weren't that thrilled to go. And I think it was really after Pearl Harbor that the spirit was there.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: You know, in Washington there was a bloc against Lend

Lease, against being involved in the European war. My older daughter is coming to visit the first of July, and she asked me to wait and see the movie "Pearl Harbor" with her. Now I know it's pretty romanticized, but that was just a staggering thing. And that was when I think that the real patriotism started to show.

EMC: Sure. I think so.

MPB: I think then it was after that that the factories geared up. And when I think about what this country did to produce the ships and the tanks and the airplanes from a civilian population to a war time economy it's staggering, absolutely staggering.

EMC: It is amazing.

MPB: Now I saw-- Well, this is digressing. You can cut this out if you want to. I saw Robert McNamara the other day. And he said something about some kind of a program that he's involved with. He was commenting on what our attitude should be about involvement around the world, and being we're the only super power. And I sat there and I thought you're not even talking about what you should be talking about because he was one of the big persons that escalated the Vietnam War.

EMC: Right.

MPB: Now he has written and said he recognizes that. He did not say that in this program the other day. And he's criticizing some other things, and he's not taking the blame that he should take.

EMC: Right. For the Vietnam debacle.

MPB: And, of course, then we should never, ever get involved in something like that again.

EMC: Absolutely not. So, yes, it was I think very patriotic after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

MPB: Yes.

EMC: And a lot of the women said they joined the WAVES or the SPARS for patriotic reasons, to serve their country.

MPB: Well, I don't think I can say that.

EMC: Oh, really?

MPB: No. I think I did it because I thought it would be interesting and valuable to me--and maybe, incidentally, it was a patriotic thing. I mean I voted the first time I was old enough to vote. I went to the poll. And my mother's name is exactly the

same as mine. And they didn't have me on the list. My mother was on the real estate list. And they wouldn't let me vote.

EMC: Oh, no.

MPB: And one of the poll workers said, "Oh, well, just go down to City Hall." And we had to go down to City Hall. We barely made it back. I mean I was always right there to pay attention to politics and government.

EMC: So you had the opportunity to vote once you produced the proof.

MPB: And I was furious. And this is part of our chauvinist world that I grew up in.

EMC: Yes.

MPB: Not even recognizing it.

EMC: No. People didn't. They just accepted it.

MPB: We just accepted it. Now when you graduate from Brown, there are only two times in the year that the Vanwinkle Gates are open--when the incoming freshman class marches through and when you graduate. And guess who walks first--the men.

EMC: Oh.

MPB: They still do.

EMC: They still do?

MPB: Absolutely.

EMC: Oh, that's tradition, I guess.

MPB: They still do it.

EMC: Interesting. Well, some of them walked up bare-footed.

MPB: My older daughter is 52. And she's lived in the women's lib thing. It's very hard for younger people to recognize how far we've come.

EMC: Right. That's true. That's very true.

MPB: And you have to be eternally vigilant.

EMC: Yes. Right. Or else. Well, I want to thank you very much, June, for your reminiscences of your three years in the SPARS. We'll get this transcribed.

MPB: Well, feel free to edit because I have been very chatty.

EMC: That's fine. We want you to be chatty. And I'll give you a chance to edit it, too.

MPB: Okay.

EMC: So thank you very much. We appreciate it.

INDEX

Oral History 270 - Beddoe, Marie Purcell

- Balzer, Cdr., USCG, 21
- Boston, Massachusetts, 2 (in passing)
 - assignment in, 19, 20
 - Brookline, location of SPAR barracks, 24
 - classmate working in, 15
 - Gardens, 25
 - living in during WWII, 25-26
 - marching through on Armistice Day, 18
 - Officer' Club, Boylston St., 31
 - place of enlistment, 10-11
 - University Club, connection to, 24
- Brooklyn Navy Yard, electrician, 8
- Brown University, attending 4-5
 - co-educational instruction, Brown University, 4-5
 - modern chauvinism at, 61-62
- California, SPAR candidate from, 16
- Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, 34-35 (in passing)
 - psychiatric hospital, 39
- Camp Polk, Louisiana, as worst base, 50
- Chauvinism, 32.
- Coast Guard, U.S., technical job knowledge, 21
 - discharge from, 44-45
- Coast Guard Academy, New London, training at, 10-14
 - classes, 14
 - dorms, 13
 - graduation, 19
 - inspections, 16
 - parades, 13, 19
 - physical training, 12, 14
- Civil Service exam, took test 5, 6
- Civil Service, Examining Department of, RI, working for, 6
 - pay compared to Coast Guard pay, 27,
- Commissary, way around rationing, 37
- Czechoslovakia, Nazi invasion of, 8
- Detachment from war, 32
- draft, doctor, Korean War, 49-50, 52
 - in 1940, 7
 - WWII reaction to being drafted, 58
 - Vietnam, friction with WWII generation, 57
- Dunkirk, American public knowledge of 8
- First Naval District, 20
- Forensic Pathology, first to be formally trained in, 52

- medical examiner as public health official, 53
- France, 8
- Great Depression, effect of 2-3, 5
- Havelock, uniform item for rain, 17-18
- Holocaust, lack of public knowledge of, 7
- Jones, Katherine, living together in Boston, 24
- Lighthouse Service, part of the Coast Guard, 21
- Pearl Harbor, attack on, 7
 - movie, 59
 - national response to attack, 59, 60
- Pembroke College, women's branch of Brown University, 4-5
- Poland, Nazi invasion of, 8
- Maguire, Mary, worked in New York City, 23
 - at Eastern Sea Frontier, 23
- Montgomery GI Bill, use for school ,41, 46
- Nathaniel Green Junior High School, attended 3
- Portland Oregon, home of Cdr. Balzer, 21
- Providence, Rhode Island, moved to 3
 - moving from Boston to, 24
 - worked in 5
- Quartermaster, job responsibilities, 30
- Rhode Island, moved to, 2
 - SPAR candidate from, 16
- Rhode Island School of Design, work experience in fashion design, 42-43
- Security clearance, secret clearance, 30
 - classified messages, 30
- Social worker, working as, 5-6
- Sommerville, Massachusetts, born 1, 2
- SPARS,
 - age determining assignment, 20
 - age of candidates, 15
 - communications positions, 23
 - enlisted women, 20
 - Ensign, 19
 - esprit de corps, 46
 - family reaction to joining, 9-10, 12
 - impressions of the organization, 46
 - job experience of candidates, 15-16
 - Lieutenant JG, 19-20
 - male reaction to females, 21
 - motivation for joining, 60
 - officer, 11
 - Public Relations Officer, 23
 - relationship between officer and enlisted, 29-31
 - responsibility, 21-22
 - supervisory role, 22-23

quotas by state, 16
uniform, 16-18
State Department, U.S., passing 15,
experience at led to personnel director position, 23-24
Train, traveling by, 24
VJ day, celebrations, 35-37
WACs, 14
uniform, 18
War bonds, buying through payroll deductions, 28
WAVES, founded before SPARS, 8, 10
publicity, 9-10
Women's lib, early form in SPARS, 29-30
Women's role after the war, 47-48, 49