

WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Anne Boehmer

INTERVIEWER: Therese Strohmer

DATE: March 1, 2011

[Begin Interview]

TS: This is Therese Strohmer, today is March 1st, 2011, and I am in High Point, and I'm here with Anne, and this is an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Project at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Now, Anne, let's see, how did you want to have your name read on the collection? Thinking about it, I know.

AB: Anne Horney Kaiser[?] Boehmer.

TS: So, Anne Horney Kaiser Boehmer.

AB: Right.

TS: Because you've got—you have two names—you were married twice, so you want to get both of those in there, right?

AB: Right.

TS: Okay. Well, Anne, let's go ahead and start. Why don't you go ahead and start by telling me when and where you were born?

AB: I was born in Greensboro, North Carolina on September the 6th, 1922, on Mendenhall Street.

TS: On Mendenhall Street in Greensboro. We were talking, earlier, about how I drive that street just about every day. Now, tell me a little bit about growing up. You had a pretty large family, right?

AB: Yes, there were ten of us.

TS: Ten of the children.

AB: Of the children, right.

TS: And where'd you fall in line with—in that?

AB: I was the baby. [laughs] And most people say to me “Oh man, you must have been spoiled.” But I say to them, how would you liked to have had ten bosses?

TS: That's a good point, I'm sure my brother would agree with that.

AB: Telling me what to do.

TS: [chuckles] Well, now, what did your folks do for a living? Did your father—

AB: He was an accountant.

TS: He was an accountant?

AB: Yes.

TS: And how about your mom?

AB: No, she was just a mother, she had a full time job.

TS: Oh yeah, she had a full time job. Double duty there, really, with all those kids.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Now, you were describing to me that you actually lived just off the campus of UNCG. It was Women's College then.

AB: That's right, right behind it.

TS: And so what was it like for you to grow up in this time period? You would have been—as a young girl, you would have been growing up during the Depression.

AB: Yes, yes.

TS: Remember anything about that?

AB: Not really. I know we were not well off, but I never really felt it, I never thought I was poor, you know.

TS: Yeah. What kind of things did you do—so, did you have any of your brothers or sisters, were they close to you in age?

AB: No, they weren't. My brothers and sisters all were kind of closer in age, but once you got down to the last couple, we were back—well, we were like three years apart. My—two of my brothers and myself.

TS: So how did you—so, I'm thinking of Greensboro today, how has it changed since the time that you grew up there?

AB: Oh, it's much larger. And I remember one time coming down for a visit with my mother, and I went through the town of Greensboro, uptown, we called it. And it was all boarded up, and I felt terrible, I felt like crying. That was when the—I guess they—all of the—what do they call the big places where the stores are now?

TS: Right, like over on Elm Street, in that area?

AB: No, I'm talking about where they built the mall, where the big mall is open and these places were moving in there.

TS: Okay.

AB: And it—but now, of course, it's come back up again there, I've noticed, in Greensboro.

TS: Yeah. What'd you do for fun as a little girl?

AB: Oh, played kick the can, and [laughs] all those things that they don't do anymore.

TS: Yeah.

AB: Yeah, it was fun.

TS: So were you—was it still—you were in the city, then, right, at that time?

AB: Yes.

TS: Just not quite as big a city.

AB: Right.

TS: Did you—as a girl, did you walk to school, or where was your school at?

AB: Yup, walked to the high school—well, I walked to all the schools. The younger ones, that means like the grade schools, were over on the street behind the college, the other side of the college. I've forgotten what it was called.

TS: Kind of like Lee Street over there?

AB: No, no.

TS: Not that far.

AB: No, it was going across, like the campus, if you went down the campus, down there, do you know what that street was?

TS: Trying to think—well, there's Aycock on the one side, and then Spring Garden?

AB: It was just a small street.

TS: Little tiny—can't think of it?

AB: Anyway.

TS: Over—over in that neighborhood.

AB: Right, right. Yes. And then the high school was way over in—I don't remember, that might have been Aycock, but way over. And probably what it is now, I don't know. Do you know what it is now? What street?

TS: What—oh, goodness, I don't know. No.

AB: Anyway, I went there.

TS: And how'd you like school?

AB: I wasn't a very happy schoolgirl.

TS: No? [laughter] Why not?

AB: I don't know, I just—oh, I guess, about like most, you know. It was good, but it wasn't bad, you know.

TS: Well, shoot, if you're the last in the line of ten kids, everybody before—all your brothers, and sisters that went before you—

AB: Yeah.

TS: So all the teachers would be—know who Anne was, yes?

AB: Oh, yeah, "Are you so-and-so? So-and-so and so-and-so's brother?"

TS: That's right. So sometimes you're kind of judged off of how they did or didn't do, right?

AB: Yeah.

TS: So, you didn't have—did you have a favorite teacher, even?

AB: I don't think so.

TS: No? Was there a subject that you liked?

AB: I guess math was my favorite.

TS: You liked math? Did you—when you were a young girl and you were growing up, did you think anything about what your future was going to be? Did you ever have thoughts like that, did you ever think “What am I going to do when I grow up?”

AB: I'm sorry to say that my thoughts at that time were getting married and having children.

TS: Well, you shouldn't be sorry to say that, that's perfectly fine, that's wonderful.

AB: And then I didn't think of big ambitions. I should have thought more of it. [chuckles]

TS: It's a different era, though, right?

AB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: So did you—so let's talk, you went to grade school and you weren't so crazy about that, and then you went to high school. Did you play any sports or anything? Any activities?

AB: Played some basketball, I guess that's about all, you know. I don't think we had as big of things then as they have now, you know, where they have all these tournaments and everything.

TS: That's right, they are pretty active now. Did you do any music, anything—any other kind of activities?

AB: No, sorry to say, I didn't. [chuckles]

TS: That's okay. So, you're—let's see, you would have been—when the war started, well, even before Pearl Harbor, were you aware of what was happening over in Europe?

AB: Yes, I was aware of it. I guess I wasn't, you know, as serious about it until my brothers got in, you know.

TS: Do you remember when Pearl Harbor happened?

AB: Oh, yes.

TS: Well, tell me about that.

AB: Well, it just—all of a sudden, we were hearing it over the radio, that was all everybody was talking about. Yeah, it was a terrible thing, really awful. And that got us right into the war.

TS: Right. Were you in school at this time?

AB: No, I think I had gotten out, I'm not quite sure.

TS: Trying to think, you—so yeah, you probably had been already out of high school. Yeah.

AB: Yeah, and my—I had a friend that moved to Syracuse, Long Island, and she had been a good friend of mine, and she wrote to me and asked me if I would come and share an apartment with her. And so of course I asked my mother and she said “All right”. She probably was glad to get rid of one. [laughter]

TS: Yeah. Now, had you ever been anywhere outside of North Carolina before this?

AB: No, I don't think I did. My mother and father never had a car.

TS: No?

AB: So whenever we went anywhere, somebody had taken us. Of course, when my brothers got older, they had cars. But by that time, I was—as I say, I moved to Syracuse with my friend for—until I heard that my mother was very ill and I came home to help take care of her.

TS: How long were you up in Syracuse, then?

AB: Well, I was up there and then I came back—I guess all together, I was there about two years.

TS: About two years. And was this during the war, or before?

AB: Well, it was—yeah, it was during the war.

TS: Yeah.

AB: During the war.

TS: What was it like to be a young girl from Greensboro going up to New York?

AB: Well, I had this friend there, and she had a brother and their family there. And I went to work right away, Walgreen's Drug Store.

TS: Is that right?

AB: And so, I—I didn't—I was fine, yeah, I liked it.

TS: Did you do anything, any kind of activities for fun? Leisure time?

AB: Well, I got to go and see the waterfalls.

TS: The waterfalls?

AB: You know, at—

TS: Like touring?

AB: The big, bit—

TS: Niagara Falls?

AB: Yeah, Niagara Falls.

TS: Oh, yeah.

AB: That was great.

TS: Did you get into New York City at all?

AB: Well—this was something that was interesting, we went through New York City to get the plane to come down here, or train, however we came. Now I've forgotten.

TS: That's okay.

AB: But we were walking down the street, marching in line, you know, down the street of New York. And I looked up and I saw this good-looking man waving at me and it was my brother. The one that was in the Merchant Marines. And we had been told we couldn't talk to anybody, or—

TS: Oh, this was after you had enlisted in the Marines?

AB: Yeah, yeah. So I was trying to get ahold of my captain, and I finally got her attention and I asked her could I speak to my brother? [laughter] So she let me.

TS: She let you?

AB: And then he went on the ferry with us, across, over into—

TS: Like Staten Island or something?

AB: Staten Island, right.

TS: How nice, how—and you never—he probably didn't expect to see you, you didn't expect to see him, you just—

AB: No. He just—he saw Marines, and he knew I'd gotten in the Marines.

TS: Well, let's talk about that a little bit. You showed me a picture of—one, two, three, four, five—six of you, four of your brothers and you and one of your sisters. And in that picture, looks like everybody picked a different service. [laughter] Is that about right?

AB: That's right, yeah.

TS: So tell me about that, tell me about this picture. Tell me who they are in there.

AB: Well, my four brothers, George was the younger one—youngest one, and he was in the Air Corps, bombardier. And Bob was in the chemical warfare—actually, I don't really know what he did in there.

TS: He was the one that was in the army?

AB: Yes.

TS: Okay.

AB: And then—well, Eugene[?] was in the army, too.

TS: Oh, two more in the army.

AB: Eugene, yes. And he was captured and put in a Japanese prison camp.

TS: And that was in the Philippines, you said, right?

AB: That he was captured, yeah.

TS: Now, was he captured at the beginning of the war, then?

AB: Near the—yeah, near the beginning. It was in—I don't know how long he was in before he was captured, but.

TS: And you had said something about how long it took for your family to find out about it.

AB: Yeah, he was—it was a year and a half that they had him as missing in action. And then they—another year and a half, we found out where he was. And that was just about the one coming home. I have the most interesting letter that he wrote from the prison camp and he just brought it home with him, because nothing got through that wasn't all scratched out, you know. So.

TS: So he hung onto it?

AB: Yeah. I have it here, a copy of it.

TS: What'd he have to say in there? That'd be—

AB: Oh, just—he just told how they were—he said they—none of them had believed that they were ever going to get out.
And after he came home, I said “You know, I heard y'all were let make a garden of your own, but that they ate most of it.”
And he said “Honey, they were just as hungry as we were.”

TS: The prison guards?

AB: Yeah, so. Well, all of the people, yeah, there in the prison. So I thought that was a wonderful way he felt about it, you know? So.

TS: Yes. Do you ever talk it very much?

AB: Not to me, I wasn't—I'm trying to think. I was married then, so I was living away from here, I was living in New York, and I came home then, because the war wasn't over yet and as soon as it was over, my husband came home and we went back to New York. But no, I didn't—I wish now that I'd talked to all of them more, you know?

TS: Yeah.

AB: And I didn't. And then Julius[?] was in the Merchant Marines, and he was back and forth across the waters, of course, all the time, so. And my sister was in the Red Cross.

TS: What's her name?

AB: Mary.

TS: Mary.

AB: And she was behind the lines with the nurses and all, working on the—

TS: Do you know what country she was in?

AB: I don't, other than London, I know when she was in London, she met two of my brothers there.

TS: Oh! [chuckles]

AB: They just happened to run into each there.

TS: Small world.

AB: But I don't know where else she went.

TS: But she went behind the enemy lines, you said, with the nurses and with the troops?

AB: Yes, right, right.

TS: With the Cross, the American Red Cross.

AB: Yeah. I'm the only one in here that didn't go across the water. [laughs]

TS: How do you feel about that?

AB: Well, I tell you what. I went on that honor flight, and I felt like I shouldn't be there, because all my other brothers were really doing something worthwhile in the war, and I felt like I wasn't doing that much.

TS: Is that right?

AB: But it was—it was a wonderful flight and I enjoyed it very much.

TS: You're—the honor flight that you're talking about is where they—can you talk about that a little bit, explain what that is?

AB: Sure. Any veteran of the World War II, they took over to see—to Washington D.C. to see the memorial for the boys that had died. So it was very nice, and they took us to several other memorials, too, and they were very good to us. And when we went in, there were people standing outside that were yelling out to us and wanted to shake our hands and everything. [laughs]
[Honor Flights, conducted by the Honor Flight Network (a nonprofit organization), are free trips for veterans to visit the memorials of the wars they were in, in this case, the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.]

TS: Kind of a celebrity, huh?

AB: Yeah, and coming back was the same thing. I have some pictures you would like to see, I bet, on that, but.

TS: Sure.

AB: But it's on the—on the—

TS: On your computer?

AB: Computer. Yeah. My daughter took some wonderful pictures.

TS: That'd be fun to see.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Well, now, with all these—one, two, three, four, five—well, half of her kids in the service, or, you know, connected to the service, with your sister Mary, what'd your mom think of all this? And your dad?

AB: I—I don't know, I never—I never thought that she worried too much, you know. She—she was very easy-going, my mother. I take after her a lot, on that part. [laughter] And she had the little—

TS: [unclear] stars.

AB: To put up, the stars to put up on the window, and—yeah.

TS: And you had told me earlier that everybody came home.

AB: Yup, everybody came home, thank goodness.

TS: Well, tell me a little bit about—so you went, you went up to New York, and you came back because your mom was ill. And I'm assuming she recovered from that?

AB: Oh yes.

TS: Okay. Good, good. And then at what point did you—were you working down here? You were working up in Walgreens, that I know, in New York. Did you work down here too, or just caring for your mom?

AB: I [was] just caring for Mom, because I had already decided to get into the Marines, so.

TS: Oh, you had? Tell me about that, what—I'll put this over here for you. At what point did you decide that you wanted—

AB: Well, my friend in New York had joined the Marines. I really tried to join the army, but I couldn't get in because I wasn't old enough.

TS: How old were you?

AB: I guess I was twenty, and you had to be twenty-one. And so, then I went to the Marines, so.

TS: Now, where did you join?

AB: I'm trying to think. I know that where I signed in was in Georgia, I don't know whether it was Atlanta or—I've forgotten now, but anyways, it's not on that thing, I guess, huh?

TS: Well, that's okay.

AB: Oh, no, that's when I returned.

TS: Right.

AB: That was when I was discharged.

TS: So what was it about joining—originally, you wanted to join the army, was there a particular reason why you were picking—

AB: Well, I wanted to go overseas. [chuckles]

TS: Oh, okay.

AB: And I couldn't, and none of the others either, so—I don't know about WAVES, you probably—might have been able to, I don't know. But anyway, Marines, you didn't have to be twenty-one.

TS: Oh, you didn't? So you signed up for the Marines, and did you look at the [U.S.] Air Force, too, at all?

AB: No, I didn't. I guess maybe I got that because my friend had gone into the Marines.

TS: Oh, okay. Is that this friend that you were staying with?

AB: Yes.

TS: In Syracuse?

AB: Right.

TS: So what did your family think about you joining the service?

AB: I don't—I don't think it mattered to them one way or the other, I don't know.

TS: Did you ever talk to them about it?

AB: No.

TS: No? You just signed up, and told them and.

AB: Yes.

TS: And then your one friend had already joined up, was there anybody else that you knew that had gone in the military, female?

AB: I don't think so, no, didn't know anybody else.

TS: What'd you—when you—we look back in history and we try to figure out what motivates people to do certain things.

AB: Yes.

TS: And so that's what my question to you would be. What motivated you to want to join the military? Besides the fact that your friend did it.

AB: Maybe because my brother was missing, you know.

TS: Oh, you think so?

AB: Well, I've thought about it, yeah.

TS: So, if—since he was missing, you thought if you went in, then you could help him?

AB: Just help out, yeah.

TS: Help out for the war?

AB: Yeah.

TS: Well, tell me about your—so you signed up, and then you enlisted maybe in Georgia? Something like that?

AB: Yes. I think—I don't know whether I—yeah, I think that's where they had to swear me in, because I went down there.

TS: Yeah. Now, do you remember any of the recruiting posters or anything like that, from that time?

AB: Gee, I don't.

TS: Some of them said things like—

AB: I'll remember them when I see them. [laughter]

TS: But not just off the top of your head. Well, some of them said things like "Free a man to fight", things like that. So, they have a lot of really fun posters, I think, actually.

AB: Yeah.

TS: So—well, I know this isn't the first time that you were away from home, then, because you'd been up to Syracuse.

AB: Right, right.

TS: And so, what—tell me about, like, your first days in uniform in basic training and all that. How was that?

AB: It was nice, I can remember we—like the boys, we were standing in the sun so long at attention you could hear people dropping behind you. [laughs] A couple of times I heard that, so. Know what that was like.

TS: Well, you talked earlier about marching through the streets of New York. Is that where you marched, mostly?

AB: Oh, no, no. It was at that school that—

TS: That we couldn't think of the name.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Shoot.

AB: Hunters?

TS: Oh, Hunter [College]!

AB: Yeah, yes.

TS: Okay.

AB: That's where—and, well, maybe they sworn[sic] me in up there, you know, because that was where they swore me in.

TS: That's okay.

AB: I don't know how they did that, I forgot.

TS: They just had you going everywhere.

AB: Yeah, and.

TS: So you're marching on, like, the school grounds?

AB: Yeah, yes.

TS: Did you get much—was it hard?

AB: No, it wasn't. As I say, like, the hardest part was standing in the sun, waiting for something to happen. [chuckles]

TS: Yeah. Did you—did you feel that when you signed up, did you have a job that you knew you were going to go to? How did that work for you?

AB: No. When I—I guess when I got down—let's see, where was I. I guess they—yeah, I must have gone to Georgia at first and gotten signed in and then went up to Hunters[sic, Hunter], and then I think they asked us up there what we thought we would like to do. And whatever it was that I thought I would like to do, I think it was something where you had to spot the planes, you know, going over, and I was not very good at it, so I—[laughter] I didn't get into that.

TS: So you had to take like an aptitude test?

AB: And then they asked where I'd like to go, you know.

TS: Oh.

AB: And I guess I asked for Camp Lejeune. Not sure whether they—well, I don't know, I think they asked you where you would like to go.

TS: Yes. A lot of people got asked. They still—they don't—

AB: But I don't know whether I said I wanted to go to North Carolina, that—it was funny, I thought I didn't—I don't think that's where I would like to have gone.

TS: You kind of wanted to get—

AB: Just to get away and—somewhere.

TS: Just to maybe travel and see something?

AB: Yeah.

TS: So they just—so how was it at Camp Lejeune, what kinds of things did you do there?

AB: The only thing that I remember, a job, doing was that this general was coming to Lejeune and they needed somebody that would walk behind him, and if he needed a message to go anywhere, you had to take the message, or whatever, you know. So I had this job, and all I know is I never had anything to do. I heard him making some snickering remarks about “this thing walking behind us”. [chuckling] And I found out later that he was very unhappy to be given a job at the Women’s Marines. He wasn’t very happy about it, so that’s why he was making these remarks.

TS: Oh, I see.

AB: [chuckles]

TS: Did you run across anybody else like that, that had those attitudes?

AB: No, no. In fact, my master sergeant was just—just a great guy, he was really nice. And he was the one that got me—I told him I wanted, you know, something to do, so he got me that job. [laughs] Following around. But then I went to Camp Lejeune and got to work there.

TS: What kind of things did you do there?

AB: Well, I used to sign in the boys when they were going to work on the planes.

TS: Oh, is this in Cherry Point, or is this in Camp—

AB: Yeah.

TS: This is at Cherry Point?

AB: Yeah, I meant Cherry Point, yeah.

TS: Okay. Camp Lejeune is where you followed the general.

AB: Yeah, right. [chuckles] And when—I would sign them in when they were going to work, and then when they were going to get off of it, they would come and sign out, so that this would give them an idea of how long it took them to do certain jobs on the planes, so

when the planes came in, they'd know how long it would take before they could get them back out again.

TS: So they had some sort of record of it.

AB: Yes.

TS: So you were the—you were keeping the records of that.

AB: Yeah, right.

TS: How'd you like—so, you were out on the flight line?

AB: No, I wasn't, I was in a little office in one of the hangars there.

TS: How'd you like that job?

AB: I liked it, yeah. It was nice. I was only—I'm forgetting how long I was there, I guess about eight months, maybe, something like that.

TS: What kind of housing did you have?

AB: We had the—some of the barracks that the men had had, there.

TS: So was it like an open bay with a lot of women in one room, or did you get like—

AB: Yeah.

TS: Is that how it was set up?

AB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: Did you have like a foot locker or something, put your things in?

AB: Yup, yup, that's right.

TS: Yeah? [chuckling]

AB: Just that way.

TS: How was that—because that's not very private.

AB: No. You go in to take showers, and one of the women there wouldn't take a shower until everybody was out.

TS: Oh, no.

AB: Because we were all in there together. [laughs]

TS: So she waited until everybody was done?

AB: Yeah. That was—that was funny, because I had never been with a lot of women, as you know, I had all these brothers.

TS: That's right.

AB: And some of them were very shy like that, you know, where there were others that would sit bare—completely naked and so. It was different. [chuckles]

TS: Took a little getting used to.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Yeah. What other things about the military were a little, maybe, different from what you maybe expected? Anything?

AB: No, I don't think so. Never had any, you know, it wasn't hard, it—you did some exercises and all, of course. And I can't remember anything that strikes me now.

TS: No? Nothing about like, waiting in line, or.

AB: Oh, well, when we went to eat and all that, you know.

TS: You had to wait in line for that, the chow hall?

AB: To go through the line and get your food.

TS: How was the food?

AB: I didn't think it was bad. Of course, you heard a lot of complaints like anywhere else, you know. But I thought it was pretty good.

TS: Did you get to do anything on your off time?

AB: Yeah, yeah, we did. In fact, we went into the little town there, and that was nice. Usually, you could get a ride with somebody who was going down there, and then you'd hitch a ride back.

TS: What kinds of things did you do when you were downtown?

AB: Oh, just walking and looking around. By that time, I had met my husband. [chuckles]

TS: Did you marry in the—while you were in the Marines?

AB: Yes.

TS: How'd you meet your husband?

AB: He was one of the boys who used to have to sign in with me.

TS: Oh, is that right? That worked out on the planes?

AB: Yes. One time he didn't sign out, so I went down there and gave him the dickens, you know. And all the fellas were laughing at him. [laughs]

TS: Then what happened?

AB: Well, I didn't know 'til later, but he told me he used to sit in my office at night and read my love letters that I got from home. [chuckles]

TS: You were getting love letters from somebody else?

AB: Yes.

TS: Oh, yeah? [chuckles]

AB: One of the boys in the service away.

TS: So you finally thought you'd date him?

AB: Yeah, we started to go out, and that was who I went to the city with. The town, I should say, it wasn't a big city.

TS: Yeah. Did you go to any dances or—

AB: I'm trying to remember. I don't remember any dances they had.

TS: None of the big bands came through for you, ever?

AB: I don't think so, I don't think so. Can't really remember.

TS: Did you like to listen to any of that? What kind of—

AB: Oh, yeah, I loved music. I love all types of music, except the hard rock, and some of that, even, I listen to.

TS: Is that right? [laughter] What'd you like back in this time?

AB: Well, mostly I liked the big bands or some of the good opera singers, and you know, like [unclear].

TS: Pavarotti?

AB: Yeah. And as I say, I like most music.

TS: Did you ever get to see any of the movies?

AB: Down there?

TS: Yes.

AB: Yeah, I think we had movies that we could go to.

TS: Did you have any favorite movie stars or anything?

AB: Yeah, what's his name, the singer.

TS: The singer? Like Fred Astaire, or?

AB: No.

TS: No? Oh, Rogers, maybe? No.

AB: I can't think of his name.

TS: [chuckles]

AB: He used to sing with Jeannette MacDonald. [Possibly Nelson Eddy?]

TS: Now, if my mother was here, she would be able to tell me who that was. [laughs]

AB: Yeah, right, right. Yeah. Oh, and I liked Clark Gable, you know.

TS: Oh, sure.

AB: And Grant.

TS: Cary Grant?

AB: Cary Grant, yeah.

TS: Now, did you—did you enjoy the work that you were doing in the Marines?

AB: Yes, I did. It wasn't—you know, didn't take too much time. They came in and signed in and then came in when they were finished and signed out, so there really wasn't much to do.

TS: Were there many other women stationed with you?

AB: No, not—oh, stationed. I don't know how many women were stationed there at—

TS: Cherry Point?

AB: Cherry Point, but where I was working, there weren't.

TS: No? Do you—kind of isolated.

AB: Yes.

TS: Was that okay?

AB: Had a little office. Yeah, it was okay.

TS: And you had talked a little bit, how you felt you were treated really well by that one—was he—the sergeant?

AB: Yeah, master sergeant.

TS: Master sergeant? So how'd you feel you were treated by most of the men that you were working with?

AB: Very nice, they were all nice.

TS: Yeah.

AB: And the women were all nice.

TS: Was there—you already said that you didn't think there was anything particularly hard, physically or emotionally.

AB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: So you probably didn't think you were ever in any kind of danger.

AB: No, no.

TS: How long did you think that you were going to stay in the service?

AB: Oh, well, I didn't know, but I was hoping to stay longer than I did.

TS: What—what'd you think about, let's say, President Roosevelt?

AB: Oh, I thought he was wonderful.

TS: Yeah. What'd you like about him?

AB: I don't know, I just thought he was a great man, and oh, maybe part of it was my family felt the same way, my mother and father. I can remember when we heard that he died, and I went to tell my father because he was down in the garden. And he cried. It was—well, it was the second time I'd ever seen him cry. I lost a brother, and when he died, I saw him crying, but yeah, he cried for Roosevelt, too.

TS: What about Eleanor?

AB: No, I didn't—I didn't really think much about her.

TS: Yeah? [chuckling] You didn't think about her, or you didn't think much about her?

AB: I didn't think about her, actually, much, you know.

TS: Yeah. Because she was kind of in the news a lot more than some of the First Ladies had been.

AB: Yeah.

TS: What about—so you were talking about when President Roosevelt died, was a pretty sad time.

AB: Yes.

TS: What about—well, let's talk about when you got out of the—what led you to get out of the service earlier than you had hoped.

AB: Okay. I got married, and then I got pregnant, and as I said, I went to verify it with the doctor and he told me that I was pregnant, and I was just thrilled, and he said "You're the first one I've had come in here that was thrilled when I told them they were pregnant." [chuckles] Anyway, that's how I got out.

TS: And did you have to get out because you had gotten pregnant?

AB: Yes, at that time, if you were pregnant, you had to get out of the service.

TS: And so, I think you had told me earlier, that you were in for about a year, maybe, something?

AB: Yes, little over a year, yeah.

TS: Yeah. So you got out some time maybe in '44 or early '45, even, something like that?

AB: Yes.

TS: So you're—what'd you do after you got out of the service? When your husband was still—he was in the service, right?

AB: Well, I went to—yes, he left to go overseas.

TS: Oh, he did?

AB: Yeah.

TS: Before you got out?

AB: Yeah, that was one reason I was happy, that—because I wanted to have some time with him before he left, you know. So I—we got to see each other quite a bit, because I was in one place and he was another, we had to get together, you know.

TS: Yes.

AB: So, yeah, what was I going to tell you? Oh, you asked me what I did after that, after I got out. Well, I went home to stay with my parents, and—until the baby was born. And then I went up to see his parents and took the baby so they could see them.

TS: And where did his parents live?

AB: In New York.

TS: In New York City, or in?

AB: Yes, New York City.

TS: New York City.

AB: Yup.

TS: You went up there by yourself?

AB: Yes, and the baby. [laughter]

TS: The baby, right. Now, did you take a train, or?

AB: Yeah, train.

TS: Took the train. So did you ever—I'm just getting from a sense of—you seem pretty independent.

AB: Yes, yeah.

TS: Because you didn't really—you went ahead and signed up for the Marines and then, I guess, told your family later, and went up to Syracuse, and went up—yeah.

AB: Yeah. Yup, I was—I was that way. [laughter]

TS: Are you that way still?

AB: Yeah, pretty much, pretty much. I shouldn't say that, because I told the girls I hate to go and eat by myself, [laughs] in a restaurant.

TS: Well, you can—you want to be social, too, right? Have some people around you. Well, when—during the war, you had—three, four, six—there were six of the ten of you that were active in either the military or the Red Cross.

AB: The service.

TS: Well, what about your other—you had four other siblings.

AB: Well, one brother had died when he was nineteen years old. The other two were older brothers, you know, they weren't of age to go in.

TS: They weren't of age to go in the service.

AB: And married and children, you know.

TS: Right. So you said, how many? You had seven brothers?

AB: Yes.

TS: And then three sisters, or two sisters.

AB: Two sisters.

TS: And then yourself. What about your other sister, what'd she do?

AB: She was married.

TS: She was married? I see. Now, did you have any trouble adjusting to—you're getting out of the service, and then you have this baby and your husband, I'm presuming, is still overseas?

AB: When—yeah, when the baby was just a little over a year old, he came home.

TS: Now, had he—he had not gotten to see the baby before he left.

AB: No, no.

TS: How was that?

AB: It was good. [laughs] He—he was not as much like my brothers as I thought he would be. They would, like, get down on the floor and play with her and all that, you know, and hold her and throw her up and all. And he just—he would take her and he would take care of her if I asked him to, but yeah, it just wasn't that type, I guess.

TS: Yeah. Well, how many kids were in his family?

AB: Three. He had one sister and one brother.

TS: Yeah. It's a different level, too, of family interactions, there.

AB: Yeah.

TS: So when you're—did your husband come home after the war was over?

AB: Yeah.

TS: Yeah, okay. So what was it—where were you living, did you stay with your folks, then, until—

AB: No, then we stayed and went up to his mother's.

TS: No, I mean, before he came home.

AB: Oh, yeah, I was with them until the baby was born—yeah, until my husband came home.

TS: Until he came home. Well, do you remember when—because we had two victories, right, we had the victory over in Europe.

AB: Yes.

TS: Do you remember that?

AB: Yeah.

TS: What was that like for you?

AB: Well, just good, just very happy that it was over.

TS: Yeah. You were in Greensboro then?

AB: Yeah.

TS: And had you had your baby by then, too?

AB: Can't remember. If you can tell me when it was.

TS: That would have been in—in the summer of '45. Spring, really. [May 8, 1945]

AB: Yeah, I had my baby in December of '44.

TS: Oh, okay, so maybe like eight months old or something. And then I guess in the Summer of '45, the war ended in Japan. Do you remember that, too? [August 15, 1945, commemorated in the U.S. as September 2nd.]

AB: Oh yes. It was great.

TS: Now, there—to end that war, we had the two, Nagasaki and Hiroshima both, they had the atomic bombs. Did you—at that time, do you remember having any thoughts about that?

AB: About the bomb?

TS: Yes.

AB: I guess I had two thoughts about it, you know, like I guess most people, it was horrible, but it was wonderful to get it over with. To get the war to be over.

TS: To end the war?

AB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: What'd you think of Truman?

AB: Thought he was good. Yeah. I thought he was good.

TS: And we had a lot of really famous generals, at that time, too, right? So MacArthur and Eisenhower and—did you ever follow any of them, think about—with all your brothers all over the place, did you ever follow the war, the way that some people had their little spots on a map?

AB: Yeah, no, I didn't—didn't do that.

TS: Did you listen to the radio?

AB: Oh yeah, I used to listen to the radio about it.

TS: And some people went to—when they went to the movie theatre, they had those news reels, right, that played. Do you remember those?

AB: Oh yeah.

TS: Did they—were they in any way, like, reassuring to you when you saw those kinds of things, or did they—I'm just thinking if I had all my brothers and sister—all my brothers in the service, or many of them—yeah.

AB: I don't think—as I—that I—I don't say that I didn't worry about them, but I'm not a big worrier, like some people are.

TS: Like you said, you're like your mom, more easy-going.

AB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: I see, that would make sense, then. Huh. So if you—did any of your—you said you had four children. Did any of them join the service at any point?

AB: Yes, one boy, he was in the Vietnamese war.

TS: Oh, he was in Vietnam.

AB: Yes.

TS: And how was that for you, as a mother that doesn't worry too much?

AB: Yeah, not too much, no.

TS: Not too bad. Would you—if any of your daughters had wanted to go join the service, would you have encouraged them or—

AB: Sure.

TS: Yeah.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Well, today, there's a—well, shoot, in World War II, women flew planes and they did all sorts of things.

AB: Yeah, yeah, right.

TS: And today, the big discussion is about, you know, women in combat.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Do you have any thoughts on that at all?

AB: I don't know. It doesn't sound right to me, you know, but I don't—I just don't know. I wonder if you got men and women mixed to go into war, we might lose. [laughs]

TS: Well, we've got them mixed right now, so I think we're doing all right.

AB: Yeah.

TS: Do you think that your life has been any different in any way because you went in the military?

AB: Any different. I guess not.

TS: Of course, you met your husband there.

AB: Yes, yes. But then, see, I would have met somebody out, too. [laughter]

TS: Your kids might feel a little differently. [laughs] Yeah. So, I know we have—you have some pictures that you showed me. Is there anything that we haven't talked about, that you might be—that I'm missing to ask you?

AB: I can't think of it.

TS: Do you remember anything, any particular humorous event that happened during your service years?

AB: No, I can't.

TS: I actually think it's humorous that that one gal wouldn't shower unless everybody—everybody else left, that's kind of funny to me, so. [chuckling]

AB: I started to say something to you, I don't know what it was. [unclear] Can't think of anything else.

TS: Well, that's okay.

AB: I told you, I didn't have very much.

TS: Oh, you have plenty to say. Well, I thank you very much for spending time with me this afternoon.

AB: I appreciate the fact that you wanted to see me and talk to me.

TS: Well, it's been very lovely to talk with you.

AB: Nice to be with you, too.

TS: I'll go ahead and shut it off, then.

AB: Okay.

[End of Interview]