

NARRATOR: Drew, Nancy
INTERVIEWER: Troy Reeves
DATE: April 9, 2004
LOCATION: Hailey, Idaho
PROJECT: Women in WWII/Veterans History Project

[Note: Drew's daughter, Susan Pollock, also attended this interview.]

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START OF RECORDING

00:00	1	Introduction
00:30	1	Drew began the interview by stating her first and last name and noting that she took her maiden name, Drew, back when she divorced her husband. Drew then offered her memories of December 7, 1941; she resided at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. She earned a BA from Smith in sociology; she explained why she chose sociology. She also explained her interest in the Red Cross and the reason she joined the Red Cross just before she turned 24.
05:00	2	With prompting from the interviewer, Smith continued to discuss her time at Smith College. She also talked about the jobs and internships she took at public and private mental hospitals in Connecticut. Those jobs made her realize that she did not want to work at mental hospitals. So, she moved to New York City to look for work; she moved to Greenwich Village in Manhattan. She loved living in Greenwich Village, and she spoke of her time there, including the nightclubs that played good music. She mentioned listening to folk music mainly, but she could not remember the names of the performers.
10:00	3	Drew knew she wanted to be in the Red Cross for a long time, probably because of her interest in sociology and the Red Cross' interest in social work. She explained her thoughts on why the Red Cross did not want women under 25 to volunteer for wartime work. With prompting from the interviewer, Drew explained why she went to work at the Brooklyn Naval Yard. She was hired as an inspector; she and other women inspected parts that would eventually become parts on the <i>USS Missouri</i> . She recalled the day that they slid the <i>Missouri</i> out into the water; she remembered the christening, and she thought Eleanor Roosevelt christened the vessel.

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15:45	8	Drew discussed how she commuted to the Naval Yard; she took the subway. She could not recall a lot of specifics about what she and her roommates did during her non-work periods. She did tell a story about trying to go bowling with an African American female co-worker. The bowling alley workers would not let them play. They knew (although they did not discuss it) why they could not bowl. That story led Drew to speak of the African Americans that went to school with her at Smith, and of the way her mother made her treat minorities with respect, even though almost everyone else in their town called the African American resident and the Chinese American(?) resident derogatory names.
20:15	10	While at Greenwich Village, she lived with two roommates that she thought she met while working in Connecticut. Both girls married men who worked at the Naval Yard. Drew offered her memories of her apartment in Greenwich. She could not recall the cost of rent or the prices of goods (except the subway was five cents); she just remembered that money was not a big issue. The rationing of goods did not bother her or her roommates; she explained why. She could picture the room that she worked in and the look of her boss; she thought her boss took advantage of the war effort to hire a lot of people, mainly women, to work in his department.
25:00	12	While living in New York, she remembered going to the Statue of Liberty and to museums. She did not attend a lot of Broadway shows or movies. She did not remember keeping detailed track of the war news, although she did recall having a radio or watching newsreels at the movies. She did not have many friends and family that served in the military; her brother joined the Navy towards the end of the War. While in New York, she did not notice any women in uniform; although, she recalled that the WAVES [not WACs like the interviewer thought] took over part of the college for their training. They were moving in during her last semester, so she did not pay much attention.
29:30	14	At 29:30 the public listening copy moves to side two. Drew continued her explanation about how she could join the Red Cross when she turned 24. They said that at 24 she was starting her 25 th year, which meant she met their 25-year-old age requirement. After she joined, she attended classes, took tests, and got her shots before they shipped her overseas. The class that explained tropical diseases stood out in her mind because she did not want to contract any of those diseases. She noted that the Red Cross gave the women every opportunity to renege on their application before they sent them out of the country. The training was not in New York but in

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		Washington DC; she offered her memories about her few days in the nation's capital.
34:30	16	Drew thought her parents were used to her doing her own thing, so they did not discourage her from joining the Red Cross. She said, "They accepted it." Drew and her fellow Red Cross workers went to Europe aboard the <i>Queen Mary</i> . She talked about that experience, including the living quarters of the men and the Red Cross employees, and the way the WACs were sequestered in one section of the ship. Drew did not become seasick, but she saw many of the men and women fall pray to motion sickness. The Red Cross women had the run of the ship (except for the part that held the WACs), so they mingled with the soldiers and played poker with them. With prompting from the interviewer, Drew discussed the Red Cross uniforms that she wore during her time. She looked at several of her old pictures that showed her and her coworkers in various garb.
42:15	19	Drew did not recall anything specific about the food on the ship, except that they ate in the officers' mess. They did not share meals with the soldiers on the ship. She continued to discuss the WACs on board the ship. She noted that there was fencing put up around the WACs' section to further isolate them from the others on board. She only remembered seeing them once, because looking at them through the fence made her feel uncomfortable. Drew told other stories about the ship trip, including watching the wake change, because the ship changed directions every seven minutes. She also noted that the water would come over the deck on numerous occasions, and that she and other Red Cross workers would buck the water as it came over the ship's side. In retrospect she knew what they did was not smart, and she noted that officers on the ship made them stop that activity. She offered her memories on how they were briefed to act if the ship took a submarine attack.
47:15	21	They reached Europe at the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. They took small boats from the Firth to the mainland. They reached Europe in March 1945. She offered the chronology from when she left Washington DC to when they reached Europe. This was Drew's first time in Europe. She offered her initial impressions of London, which was her first extended stop in Europe. She was brushing her teeth when one of the guided missiles (V-2) hit near her lodging. She explained the difference between the "buzz bombs" and these new missiles. She talked about the sights she saw during her few days in London.

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51:30	23	From London, the Red Cross moved her to Blandford, England. She worked at several hospitals located in Blandford; she explained the difference between a field hospital and a general hospital. It was during her arrival in Blandford that her reputation was “besmirched.” She arrived late at night with two other officers. The three of them chatted and walked together while she trying to find lodging, and they tried to find the hospital where a relative was staying. Because she was seen with officers, the rumor became that the new Red Cross worker (Drew) was “brass happy.” She laughed loudly at that memory; she noted that it did not truly affect her reputation with the other workers.
56:00	25	Drew explained that the Red Cross workers were there to assist the GIs, not the officers. She put a couple of dozen pictures from her time in the Red Cross on the table; there were no pictures from her time in Blandford, England. She did mention that she had two formal postcards of Red Cross workers making postcards in Blandford, England. She was stationed in Blandford when she heard that President Roosevelt died and on V-E Day. She recalled being touched by the locals giving their condolences about the President’s death. She talked about making the donuts for the soliders and about hearing from the doctors that the donuts may not be too healthy for the recovering patients. [At 60:00 the analog cassette copy changes to tape two side one.] Drew recalled seeing American engineers leaving for battle, all in camouflage. She thought they were the last American soldiers that left for battle.
61:45	27	Drew explained General Eisenhower’s motives of having the Red Cross girls with coffee and donuts wherever the soldiers were, including hospitals, trains, and even the beaches of Normandy soon after the invasion. [At 63:30 the master DAT changes from tape one to tape two. There is an extended pause at this point.] After the interviewer’s introduction to tape two, Drew talked about being a Red Cross worker “all day, every day.” She did recall having time off, including a week off between being stationed in England and France, and a week later during her time in Europe where she vacationed in Switzerland. Even though they did not always hand out coffee and donuts, they always tried to act like a surrogate mother, sister, girlfriend, etc. Drew offered her memories of V-E Day; she remembered being in a pub in Blandford with recovering soldiers. Most of those soldiers were going home, anyway, so there was not a huge celebration.
69:00	30	From Blandford, England, Drew moved to Prestwick Air Base in Scotland. The American soldiers that flew back to the U.S. flew out

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		of this airfield (and the people that flew into Europe), so the Red Cross was stationed there (at a “club mobile” to give out coffee and donuts before they left). For most of the time that Drew stayed there, it was a buzz with activity because the troops would arrive, stay for a day, and then leave. She thought it was similar to a welcome wagon. She told two stories: one about helping some high ranking officers with the times the troops would arrive, and seeing a Bob Hope show (she was sitting in the front row). She remembered Hope asking them if they thought they would see Errol Flynn. This story led to Drew talking about the phrase, “In like Flynn.”
74:45	33	From Scotland Drew was transferred to northern France near the town of Reims. Near Reims there were several large camps where soldiers were being “shuffled,” as well as POW camps. The trains arrived (and departed?) every four hours, which meant the Red Cross workers were kept busy disbursing donuts and coffee. They made so many donuts and coffee that they used German POWs to do the baking and coffee making. (They were housed near a POW camp.) Drew was in France when she heard about V-J Day, although she noted the rumors about it before they official heard had dampened the celebration.
80:00	35	Drew said she was too busy to think about when she would return to the U.S. She did discuss how when the trains stopped arriving with such frequency they improvised and created a roadside stand and “Burma Shave” signs to help entice the trucks and jeeps to stop and partake of the donuts and coffee. She showed the interviewer pictures of the stand and signs, and the interviewer read some of the signs into the recording. They had a German POW in their command, and he helped hang up the signs and make the coffee. (They made so much coffee that they brewed it in a trash can.) She told a story about being along with the POW while they hung the signs up. She said it felt a little strange being alone with a former enemy.
85:00	37	From France Drew went to Germany. She said that the soldiers told her she would enjoy Germany, but she never did. She discussed her beautiful accommodations, and the reasons she felt uncomfortable in Germany. She talked about how the servants in the house would use the excess food—the Army provided the food for the Red Cross, and how the cook and servants felt slighted when they had to serve some former enemies (Lithuanians perhaps). They basically threw the food at Drew’s guests. With prompting from the interviewer, Drew discussed some of the remaining photos on the table, including the various forms of transportation that the Army provided to the Red

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		Cross. They talked about a picture that showed a sign stating that the donut shop in Germany (the Red Cross') closed down on March 31, 1946.
90:00	40	Drew explained the events that conspired to make her leave Germany and return to the U.S in May 1946). [At 91:00 the analog cassettes moves to tape two side two.] Between the Army taking over the social functions of the Red Cross and the occupation Army in effect, she did not find as much pleasure as during the War. Drew began her conclusion by showing the interviewer some newspaper articles from the late 1980s [articles on file] that talked about the Red Cross charging for coffee, donuts, cigarettes, etc. Drew never charged out in the field, but she found out that clubs in London (and perhaps other towns) would charge soldiers, because the British Army (or Government) asked them to do it. Drew felt that the backlash from these articles were unfortunate, because in the field they never charged the soldiers anything. Drew concluded with a story about being in France and watching a movie. There was some bad language being spoken by some of the soldiers, so one soldier shouted out to them to shut their mouths. She felt that during the War the Red Cross worked just how General Eisenhower wanted it to, including the soldiers treating the Red Cross girls well.
98:15	43	END OF RECORDING

NAMES AND PLACES INDEX

American Red Cross
Backnang, Germany
Blandford, England
Brooklyn (New York) Naval Yard
Eisenhower, General Dwight D.
Greenwich Village, New York
Hope, Bob
New York City, New York
Prestwick, Scotland
Queen Mary, The
Smith College (Northampton, Massachusetts)
The Firth of Clyde, Scotland
Washington, DC