

NARRATOR: Harris, Marie O.
INTERVIEWER: Lauren Brock
DATE: April 3, 2002
LOCATION: Boise, Idaho
PROJECT: Veterans History Project

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000	00	Introduction.
015	00	Harris stated that she wanted to become a nurse since her childhood, but was unsure how to pay for her education. She earned money for her schooling by working in a bag factory for three months when she was 18. She then attended St. Elizabeth's nursing school in Covington, Kentucky for three years. Shortly after receiving her R.N. diploma, she joined the army. In December of 1945, she traveled overseas to Europe. Harris stated that she was eager to leave the U.S.
040	00	The interviewer asked for Harris's memories of and feelings about Pearl Harbor. Harris replied that she was in nursing school at the time, and was too young to fully understand the situation. She was worried primarily about her brother, Paul Harris, who had joined the Navy four years before. However, she also felt proud that he was fighting in the Pacific.
075	00	The interviewer asked whether many of the men and women Harris knew were enlisting at about the same time. Harris stated that nearly all of her friends enlisted, and that none were killed in the war.
085	00	The interviewer asked for Harris's opinions of the Germans at the time; Harris said that they were viewed as the enemy, but that she had no particular grudge against people purely because they were German. Harris offered her recollections of German prisoners of war, including one, named Klaus, who was a nice man but called himself "a little bit Nazi." Harris said that she loved Franklin Roosevelt, and continues to admire his achievements as president. She did not realize until after he had died that he was disabled.
120	00	The interviewer asked if Harris worried that the U.S. would be bombed before she went overseas. Harris described the only incident of violence she saw in America during the war. A Japanese intern working at her hospital would frequently be beaten up by others; eventually he was placed in an internment camp.

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		Harris states that Americans viewed the Japanese as enemies and hated them as a result. She had no particular feelings about the treatment of Japanese-Americans.
140	00	The interviewer asked for Harris's opinions on U.S. neutrality during the beginning years of the war, Winston Churchill, and Stalin. Harris stated that she had only general knowledge of these things until after the war – at the time she was young, and information was difficult to come by. She related that the Holocaust, too, was scarcely discussed until after the war. The interviewer asked whether Harris felt comparing the September 11 th attack with Pearl Harbor was valid. Harris responded that Pearl Harbor was a military strike, while September 11 th was an atrocity.
185	00	The interviewer asked for information about life in the United States during the war. Harris stated that she suffered very little from the rationing because she was in nursing school at the time, but her mother would often talk about how difficult it was to get sugar, lard, or soap. Only the cigarette ration really affected Harris, who had to learn to roll the cigarettes herself.
225	00	Harris explained that she cared for her sick grandmother until she died in late 1944, when she decided to enlist in the army. She was shipped to Le Havre, France, where she acted as a nurse both for Americans and for German POW's. She also handled the childbirths of European women who had married American soldiers, but disliked the job. She worked at night in an infirmary and lived in a common house for the nurses.
290	00	The interviewer asked whether Harris enjoyed serving in the army. Harris stated that she was able to travel all over France, and went to the opera in Paris. She met Kip, her husband, in France, then went to Switzerland on a honeymoon. Finally, they went to Hanover, Germany, and returned to the U.S. Harris described traveling through Germany immediately after the war and seeing the destruction there. Harris then explained that while she was Catholic, Kip was Jewish, leading to some tension between their two families. Eventually, they were divorced.
360	00	The interviewer asked for Harris's impressions of D-Day. Harris was at Camp Atterbury at the time, and remembers celebrating the occasion with the other nurses. She stated, however, that it meant little to her personally. She recalled attending an Army dance

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		to which she wore a French blouse, a skirt she had made from a bedspread, and her army boots. She remembered hearing that Hitler had committed suicide and Germany had surrendered, but continued to worry about her brother fighting in the Pacific War.
430	00	Harris stated that she feared the Japanese a great deal during the war. She described visiting a museum intended to demonstrate the Japanese methods of jungle warfare. She said that the Japanese were more feared than the Germans. Harris's grandmother was from Germany and refused to ever acknowledge Hitler's crimes.
450	00	The interviewer asked about Harris's feelings about President Truman after Roosevelt had died. Harris viewed him as an intelligent, practical leader. She was still in Europe when the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan; her brother Paul saw the aftermath in Nagasaki. Harris said that the atomic bomb was terrible but necessary.
500	00	Harris offered her humorous memories from the war.
600		END OF SIDE ONE TAPE ONE SIDE TWO
000	00	Harris explained the types of recreation available for the nurses, such as tennis, American movies, and one occasion on which they were served a fifteen-course meal. Dancing was also a popular pastime.
025	00	The interviewer asked for any final memories of the war. Harris returned to the United States during August of 1946. She was in Europe for approximately sixteen months. After leaving the service, Harris and her husband lived in Maryland. Harris did not return to her profession as a nurse for 19 years because her husband would not allow her to work. In total, however, she was a nurse for more than fifty years.
105		END OF SIDE TWO END OF INTERVIEW

NAMES AND PLACES INDEX

Camp Atterbury
Covington, Kentucky
Harris, Paul
Le Havre, France