

NARRATOR: Jacobs, Ruth
INTERVIEWER: Troy Reeves
DATE: June 28, 2004
LOCATION: Meridian, Idaho
PROJECT: Women in WWII/Veterans History Project

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START OF RECORDING

00:00	1	Introduction
00:45	1	The interview began with Jacobs answering follow-up questions from the first interview. The questions focused on her trip across the Atlantic on the <i>Queen Mary</i> . Jacobs talked about the types of men and women that were on the ship and the types of entertainment possibilities on ship. She did note that enlisted personnel did not fraternize with the officer corps.
04:30	2	Jacobs shifted to the ship trip across the English Channel to France. She recalled the rough water that forced them to stay on the ship for three days and the seasickness that affected practically everyone. The other thing she remembered about the trip was eating mainly beans, but being so sick that she and the others ate very little. When they finally landed, they were at Omaha Beach. She offered her memories of the Normandy area, including being bivouacked near the beach for several days before being moved to Carentan, France.
09:30	4	While near Normandy the nurses waited several days before getting their uniforms. Jacobs showed the interviewer pictures of her fellow nurses in men's Army clothes. She and the other nurses wore dungarees on the ship ride over to France; she showed the interviewer pictures of their attire. The interviewer listed the last names of some of the nurses that Jacobs worked with in France. Jacobs recalled being bivouacked for five days before being trucked to the hospital set up for them in Carentan, a town near Cherbourg, France.
13:30	6	With prompting from the interviewer, Jacobs described the layout of the 196 th General Hospital in Carentan. The nurses worked in twelve-hour shifts; Jacobs did not like that length of shift. She worked both the day and the night shift and enjoyed the night shift less than the day. She described the type of soldier that she saw in

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		the hospital, the command structure of the hospitals, and the protocols of which soldiers went to what facility.
19:15	7	Jacobs recalled that they set up the hospital in October; by the spring of 1945, the Army converted the hospital to a German POW hospital. Jacobs remained working there; she discussed the differences and similarities in aiding the enemy. Jacobs told a story about having relatives in Germany. She had a cousin (father's side) who had a son around Jacobs' age. Jacobs would check the patient's roster every day to see if her cousin was in the hospital. She never found him. Jacobs returned her memories to the American soldiers at the hospital; she discussed the aspects of her job and the number of patients she oversaw. She noted that it kept her very busy.
23:45	9	As far as the winter of 1944/1945 went, it was not too cold or snowy. She did not recall ever being too cold. When asked about how she spent the holidays, she told a story about the head nurse putting Jacobs and her nurse friends on evening duty during Christmas and New Years' Eve. Jacobs figured she did that so they could not dance and party on the holidays. She elaborated by noting that there were many Army groups in the area, and they held parties and invited the nurses. So, there was plenty of opportunity to dance and party. Jacobs recalled that most of these shindigs were held at officers' clubs, but she could not remember for sure where the music came from. She thought they used record players.
27:30	10	During her time in Carentan, she did not get leave. She remembered getting leave in May 1945. Jacobs showed a picture of the head nurse; Jacobs thought she liked the group of nurses, including Jacobs, but she did not want them to party over the holidays. Jacobs thought they became a POW hospital in March 1945 before the hospital staff moved to Cherbourg later in the spring. [At 30:00 the analog cassette copy moves from side one to side two.] Jacobs did not recall ever feeling uncomfortable while working and attending to the POWs.
31:00	11	When asked about memorable events, Jacobs showed some pictures of patients. She then discussed her leave in May to the Riviera and her three 72-hour passes to Paris. She recalled that during her week in the Riviera she heard from the Red Cross that her mother had taken ill. She talked about going to Paris on two of her three passes specifically to talk to the chief nurse of the European Theater to see about getting transferred stateside to be near her mother. [Note: Jacobs' husband made a brief, hard to hear comment in this section.]

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35:00	13	Jacobs showed some pictures of her time in Cherbourg. Nothing specific stood out in her mind about her time in Cherbourg. When they moved to Cherbourg, they returned to aiding American soldiers. With prompting from the interviewer, Jacobs described her time in Paris. She told one story about going on a set-up date with a soldier (set-up by a Red Cross employee). She and the soldier went to a dinner theater that featured topless dancers. They used feathers to cover their breasts, but Jacobs said that the feathers left little to the imagination. She thought the show was quite lavish and well done, but she felt quite uncomfortable seeing the topless dancers. She then talked about some of the sights of Paris, including the Eiffel Tower. She recalled going to another show (she could not remember the name) with risqué content. She kept her head down as she left for fear that someone she knew would spot her leaving the show. (She chuckled as she made that last comment).
43:15	17	With prompting from the interviewer, Jacobs offered her memories of V-E Day. She was on leave at a hotel at Juan Les Pins. She showed the interviewer pictures and postcards of the hotel and of Juan Les Pins. She talked about her leave and about Juan Les Pins in general. She found out about her mother's illness after she returned to Cherbourg. She showed the interviewer more pictures of her leave in the French Riviera and discussed in more detail her week long leave.
48:30	18	Jacobs recalled being home on V-J Day, so it meant her stay in Cherbourg was only a couple of months at the most. She then discussed working in the Army Nurses Corps in Cleveland and dealing with her mother's illness. She said her mother died of cancer. She briefly described her work at the Army hospital in Cleveland. She felt relieved when she heard about Japan's surrender, because that meant that she and her nursing friends would not be transferred to the Pacific Theater. After V-J Day [probably after V-E Day too] the Army would discharge people based on the point system.
53:00	19	Jacobs recalled mustering out of the military in February 1946. Her mother died in October 1946. After her mother died, she wanted to leave Cleveland. She moved to California and lived with an aunt for a while. She then moved to Long Beach, California, got a job, and found a place to live. She met her husband at an officers' club in Long Beach in March 1947; they were married in July. After she married, she worked at nursing off and on until 1981. She had four children in between. She offered a more detailed timeline of her

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		nursing work from 1947 to 1981. Her husband was in the Marine Corps. When he mustered out, he went to college. Jacobs worked steady for three years while her husband earned his degree.
57:00	20	Her husband began teaching in 1956 or 1957. When he started working, she began her off and on nursing from then until 1981. With prompting from the interviewer, Jacobs discussed how she and her husband moved to Meridian, Idaho in 1993. Her husband needed to retire from work in 1980; after that they summered in La Grande, Oregon to be near one of their children. The husband of another child got a job in Boise. So Jacobs and her husband sold their house in California and moved to Idaho. They have lived in Meridian for their entire 11 years in Idaho. [Note: Around 60:00 the analog cassette copy moves from tape one side two to tape two.] Jacobs discussed their current home, which is part of Meadow Lake Village, near St. Luke's Hospital in Meridian.
62:00	22	Jacobs concluded the interview by telling about her flight home. She got special orders to fly home, and she recalled an officer being upset that Jacobs was taking his spot on the plane. The pilots let her ride on the bunks at the back of the cockpit. She noted the stops on the flight between England and the U.S. She thought they stopped at the Canary Islands and Greenland before landing at (currently) Dover AFB in Delaware. She asked the interviewer for a copy of the recording as the interview concluded.
65:00	23	END OF RECORDING

NAMES AND PLACES INDEX

Carentan, France
Cherbourg, France
Cleveland, Ohio
French Riviera
Hotel Ambassador (Juan Les Pins, France)
Juan Les Pins, France
Meadow Lake Village (Meridian, Idaho)
Omaha Beach (Normandy, France)
196th U.S. Army General Hospital
Paris, France
Queen Mary (ship)
U.S. Army Nurses Corps
World War II