

Video Recording Log
Veteran Margaret Henderson

1. Name and address of collector of interviewer.

Name of Donor/Interviewer: Harriet Williamson
Address: 300 N. Goodwin Ave.
City: Urbana
State: IL
Zip: 61801
Telephone: 217-333-7300
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Partner organization affiliation (if any): WILL AM-FM-TV

2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed at is appears on the Biographical Data Form: Margaret Rose Henderson Foster

Name of Veteran/Civilian: Margaret Henderson
Birth Date: 07/25/1921

3. Recording format

VIDEO type: Mini DVD

4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes): 32 minutes Date of recording: 10/02/2007

5. Location of recording: WILL AM-FM-TV, 300 N. Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.

00:00 Introduction

00:41 Trip to see opening of Olympics in Berlin, 1936—saw Hitler in person

01:33 Staying with family in Berlin—family took American girls into the closet and told them terrible things were happening in Germany—their children were in Hitler Youth and would turn them in if they found out they were talking to them—asked the girls to go back to the United States and tell people that bad things were happening in Germany

02:15 Radcliffe College, senior year—recruited to take secret communications course—offered commission in the Navy—Month at Mount Holyoake for Officer's Training—supposed to be 2 months, called 30-day-wonders

03:20 Went to Washington, D.C.—assigned to communications intelligence office—put in top European Theatre part—not decoding

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- 03:44 Job was to keep track of German U-boats, 1943—Allied troops started getting a hold of U-boats
- 04:10 Broke Trident Code —communications from U-boat skippers intercepted
- 04:28 Radar had been perfected—U-boats
- 04:35 German translators—decoded messages wired into office—transcribers took decoded message, gave it to her, she put pin on map which was coordinated with aircraft sightings
- 05:34 Information given to operators who sent planes after boats
- 05:45 Office completely secret, working 24 hours a day—3 shifts, would be on one shift for 2 or 3 weeks
- 06:05 Naval Intelligence Office—Nebraska Ave., Washington, D.C.—couldn't tell anyone
- 06:24 U-boats defeated in about 1945
- 06:35 Asked to be transferred to Hawaii—sent to Naval Air Transport Service, Atlantic Wing (Newfoundland to Florida)
- 07:13 Trained as air transport officer, Patuxent River, Maryland
- 07:25 Norfolk Air Station—assigned there until end of war
- 07:38 In charge of whole detachment because people were getting out of service in 1946
- 07:49 Was begged by superiors to stay in the Navy but did not see a future in the Navy for women at the time
- 07:58 Terminated in August, 1946—terminal leave until October—could fly on any airplane—went to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Havana, Cuba
- 08:48 October, 1946—ended service
- 08:56 Naval Air Transport Officer's duties: in charge of plane when it came from last stop—load and balance sheet—"topping the rears"—plane gassed up—signed a balance sheet, saluted Captain
- 10:03 Navy Chiefs did most of the work—really the experts
- 10:20 Materials being transported—also operated shuttle between Norfolk and Patuxent River, a popular route—often was in charge of shuttles

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- 11:03 Gene Kelly came to air field once
- 11:31 Intelligence—working constantly –urgency
- 11:52 Had broken code in 1942—by the time started working in 1943, Allied sea power had started to slam U-boats—so less urgency
- 12:35 Urgency
- 12:47 Working in Washington, D.C.—own quarters—rented a house with five girls
- 13:48 Washington, D.C. full of military people working
- 14:07 House—4 waves, one civilian—could not talk to each other about jobs
- 14:35 Not a lot of women in the military—felt important to be doing something for war effort
- 15:05 Did not feel there was a future for women in the military
- 15:23 Does not remember discrimination, but men had higher posts, male dominated field
- 15:48 No reunions for Naval Intelligence—never had any communication with anyone
- 16:42 Colleagues—not sure if they worked for military during Cold War—most people were from the Reserves and went back to college—regular Navy man in charge of unit—one is now the head of the Fogg Museum at Harvard
- 17:40 Only heard from roommates from home—doesn't even know what unit would be called technically because everything was so secretive
- 18:03 1936, Germany—the family telling her about the terrible things happening in Germany
- 18:30 East Coast was a little more aware about the bad things going on—started getting refugees from Europe, some Jewish
- 19:03 Told people what the German family had told her, but not much she could do
- 19:15 Parent's reaction—understood—but what could you do?—felt helpless—like with the war in Iraq, when you're not in a position of power it is hard to make a difference
- 19:48 Knew something was going on before war started—was obvious from trip to Germany in 1936—military people everywhere—mood at Olympics
- 20:40 Tour to Germany run by person from Germany that lived in her town –Nazis were suspicious—harassing outsiders

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- 20:57 Arrested by two men at youth hostel, questioned—accused of stealing—sum was 95 cents
- 21:58 Same man took another group of Americans to Germany in 1937—one of his people was arrested for murder—German police harassing them because he was German—Berlin
- 22:50 In the United States, reports of Hitler and Jesse Owens at Olympics—saw it in person
- 23:00 Opening ceremonies interesting—some nations wouldn't hile Hitler (American, English, French)
- 23:50 On the roadside, Germans looked like they were in a trance, when they hiled Hitler when they walked by—maybe they were in a fantasy, seemed dazed
- 24:45 Very good experience—all felt WWII was a necessary war—Ken Burns—does not approve of invading
- 25:38 Influenced life—solidified feeling that war is not the way to improve world—doesn't solve anything
- 26:20 Traveling to Cuba—Havana City before Castro—Went to West Coast: San Diego, CA, San Francisco, CA—brother sailor
- 28:26 Stayed in Naval Reserve until had a child, 1948-1949, would have had a promotion—envious of male friends who stayed in the military—women could not stay in the military after they had children
- 29:25 Husband said she should sue Navy for forcing her to quit service when pregnant
- 29:30 Women's status in society improved because of WWII, overall, gradually, not just because of military service
- 30:08 Thinks women are pretty equal to men now
- 30:25 Wrap-up