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	ORAL HISTORY OF MARIE LOMBARDO
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4	April 15, 2005
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- 1 MR. RUSSERT: This is an
- 2 interview at the New York State Military Museum,
- 3 Saratoga Springs, New York, the 15th of March --
- 4 excuse me, 15th of April, 2005, approximately
- 5 ten-thirty a.m. Interviewers are Wayne Clark and
- 6 Mike Russert.
- 7 MR. RUSSERT: Could you give me
- 8 your full name, date of birth and place of birth,
- 9 please?
- 10 A. Cohoes, New York is my place of
- 11 birth. That's just a small city nine miles north
- of Albany. I'm sure you all know, but anyhow,
- right on the confluence of Mohawk and Hudson
- 14 Rivers. We've got the beautiful Cohoes waltz like
- 15 A, you wouldn't believe. Right now it was spring
- 16 with all the rain and the snow melt. They're glory
- so come on over. If you can't afford to go to
- 18 Niagara, come to Cohoes.
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. The walls are there waiting for
- 21 you. Well, anyhow, that's where I was born on May
- 22 23rd, 1924.
- Q. What was your education prior to
- 24 entering military service?

- 1 A. Well -- well, I -- I did get a
- 2 bilingual education with the -- the Sister's of the
- 3 French -- French Canadian Sisters. They serve at
- 4 at St Johns House so -- so that was half a day
- 5 French and a half a day of English at the parochial
- 6 school of Saint Vifth (phonetic spelling) in
- 7 Cohoes. And then after that -- well, then for --
- 8 for high school I -- I went to the -- the Catholic
- 9 High School in -- in Cohoes which was Kieve Votra
- 10 Academy. And that was the Irish parish of Saint
- 11 Bernards. Saint Jovet was a French parish. Well,
- 12 I got to meet some nice Irish girls, you know. And
- so anyhow, I graduated from there and well, anyhow,
- in my senior year that's when the Japanese bombed
- 15 Pearl Harbor. And I'll -- I'll never forget that
- day. I was following it with my father. He had
- 17 the radio on, the old Atwater Kent radio. And
- 18 F.D.R., Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the only
- 19 president I ever knew growing up, interrupted the
- 20 program to tell us that we had been bombed in Pearl
- 21 Harbor.
- It was a day I'll never forget.
- 23 And -- and this triggers, you know, like
- 24 patriotism, like we've never seen it since then.

- 1 So many boys in high school just quit, joined the
- 2 services. My husband was a -- he -- he lived in
- 3 Troy and he -- he quit school and went in the
- 4 Marine Corps.
- Q. Did you know him at that time?
- 6 A. No. No. I just knew people
- 7 in Cohoes.
- 8 O. Uh-huh.
- 9 A. Never went anywhere.
- 10 Q. Did you know where Pearl Harbor
- 11 was?
- 12 A. I -- oh, yeah. Well, I was good
- in geography. You know, I was very good in
- 14 geography and I loved maps. I -- I used to read
- 15 maps, you know. I had the encyclopedia there and I
- was over there I always had my maps there. That
- was -- yeah. And so I knew where Pearl Harbor was.
- 18 And so anyhow, boys in our class, they -- you know,
- they quit school, joined the merchant marine. By
- 20 the time graduation came in June, you know, a
- 21 couple of them were already dead with German in
- 22 bombs killed them.
- They were doing a real number on
- us in the North Pacific or -- I mean the North

- 1 Atlantic. It was my husband that was out in the
- 2 Pacific when he was just a kid. He went in at
- 3 seventeen, you know.
- 4 O. Uh-huh.
- 5 A. They had X'd where his parents
- 6 signature should have been. You know, they were --
- 7 just came over from Italy and so he was just first
- 8 generation Italian. Of course I didn't know him
- 9 then. I didn't know him.
- 10 So anyhow, then when I heard that
- women could go into the military service, oh my
- 12 God, I couldn't wait to go in. But then I found
- out you had to be twenty-one to join for women or
- 14 twenty if your parents signed for you, signed a
- release. So I couldn't wait. I had always wanted
- to be a teacher and thought I'd go as, when things
- were called a normal school which was New York
- 18 State Teachers College in Albany. I thought I
- 19 would go there. But I didn't want to be in college
- 20 for four years with the war going on. Couldn't
- 21 wait till I was twenty and could go. So my mother
- said, well, you took a college entrance course, so
- what are you going to do. So she insisted I go to
- 24 Bill Melleri's Secretarial School, so I did. So I

- 1 would take the bus every day from Cohoes and go to
- 2 Albany and so I went to Bill Melleri's, got my
- 3 typing speed up, got my shorthand, Gregg Shorthand,
- 4 you know, came in handy. Well, anyhow, so I --
- 5 then I got a job at Bear Manning. Now Bear Manning
- 6 was a sandpaper place. They made all kind of
- 7 papers -- of sandpaper and what a relief. But
- 8 during the war, you know, every factory had to be
- 9 involved in the war effort and so they had what
- they called a navigation division. So I went and
- 11 applied for a job there. I got -- I got a job and
- in the navigation division in the office and so I
- 13 was working in the navigation division on -- it was
- 14 the -- it was called a harness. It was a -- kind
- of a horseshoe with all wiring that went around the
- 16 Corsair fighter plane.
- 17 O. Uh-huh.
- 18 A. That was a fighter plane for the
- 19 Navy. So that's what we did there in the
- 20 navigation division of Bear Manning.
- Q. Now did you do soldering and
- 22 other things?
- A. No, I was in the office. I was
- 24 in the office.

- Q. Well, I was referring to --.
- A. I believe I -- I had my, you
- 3 know, office training, Bill Merelli's (phonetic
- 4 spelling) Secretarial School, so I was in the
- 5 office. Yes. I was in the office there. It was a
- 6 very nice place to work.
- Well, anyhow, of course when I
- 8 graduated from high school I was eighteen. When I
- 9 finished I was nineteen, so after one year at Bear
- 10 Manning I was twenty. Hurrah. Twenty. Old enough
- 11 to go in the service.
- 12 So anyhow, I met recruiting --
- 13 the recruiting posters, oh yeah, for the Navy. And
- 14 I always looked good in navy blue, you know, and --
- but then I was down at Montgomery Wards in Menands,
- the big store, shopping, and there was a girl from
- 17 the Coast Guard on recruiting there. To tell you
- 18 the truth I had -- you know, didn't know too much
- about the Coast Guard, but I'll tell you, she was
- 20 so nice right then and there I decided that would
- 21 be the service I would go into.
- 22 So I went home and I asked my
- 23 mother if she would be willing to sign for me
- 24 because I was just twenty and she said yes. She

- 2 sworn in --
- 3 O. Now --.
- A. -- down -- down in Albany.
- 5 Q. Now were they upset at Bear
- 6 Manning that you were leaving to go into the Coast
- 7 Guard?
- 8 A. Well, I -- I -- they -- they
- 9 weren't upset, no.
- 10 O. No?
- 11 A. No. I mean they didn't give me a
- 12 party or anything and I wasn't there quite a year.
- 13 It was like maybe a month before the year was up.
- 14 O. Yeah.
- 15 A. If I had stayed on an extra month
- they would have given me a going away present of
- 17 like -- I think they gave a hundred dollars --
- 18 O. Oh.
- 19 A. -- to anybody who had worked
- there a year and was going into the service.
- 21 Q. Uh-huh.
- 22 A. So they were very patriotic
- 23 there. It was really a very nice place to work.
- 24 But I didn't know about that, but -- so -- but I

- 1 was anxious to go in the service. So I forfeited 2 my hundred dollar departing gift. 3 So when did you enter --Q. 4 A. Enlisted. -- when did you enter the Coast 5 0. Guard? 6 7 Α. So --. 8 0. Do you remember? 9 So let's see. So the date I went Α. 10 down to Albany right on -- well, what used to be 11 the post office there across the street, that's --12 that's Broadway in Albany. It was right on the 13 corner of that beautiful building there right on --14 on the corner of -- of Broadway and State Street 15 there. 16 O. Uh-huh. 17 A. And on the second floor, I'll 18 never forget, I went up there and I swore myself in 19 to the Coast Guard. I took the oath. And before I 20 left the house my sister, Frances, who was nine 21 years older than me, she took out the camera and 22 she took a picture of me with my long hair because

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I always wore long hair, you know. And so I got

sworn in and I took the bus back home and when I

23

- got home she was waiting for me with a pair of 1
- 2 scissors. And she gave me my short haircut and
- 3 then she took my picture again with the short
- 4 haircut. It was the first time that I had my long
- 5 curls cut off, you know. I had long hair then.
- 6 Well, anyhow, so --.
- 7 Excuse me. Do you remember what
- 8 month and year that was?
- 9 A. Oh yeah, that was September --
- 10 September 14th -- okay, September 14th, 1944.
- 11 Yeah, I had graduated from high school in '42.
- 12 this was '44. Yes. And you know, so I was in the
- 13 service for two years, so I got out in '46. And
- 14 well, anyhow, so then I had to wait for my orders
- 15 to start out. They came and I was thrilled to
- 16 pieces. My mother and my girlfriend, Helen, took
- 17 the bus with me, they all rode the bus, down to
- 18 Albany to the railroad station in Albany, that
- 19 beautiful Union Station which is a bank today. And
- 20 they saw me off on the train and off I went and got
- 21 off at Grand Central Station. And from there I
- 22 worked my way on down to -- to Broad Street and met
- 23 the rest of the gang of the girls that would be the
- 24 girls that I started into the service with in boot

- 1 camp.
- 2 And so then after they fed us
- 3 supper we went to Pennsylvania Station, boarded a
- train and choo-chooed on down to West Palm Beach, 4
- 5 got off the train. It took twenty-five hours then.
- 6 I still remember it was twenty-five hours from
- 7 Pennsylvania Station, New York to Palm Beach
- Station and we got off -- this is my first trip to 8
- Florida. And so then we got on a bus and over
- 10 the -- over plain Ouarters to get into Palm Beach.
- 11 I'm in Palm Beach. Whoa, beautiful.
- 12 Of course the Breakers were
- 13 there, but we weren't stationed in the Breakers.
- 14 We had the Biltmore. It was another hotel that had
- 15 been taken over for the Spar Training Station.
- 1.6 And -- and so we -- six weeks of boot camp, yeah,
- 17 it was great. I loved it. Hey, I -- I learned to
- 18 climb a cargo deck and all that other stuff, crawl
- 19 around on your belly. It was regular boot camp.
- 20 Oh yeah. And -- and then we would go to the
- 21 younger beach for swimming, you know, go
- 22 wooly-wooly G.I. bathing suits, navy blue of
- 23 course. And anyhow, it was my first taste of the
- 24 Atlantic Ocean and I tasted the salt of it and it

- 1 didn't taste good.
- 2 And well, anyhow, we were only
- 3 there two weeks and there was a -- a hurricane
- 4 warning. A hurricane? How -- well, so we had to
- 5 batten down the hatches and oh, I said, nothing's
- 6 going to happen. Oh my God, we had to secure the
- 7 place like you wouldn't believe. Well, anyhow,
- 8 that was my first taste of a hurricane and the
- 9 warning, I'll tell you, every palm tree around had
- 10 lost its top. They were just sticks left. It was
- 11 really a hurricane. So those were things that I
- 12 have never seen in Cohoes. Hurricanes, Atlantic
- Ocean, it was so. And it -- it was -- it was
- 14 great. I was on K.P. duty, the whole bit, you
- 15 know.
- Q. So did you have to pull guard
- 17 duty at all?
- 18 A. No guard, no, but we had -- you
- know, we had to learn to march and do all that
- 20 stuff.
- 21 O. Uh-huh.
- 22 A. You know, and I always thought I
- was tall. In Cohoes I always thought I was a tall
- 24 girl, but down there I -- I was the last one in the

1	back because they were all taller than me, you
2	know?
3	Q. Uh-huh.
4	A. And for rest parade, every
5	Saturday morning it was Dress parade and oh, I
6	loved that. But I was I was always bringing up
7	the rear. So, anyhow, they give you all an
8	aptitude test and decided I would be a good
9	storekeeper. So I started the storekeeper school.
10	So that took six weeks of training at the
11	storekeeper school and it was right there in Palm
12	Beach. So then I graduated from storekeeper school
13	and
14	Q. Now now what was that like,
15	the storekeeper school? What did you learn there?
16	A. Well, I learned that to make
17	out order forms and everything, you know, I mean
18	this was for Coast Guard, you know?
19	Q. Uh-huh.
20	A. Yeah.
21	Q. You had to do requisitions and
22	order?
23	A. Yeah, all that stuff. You know,

it -- and of course I -- I already had typing and

- 1 shorthand, but that was more in the other line, so
- I really didn't have to use my shorthand, but I did 2
- 3 use the typing.
- 4 O. Uh-huh.
- 5 You know, I did use the typing,
- 6 so that was good. And yeah, so then after
- 7 storekeeper school permanent duty station, Boston,
- Massachusetts. So Constitution Wharf, it's still a 8
- 9 Coast Guard station. So whenever I go to Boston I
- 10 go past it for old times sake and it's still a
- 11 Coast Guard station. Yeah. And you know, so that
- 12 was my active duty, you know.
- 13 Now what was life like for you in
- 14 What was your work routine like? Boston?
- 15 Yeah, okay. Well, it was -- we Α.
- 16 were billeted in Brookline at 1501 Beacon Street
- 17 Brookline. It used to be an apartment building
- 18 that they took over for, you know, Coast Guard, for
- 19 the SPAR's and so you know, you had perfume, you
- 20 had to be in every night at nine o'clock. I would
- 21 be in bed every night at nine. And the funny part
- 22 of it is another girl from Cohoes was on -- on the
- 23 desk there in the Coast Guard, you know.
- 24 And you knew her before you went Ο.

- 1 in?
- A. Oh yeah.
- 3 O. Uh-huh.
- 4 A. Hey, and I didn't even tell you
- 5 when I was on K.P. duty down in -- in -- see, every
- 6 three weeks there was a new recruit team coming in,
- 7 a new seven recruits and so I went in, I was there
- 8 three weeks. So I was on K.P., dishing out the
- 9 grub, down the chow line and who comes -- I go
- 10 to -- and I look and I said oh, it's Monique --
- 11 Monique. Monique -- Monica to you. Monique, I
- mean her father was my dentist. I still got some
- old fillings he put in here, you know, seven, eight
- 14 years ago. Well, anyhow, so she was just three
- weeks behind me in Florida, so -- and then just
- 16 coincidence, she also got stationed in Boston and
- so -- yeah, so I used to see her every day. When
- 18 I'd come in and check in at night she was at the
- desk there making sure I got in. Oh yeah.
- 20 And yeah, so then in -- in -- in
- 21 the morning, you know, you'd have reveille, you'd
- get up out of bed and you'd get dressed and we
- 23 would go outside and -- and take the T, the Boston
- 24 T. That's the transportation and it was -- and I'd

- get off at Saint Marcus Square and walk the whole
- 2 length of Hanover Street which was very, very long,
- 3 you know, it's like Little Italy there, Hanover
- 4 Street, all the way down to Constitution Wharf. I
- 5 would climb up the stairs to the second floor.
- 6 That was the supply office and that's where I
- 7 I had a desk, I had a typewriter, I would worked.
- 8 get requisition forms from -- from the Coast Guard
- 9 cutters or -- or the light houses or whoever wanted
- 10 something and I would type them up. And so -- so
- 11 we were -- you know, there were guite a few SPAR's
- 12 that worked there in that -- in that office at --
- 13 that was the First Naval District there and -- but
- 14 there are also some civilian girls. Most of them
- 15 were Irish girls from South Boston. So I got to
- 16 know some Irish girls from South Boston.
- 17 And after the war was over and I
- 18 was home I got invitations to a couple of their
- 19 weddings and I did go back to Boston to attend
- 20 their weddings in South Boston.
- 21 Q. Now did you work with men also or
- was it strictly women? 22
- 23 Well, it was all women in that
- 24 office at the desk.

- Q. Uh-huh.
- A. But we had a male officer, you
- 3 know, the officer, the head guy there from the
- 4 supply office was a male, you know.
- 5 Q. Uh-huh.
- 6 A. So --.
- 7 O. Now were there enlisted men
- 8 working there also or --?
- 9 A. Well, it -- it was really -- you
- 10 know, I would just go to the second floor because
- 11 that was my supply office.
- 12 Q. Uh-huh.
- 13 A. But the pay office was on the
- 14 first floor. Okay? So hey, there were a few movie
- stars who were in the Coast Guard.
- Q. Really?
- 17 A. And so when it was payday, when
- 18 the ship came in and -- and we knew, hey, we would
- 19 look for some excuse to have to go down to the
- 20 first floor.
- 0. Uh-huh.
- 22 A. So I saw a few of them. Oh yeah.
- There were a few. I don't want to mention any
- 24 names. Caesar Romero was one of them. Anyhow,

- that -- that was a little, you know, extra that
- 2 I -- I get to see. That would happen, but hey, it
- 3 was fun.
- Q. Now did you get to see any U.S.O.
- 5 shows at all?
- A. No, I didn't see any U.S.O.
- 7 shows. But I -- I did get down to the U.S.O. down
- 8 on the watering place of the cows. That's how
- 9 Boston's streets were done, you know, they paved
- 10 behind the cows. And so it was right down in -- in
- 11 the -- of course there was a public park is here
- 12 here and then there was the Boston Commons and that
- was where the water hole for the cows were when you
- 14 know -- and they paved behind the cow paths, so
- 15 that's how -- that's why the streets of Boston were
- all kind of wavy and curly and kind of funny and
- very narrow. But anyhow, they -- they put up a
- 18 temporary building there that was the U.S.O. Okay.
- 19 So I used to go down and jitterbug at night. And
- hey, that's how you got your exercise in those
- 21 days. Nothing like jitterbugging. Oh dear, today
- everybody gets gymnasiums or their garage or the
- 23 basement or you know, or they go to a gym, you
- 24 know. I'll tell you the jitterbugging kept me in

- 1 shape. And then walking. I -- I used to walk all
- over in Boston -- walk all over the city. Just
- 3 used to walk. Loved to walk.
- 4 Q. Now could you wear civilian
- 5 clothes --
- 6 A. No.
- 7 Q. -- or did you always have to wear
- 8 a uniform?
- 9 A. No. During the war -- where
- there's war on, and I imagine it's the same today,
- 11 I'm not sure, but back then World War II, every
- person who was in the military, whether it was the
- 13 Army, the Navy, the Coast Guard or whatever, Marine
- 14 Corps, had to be in -- in full uniform. And the
- only -- you know, whether they were just out in
- leisure or going to work or whatever. You had to
- 17 be in full uniform, except when you were in your
- 18 own barracks. I suppose you could run around in
- your -- your tee shirt, but I didn't even have any
- 20 civilian clothes with me because there was no need
- 21 for it.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. So I -- I left all my clothes in
- 24 my closet back home. Well, anyhow, while I was in

- 1 the service stationed in Boston my mother and
- 2 father bought another house up on the hill in
- 3 Cohoes and so the house where I was born and grew
- 4 up they moved out of there and they were renting it
- 5 out. So she had to empty out all the closets. She
- 6 got rid of all my clothes, everything. So I didn't
- 7 even have any civilian clothes to come home to.
- 8 She had cleaned everything out when moving day
- 9 came, you know, before moving day. I had cousins
- who lived next door. She gave it all to them, you
- 11 know, because they were -- we were all thin then.
- 12 O. Uh-huh.
- 13 A. Nobody was obese then like they
- 14 are today. Oh my God, all of us couch potatoes.
- 15 Well, anyhow, yeah, so all my civvies were gone
- and -- and we didn't know how long the war would
- 17 last. And when -- when you signed up and there's a
- war on, if you volunteered, you volunteered for the
- 19 duration of the war. And you know, nobody knew how
- 20 long the war would last. It could have lasted ten,
- 21 twelve years. Who knows? So anyhow, you know, we
- just thank God it didn't last too long.
- Q. What was it like when the war did
- 24 end? Was there a lot of celebration?

- A. Oh my God, Boston -- you know,
- 2 the -- the newspaper photo people really took
- 3 pictures all over the place, you know, New York
- 4 City, Boston, all the big cities. Oh my -- I mean
- 5 people were celebrating in the streets and you
- 6 know, so anyhow, yeah, so that's how it was.
- 7 Q. Do you remember where you were
- 8 and how you remember? You said that President
- 9 Roosevelt was the only president you remembered.
- 10 A. Oh yeah.
- 11 Q. Well, how did you feel when he
- 12 died?
- A. Oh God, you know, I know what
- 14 he -- he -- he was such a good president and you
- know, we didn't -- we didn't even know about him
- 16 till later that he had had, you know, polio and --
- and you know -- and -- and then when he died, I
- mean my God, you know, it -- it was, you know,
- 19 Winston Churchill and I mean God, they -- all these
- get togethers they had and everything. And you
- 21 know, finally the Axis's, the Nazi's, you know,
- 22 and -- and then it all came out about and all those
- 23 terrible, terrible places that went on, you know.
- 24 I mean all this stuff was terrible when you think

- 1 of it, you know. And we probably will never be
- 2 anything like that again.
- 3 And of course I had uncles and my
- 4 God, you know, they all went over -- off to World
- 5 War I and it wasn't even called World War I because
- 6 they never thought there would be a World War II.
- 7 It was just called the Great War -- the Great War,
- 8 the war to end all wars. Oh, and I mean they went
- 9 over the hill and in the trenches and everything in
- 10 France and it's -- it's like a miracle that they
- 11 returned. But they returned and so you know, my
- 12 Uncle lived right next to me, my Uncle Paul,
- 13 they -- and their children, they all grew up right
- 14 next to me. We all lived -- you know, everybody
- 15 had a house here on Lake Street, Cohoes, we all
- 16 had, you know, like grandpa to care of us and he
- 17 built a brick house, my father, they all sweated
- 18 and then for Uncle Sharrif and then Uncle Paul, you
- 19 know, all on the same street, and a big garage.
- 20 That big garage now was -- they made, oh, I don't
- 21 know, six or eight apartments out of it now, you
- 22 know. Yeah.
- 23 So it's -- it's -- but anyhow,
- 24 when -- when World II was declared and -- you know,

- 2 renamed World War I. So that's how it went, you
- 3 know.
- Q. Was there any person or persons
- 5 that you remember that left an impression on you
- 6 or -- or close friends while you were in the
- 7 service?
- 8 A. Oh God yes. I -- I made such
- 9 good friends. You know, two Italian girls from
- 10 Brooklyn, they were great friends. And I had gone
- 11 to their wedding and they came up -- they came to
- 12 my house in Cohoes for their honeymoon. I -- I
- gave them my bedroom for their honeymoon. Yeah. I
- mean, you know, it's not like honeymoons today.
- Oh, and then they came up to my wedding and -- and
- 16 then -- and they drove up. They had a car. Now me
- and my new husband, we didn't have a car. We were
- married in -- in 1948 and we didn't have a car.
- And so they came up -- they drove up from Brooklyn
- and believe it or not, we went to New York City.
- 21 We got in the car with them and got a free ride
- down to New York for our honeymoon. So we were two
- days in a hotel in New York City. That was, you
- 24 know --

- 1 0. Uh-huh.
- A. -- hey, after the war. Oh, it
- 3 was hard to find a place to live, it was hard to
- 4 find furniture. You know, that's after the war.
- 5 That's post-war era. Yeah. And you know, like in
- 6 Troy they -- they built temporary housing for
- 7 returning veterans, you know, all over the place.
- 8 Temporary housing went up in Troy.
- 9 Q. Did you ever -- did you ever
- 10 perform any unusual duties or services while you
- 11 were --?
- 12 A. Well, believe it or not, when I
- was in Boston in the supply office if they needed a
- 14 supply that could have been purchased right
- 15 there -- right there on Atlantic Avenue in Boston,
- 16 hey, I -- I was the one that would always volunteer
- 17 to go fetch it. That was part of my walking and I
- 18 would be out the door and -- and I would go -- I
- mean it's not like Boston today. I mean this was
- 20 Atlantic Avenue with all the -- you know, the old
- 21 wharfs and everything, rat infested and then all
- these little, you know, marine stores, one after
- 23 the other all along Atlantic Avenue. Fun.
- 24 If there was something that could

- 1 be picked up and brought in, you know, to hasten,
- 2 hey, I -- I would always volunteer to go. I love
- to walk. Oh, I used to run all over. 3
- Q. How were you treated by the 4
- 5 civilian population?
- 6 A. Well, very good. You know, like
- 7 I said, we had some civilian girls working in our
- 8 office that I became very friendly with. And like
- 9 I -- I said, when the war was over I went back to
- 10 Boston to attend their weddings in South -- South
- 11 Boston, you know. And so we became good friends.
- 12 And then I became good friends with girls that I
- 13 worked with, you know. And -- and -- and girls
- 14 that I was in boot camp with I'll never forget, you
- know. Oh yeah. 15
- 16 Q. So have you stayed in contact
- 17 with a lot of them over the years?
- 18 Oh yeah. Yeah. Nita from the
- 19 Bronx, you know, I went to her house in the Bronx
- 20 and had a -- you know, a beautiful Jewish meal.
- 21 Her mother cooked me gefilte fish I'd never had,
- 22 you know.
- 23 Ο. Uh-huh.
- 24 Oh yeah, and her -- her Α.

- 1 grandfather was at the table with the Skull cap on
- 2 and -- and you know, and presided at the table, you
- 3 know. Oh yeah, so -- and then in -- in Brooklyn I
- 4 went to -- with my Italian girlfriends. You know,
- 5 like I said, Millie -- Millie Bonarico, you know,
- 6 oh yeah, and you know, and like I say, she came to
- my house for her honeymoon, brought her husband,
- 8 Tiny, Tiny Capello. I still remember all the
- 9 names. And then I went to reunions. I went to a
- 10 couple of reunions, you know, Washington D.C. at
- that big hotel there, the biggest hotel, but I
- 12 can't -- oh, but it was great, you know, and so
- 13 this was a SPAR reunion --
- 14 O. Uh-huh.
- 15 A. -- in Washington D.C. And then I
- went to another SPAR reunion at the Commodore Hotel
- in New York City and at that one I brought my
- husband with me. I mean he has been discharged
- 19 from the Marine Corps and he was also in the Marine
- 20 Corps Reserves and he almost went to Korean War in
- 21 1950. Oh, he had to go down to Albany. We were
- 22 married two years. We were married in 1948 and
- then in 1950, you know, the Korean War is on.
- 24 There's another war. And he was in the Marine

- 1 Corps Reserves. Hey, they were calling out the
- 2 reserves for that war. He was in it. So he got
- 3 his papers to go down to Albany for the physical.
- 4 And the same day that -- I mean I labored all day
- 5 Labor Day and this was the next day on a Tuesday
- 6 and my daughter was born that morning at
- 7 seven-thirty at the old Veterans Hospital in North
- 8 Troy. They used to call it Lansingburg. Well,
- 9 anyhow, and he had to be down to Albany for his
- 10 physical at eight o'clock.
- 11 So here he comes up, oh,
- 12 Antionette, we have a beautiful daughter. We'll
- 13 name her Stella after my mother. I have to be in
- 14 Albany by eight o'clock for my physical for the
- 15 Marine Corps Reserves, I'll see you as soon as I
- get out of there and I'll come back. Off he went. 16
- 17 That -- that was it. Off he went. Oh, and it took
- 18 him all day -- all day, believe it or not, to get
- 19 rejected on his physical because he had had a knee
- 20 operation in the spring. Now, when he had that
- 21 knee operation for a split cartilage, oh, I thought
- 22 it was terrible. Here I am pregnant for our first
- 23 child and I didn't know how to drive. We didn't
- 24 even have a car. And I used to go visit him every

- day at the Samaritan Hospital. You know, in those
- days they kept you in like two, three weeks for
- Pete's sakes, you know. It's not like today, zoom,
- 4 zoom. Most everything is -- is not even in the
- 5 hospital. It's out -- out -- out in the doctor's
- 6 office.
- Well, anyhow, but it -- it turned
- 8 out to be a blessing in disguise as far as I was
- 9 concerned because that knee operation was the only
- thing that rejected him on the -- on the physical
- 11 to go away in the Korean War. Now there's another
- war, you know, and that was -- you know, the
- 13 Vietnam War and the Gulf War and O my god you know?
- 14 I don't know if the wars will ever end. When --
- when is mankind going to learn that nobody wins the
- 16 war? We're all losers. It's terrible. Oh God.
- 17 How I pray.
- Q. How do you think your time in the
- 19 Coast Guard changed or had effect on your life?
- A. Well, I -- I certainly learned to
- get along so well with so many different ethnic
- groups and I got to learn my prayers in English. I
- 23 didn't even know them in English. When I went to
- 24 confession down in Florida at the Catholic church

- don't know my Act of Contrition in English. He
- 3 said oh, that's all right, just say it in whatever
- 4 language you learned it in. So I said my Act of
- 5 Contrition in French. And I got out some emotion.
- 6 Yes. So -- so I -- I did get to
- 7 learn about so many wonderful people, you know, and
- 8 of course just the traveling, you know, I mean Palm
- 9 Beach. Oh, when I go back to Palm Beach and I do
- 10 go back just to look it over, you know, and I -- I
- 11 go looking at the old S.S. Biltmore. That's what
- we called it, you know, the SPAR training ship,
- 13 Biltmore. Well, they've made apartments out of it
- 14 and it's high class. Oh my God, you know, yeah, so
- 15 it's still there. And a Sun and Surf Club where we
- used to go swimming, I mean it's -- you know, I
- 17 mean Palm Beach is Palm Beach. It's high class
- 18 living down there I'll tell you.
- 19 And -- and then Boston. Well,
- out of my ten children, one of my daughters is
- there in Boston. So I go quite often to visit her.
- 22 And I -- and I care that she has seven sons now.
- Q. Uh-huh.
- 24 A. She married one of those nice

- 1 Italian boys that used to live on Hanover Street,
- 2 you know, where I used to walk down every morning
- on my way to Constitution Wharf. And I'm sure he
- 4 must have been in a baby carriage and I must have
- 5 rubbed his head and marked him for my daughter when
- 6 we end of my walk.
- 7 And so she married him. She
- 8 went -- she went to Boston to study architecture.
- 9 Well, when she met Paul the architecture went out
- 10 the window. She got married and they raised seven
- 11 boys. She has restaurants in Troy -- in Troy -- in
- 12 Boston and The Daily Catch, there's a free
- 13 commercial, and -- and she lives in -- in -- across
- 14 the river, Charles. I got to call it the River
- 15 Charles, not plain old Charles River, it's the
- 16 River Charles. And -- and I used to see the boys
- from Harvard and shells you know, it's a new wing
- down and all that stuff. And it was very nice. I
- got to see all that, you know, and so where my
- 20 mother -- my mother -- my daughter, Maria, lives
- 21 and she lives in the Cambridge, across the River
- 22 Charles in Cambridge right between M.I.T. and
- 23 Harvard. And so when I go visit her I take in all
- 24 the museums -- all the museums. There's museums

- 1 galore in Boston. And believe it or not, during
- 2 the war they were all locked up and moth balled
- 3 just like the Old S.S. Constitution, Old Ironsides.
- 4 It was -- it was right there pulled in at
- 5 Constitution Wharf and I used to see it every day
- 6 before I'd go up to the second floor to the supply
- 7 office. It was there and I could never go into it
- 8 because it was -- everything was moth balled during
- 9 the war. That's how it was during the war.
- 10 Everything was locked up. So -- okay. Now we're
- in a different kind of war.
- 12 Q. Okay. And could you show us a
- 13 little --?
- 14 A. The bombing.
- Q. Could you tell us when and where
- they are at? Could you hold it up?
- 17 A. This -- this -- this was taken
- in -- in Boston. See, I've got my chevron shirt.
- 19 I'm storekeeper first -- third class here. I was
- 20 third -- third class storekeeper. And -- and
- 21 believe it or not, I took all the correspondence
- 22 courses and I did get to storekeeper second class
- and so that's -- you know, storekeepers were cross
- 24 chains and not to be confused with the cross guills

- which is a yeoman and -- and second class you get
- 2 two chevrons. And anyhow, I took another
- 3 correspondence course and of course then the war
- 4 was over, so I never even bothered to sew on my
- 5 third chevron.
- 6 Q. Okay. Thank you. You had some
- 7 others where you were -- they were taken at the
- 8 Coast Guard Academy?
- 9 A. Oh yes.
- Q. You want to hold those up?
- 11 A. My God, I had never been to the
- 12 Coast Guard Academy because, you know, I'm -- I was
- never an officer, but anyhow, my daughter, Cecelia,
- who's my second oldest daughter, she took me there
- and we went down and so here's -- here's pictures
- 16 from -- there's the poster that got me in the Coast
- 17 Guard and there's me eighty years old seeing -- in
- 18 the museum at the Coast Guard Academy, the new one
- in Connecticut. And it was beautiful. If you get
- 20 a chance go on down to New London and you can visit
- 21 the museum. It's beautiful. And I did bring back
- 22 all kind of memories for me, yes, and so the Coast
- 23 Guard SPAR's and that SPAR's, S-P-A-R, of course it
- 24 was a nautical term because you know, you were on a

1	ship, but it stands for Semper Paratus, Always
2	Ready. Did you know that? Semper Paratus like
3	Semper Fidelis is for the Marine Corps. That was
4	my husband's outfit.
5	Okay. So too bad we still have
6	wars. That's how I feel. And anyhow, my husband
7	passed away and so here here's where he's buried
8	up at Saratoga and that's my spot right next to
9	him. And it's there waiting for me. I thought
10	sure I would go before him. I'm still hanging
11	around. He's gone two years already. He died the
12	day after Valentine's Day two years ago. So we
13	never know when we're going to die. So when you
14	got to go there's my spot ready and waiting for me.
15	See, this is my jacket I put over him.
16	MR. RUSSERT: Okay. Well, thank
17	you very much.
18	(The interview concluded)
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	

1	This is a transcription of the audio
2	provided to us. It is completed to the best of our
3	skill and ability. The transcript consists of
4	pages 1 through 33 inclusive.
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7	Judith Spriggs
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