Barbara Rosenthal Allen
Narrator
Wayne Clarke
Mike Russert
Interviewers
New York State Military Muse

Interviewed on 22 March 2006
Interviewed at Delmar Place
Delmar New York

Barbara Rosenthal Allen: BA
Wayne Clarke: WC
Mike Russert: MR

MR: Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth please?
BA: My name now?

MR: Yes
BA: Barbara Rosenthal Allen

MR: What is your date of birth please?
BA: 5.2.25

MR: Where were you born?
BA: Albany New York

MR: Ok. What your educational background before entering the service?
BA: High school and one year of college

WC: Where about did you go to college?
BA: Russell Sage

MR: Do you remember where you were and your reaction when you heard about Pearl Harbor?
BA: I was in my home, and chucked - shocked, absolutely shocked

MR: How did you hear about it?
BA: On the radio

MR: Why did you decide to enlist in the Navy?
BA: (Chuckles) well, I was going with a gentleman who reported to be missing in action so I joined; and no sooner than I joined he appeared on the scene
MR: Why did you select the navy?
BA: m

WC: Was he in the Navy?
BA: Yes... and, when I went down to New York in those days you had to take a test before your physical and while I was sitting there I met another young lady and we had been friends for over 50 years and unfortunately she passed away last week. But we had a long friendship with our children and grandchildren

MR: So the first time you met was when you were joining the service
BA: Yes in fact she asked if I wanted to go to the draft and I was like what’s draft

MR: Both of you went into the service together?
BA: Yes

MR: So that's how you become friends?
BA: Yes

MR: You served together also?
BA: Yes

MR: What was her name?
BA: Lorraine Phillips

MR: Where was she from?
BA: Brooklyn

MR: When you joined, you joined in New York City?
BA: Yes

MR: Where did you go for training?
BA: Hunter College (pause) Great lakes Ill. And then St. Albins Long Island

WC: What was your training like initially was it pretty rigorous and hard or -
BA: Well I was in the medical - it was difficult, it was difficult when we had to take care of those men who had been prisoners and various things, it was quite sad. And I don’t think they were thrilled with the women in the service

MR: What kind of specialized training did you receive?
BA: Hospital, lab tech, in fact I went on with that before I retired at 31 years working in a lab

MR: So this was something you learned while in the service?
BA: Yes

MR: ok, as a lab tatt, was you a lab tech in the service
BA: Yes

MR: What did you do specifically?
BA: Blood test, urinalysis, the route lab work
WC: Did you wear a nurse’s uniform or navy uniform?
BA: A navy uniform, yeah

MR: What kind of rank were you given?
BA: Hospital—oh god it was so long ago, hospital apprentice 3rd class I think. Many moons

MR: Did you, so you basically worked with patients who had returned from front line or POW’s?
BA: Yes yes

MR: Did you receive or have any illnesses something you contracted when you were in the service?
BA: No

WC: What type of housing did you have?
BA: Barracks

MR: What hospital were you assigned to?
BA: , let's see, St Abins Long Island and Brooklyn Navy Hospital

MR: Now, you stayed in barracks in both of those places
BA: Yes

MR: What were the barracks like?
BA: Crude, laughs

WC: Did you have bunk beds or regular beds?
BA: Bunk bed, yeah

MR: What was the equipped like that you used?
BA: At that time?

MR: Yes
BA: When I look back now, very old fashion

MR: What were or how were some of the changes in the type of equipment all those years you been in the lab tech
BA: The changes?

MR: Yes.
BA: The changes I’ve seen now because over the years, 31 years, I worked a lab

MR: Ok but what type of equipment
BA: Equipment, testing all kinds of various things

MR: Ok where there any amusing stories that stand out more than others or inspirational things happen that maybe stand out
BA: Well I met a woman, a wonderful young lady and we were friends ya know for over 50 years and amusing I don’t think the men were thrilled with women in service
WC: How did they treat you?
BA: Not very nice

MR: What were your officers like? Were most of the officers where you were doctors?
BA: Yes medical

WC: How were you treated by them?
BA: Efficiently (chuckles)

MR: Ok, what do you think was one of the greatest impressions of this work that you did that you recall?
BA: Well I was very happy to be part of the recovery I felt I was doing something

MR: Were there ever anything unusual duties you had to do?
BA: No as far as medically

MR: Yes
BA: I don’t think so

MR: When did you leave service?
BA: 46

MR: Were you able to use the GI Bill?
BA: I didn’t take advantage of it

MR: So the education you received you done on your own?
BA: Yes

MR: What was the education you received after service?
BA: After service?

MR: Yes
BA: For what I paid for myself?

MR: Yes
BA: I had one year of college

MR: So you worked then as a lab tech for 31 years
BA: I worked for New York State Health Dept. in the virus unit
MR: That must’ve been interesting

MR: Oh now where about was that located
BA: Well it was on new Scotland Avenue, next to the Armory, But I think it’s gone now Then I think they moved it out to, griffin lab outside the city

MR: Did you ever join any Veterans organization at all
BA: I temporarily did but uh yeah
MR: How do you think your time in the military service changed or had an effect on your life?
BA: Well as I said I met this lovely lady and we were friends for over 50 years
MR: Lifelong friendship
MR: Yeah
MR: Do you think you would’ve ever gone into lab tech if it wasn’t for the service?
BA: Probably not
MR: are there any other thing that you recall or USO shows
BA: Yes I did
MR: What did you see, do you remember?
BA: Oh god it was so long ago
WC: How did the civilian population treat you as a woman in uniform? Were you treated with a lot of respect?
BA: My parents were not happy
MR: They did not like you being in the service?
BA: No, they thought only bad girls did that; but my friends thought it was wonderful
MR: Now after you left service, did you stay in the Albany area?
BA: Yes and I worked at the lab on new Scotland Ave
MR: Now where did your friend stay in New York City?
BA: Yes
MR: Ok. Well thank you very much for your interview