AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Title: Catching Up With A WAVE: A Multiscalar Anthropological Study of the Navy's Women in Blue of World War II.

Abstract approved: 

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The purpose of this study is to educate adults and later generations on the experience of women of the Navy who worked behind the scenes in World War II and helped win the war. The efforts and experiences of these pioneering women will be lost at a rate of 1,700 veterans each day (American Folklife Center 2002) leaving only the macroscalar documentary material and microscalar oral history interviews largely provided here as their only legacy. In coordination with the Veterans History Project and WAVES National, this thesis presents an opportunity for scholars as well as the general public to participate in preserving the women's military voice for the benefit of future generations. Through a macroscale study of the documented history, plus a microscale life history interview of a WAVE, and contextual interviews with a military man and nonmilitary woman from the time period, a multiscalar anthropology investigation has been conducted and recorded on these pages in a contribution to the discipline of Anthropology as well as the present and future generations of Americans in their nation's historic trust.
Catching Up With A WAVE: A Multiscalar Anthropological Study of the Navy's Women in Blue of World War II

by
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Julie Federico, Author
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century women are a typical, if still smaller sight to see in the United States of America's volunteer military. When discussions of whether to draft Americans ensue during a war, women are included in these discussions. But it wasn't so long ago, in the 20th century, that the idea of American women in the military surprised the country. The occasion was World War II, a phenomenon that needed all of America's available manpower and then some. Where was the rest going to come from? American women. Almost overnight the services began to prepare for volunteer women. These first "experiments" were told they would only be a part of the military for the duration of the war and for six months after. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed that legislation into law and was true to his word. Within six months after Japan surrendered, the women were honorably discharged. It was not until 1948 that President Harry S Truman decided that it was in the best interest of the country for women to be a permanent fixture in the American military.

As of today, 2004, this generation of pioneers is beginning to say goodbye and give way to succeeding generations, as people do in the story of social and biological evolution. In about another fifty years all that may remain of their contribution as trailblazers is currently hidden away, tightly, in the archives and documentary history. World War II is the subject of numerous books, movies,
and television programs, but the subject matter covered is nearly always technological and tactical, not often is it humanistic. Unfortunately, this will be the legacy left of these pioneers once they become only history.

When I began doing research on the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) of the Navy, I came upon the Veterans History Project (American Folklife Center 2002) created by the Library of Congress. According to its statistics there are over 19 million war veterans living in the United States as of today, but every day we lose 1,700 of them. This is why the United States Congress created the Veterans History Project, so that their stories and experiences could be collected while they are still among us, and to honor these war veterans for their service.

The Veterans History Project covers World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars. It includes all participants in those wars—men and women, civilian and military. It documents the contributions of civilian volunteers, support staff, and war industry, as well as the experiences of military personnel from all ranks and all branches of service—the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy, as well as the Coast Guard and Merchant Marine. The Library of Congress and the American Folklife Center have recognized that future generations of Americans have much to learn from those who served (American Folklife Center 2002). After learning of this effort to preserve our nation's past for future generations, I decided to apply my anthropological research to this national cause by turning over the information I collect to them.
The research question I hope to have answered, as a result of these applied aims, is both macro- and micro-scalar. The question is what roles did gender stereotyping and status play in the WAVES during WWII? My secondary questions are: what did a Navy man think of the idea of women taking over his job? And, what did a civilian woman on the homefront think of the WAVES?

In order to answer the primary question, I have first conducted a review of the literature, which discusses what information is already available on the WAVES and what is not. Following this review of the primarily theoretical development of gender stereotyping and status, is a discussion of the method I have used in order to answer my primary question for this research, the method of life history. The life history explores in-depth the experience of one person who has participated in an event that is under study. Following the method section is the macroscale study of what is known about the WAVES in general from the time period, a historical context, both from reported news sources and representational stories from the time. The life history of one WAVE, Dora Belinger, follows this, in its analyzed, interpreted form.

The answers to my secondary questions follow the life history. The Navy man is Wayne Feaster. I conducted a full life history of him as well for the Veterans History Project, but for this particular study I only included his information regarding the WAVES in order to obtain a male viewpoint. Following my interpretation of Wayne’s information, is Lou Etta Sikes Feaster’s viewpoint of the WAVES from the perspective of a woman who did not join the WAVES, but who maintained a traditional woman’s role on the homefront during the time period under study. I again conducted a life
history of Lou for the Veterans History Project, but only included the information regarding her perspective on the WAVES.

After the informant's knowledge contributions is the discussion and conclusion chapter. Here I discuss my results of two analyses, that of coding for themes generically first for all three life histories, and a second analysis for emic meaning, presentation, and categories in only Dora's. The discussion was only conducted on Dora's life history and the questions came out of the review of the literature. And, finally, along with the discussion are the conclusions of the study.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Developing a Context for Women in WWII

One of Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith's (1997) objectives in producing the book *American Women in a World at War* was to reconstruct the worldview of the 1940s for contemporary readers. To a large extent, this book represents a "retrieval and salvage" (Litoff and Smith 1997:xii) operation. The authors note that the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of WWII produced an avalanche of historical and literary works about that conflict. They included biographies of military and political leaders, battle accounts, unit histories, and memoirs of soldiers, sailors, and marines. As important as these works are, however, nearly all of them focus on military, strategic, and political issues of primary importance to men (Litoff and Smith 1997).

One of the central themes to emerge from the contemporary writings of American women during WWII is that "woman-power is part of this war...It is woman's war as no war has ever been" (Litoff and Smith 1997:xii). How the cataclysmic events of the conflict that raged from 1939-1945 affected the lives of American women has yet to be fully incorporated into collective understanding. Also, women's active participation in the war effort is still not accepted as part of the World War II canon (Litoff and Smith 1997).

Litoff and Smith (1997) acknowledge that readers may be surprised and jarred by the fact that the well-educated authors of the selections included in their book often
referred to women as "girls." However, these authors did not use the term in a derogatory way. Simply put, the linguistic standards of the 1990s do not apply to the 1940s. The linguistics of gender will be discussed further later on in this chapter. For now, it is the context that is of use here (Litoff and Smith 1997).

The 25 contemporary accounts that Litoff and Smith (1997) provide constitute incontrovertible evidence that women played an active and resourceful part in the war effort. They further demonstrate that WWII was "everybody’s war." The transformations that occurred in the lives of these women were immense. Taken together, the selections confirm that WWII served as a major watershed in the lives of American women. Despite some initial setbacks in the immediate aftermath of the war, the changes shaped by WWII were not forgotten. They provided the foundation for the emergence of the modern feminist movement a generation later (Litoff and Smith 1997). Wayne Feaster also came to a similar conclusion when he reflected on the WAVES’ contributions and achievements, included in this study in chapter 6.

According to Nancy Wilson Ross (1943 in Litoff and Smith 1997), an author of one such contemporary account in the book entitled: *The WAVES: The Story of the Girls in Blue*, following the creation of the WAACs, WAVES, SPARS, and Women Marines, each of the service branches took specific steps to make sure that the public was well informed about admission requirements, training, and the duties of women in the military. Popular magazines and newspapers published hundreds of articles on these topics. Radio stations even assisted with recruitment by broadcasting programs about the experiences of military women (Litoff and Smith 1997). Many of these public
announcements and photo-essay representations are included in this study in chapters 4 and 5.

One question C. Kay Larson (1995) asked herself when she read some letters of WWII nurses who had lived in tents in Belgium during the 1944-45 winter was “why hadn’t I known more about nursing then?” (Larson 1995:xi). Since Larson’s (1995) mother had been a nurse while her first husband was in the Navy and she herself grew up watching WWII movies, Larson (1995) was sensitive both to some of the gruesome facts of a nursing career and to the sacrifices that her parent’s generation had made.

Within that context, however, Larson’s (1995) image of WWII nursing was of women working in base hospitals far from the front lines. She saw them in white uniforms which they could keep clean, or at least they had the opportunity for changes. When she read the nurses’ letters, she said to herself, perhaps like the Civil War nurses, WWII nurses lived in field conditions similar to those of the men and were real “combat” nurses (Larson 1995).

Larson (1995) finds out that the answer to her question is that although many memoirs have been written and nurses wrote letters home, much of this information is generally unavailable. The number of women’s wartime memoirs was not that great. Many that have been published have been in circulation only since the mid-1980s. With a few exceptions, they cannot be found in bookstores (Larson 1995). I also found this to be the case in my research for this study. The only books on the women in World War II that I was able to find I found through used bookstore searches on the internet.
In doing research for her book, Larson (1995) was confronted with a lack of information from the services and a dissatisfaction with published sources. Public libraries would not have the history of each service and these deal primarily with administrative history anyway. Another type of history features collections of women's letters. But the problem with this genre is that history-by-anecdote can offer skewed evidence from which to determine trends and conclusions. Often these collections are "catch-as-catch-can" (Larson 1995:xii) and the women who were doing the most dramatic things, such as a nurse in Sicily working 12-hour days, may not have had the energy to write home often (Larson 1995).

Most sources do not give enough meaning to the women's work. As a hypothetical example, in a published letter, a nurse in Saipan might write home that she has dengue fever. What she may not say is that there is an epidemic of it there. Even the Army WAC histories do not discuss the extent of the V-1 and V-2 bombings which the women endured in London. Many of the women's jobs required repetitive, detailed work, yet little mention is made of the exhaustion constant attention to detail produces or the consequences of errors. One of the WAVES' jobs was to produce navigation charts. Wrong numbers recorded for water depths could ground warships (Larson 1995).

There are other limitations to individual history or anecdotal sources. If only they are accessed, major activities, important figures, and scattered heroines may be missed. For instance, the work of the women in the Civil Air Patrol has gone largely unrecognized (Larson 1995).
Reliance on memoirs and unpublished sources will also not necessarily capture women’s recognized achievements. The reason Larson (1995) relied on *The New York Times* articles for a good deal of material is that they recorded these. In spite of a general climate of discrimination, as today, during WWII, the strict military rules worked for the women. When they achieved, they were rewarded. Everyone needs heroes and victors, and to date women have been afforded few. This has not been because they have not existed, but because not enough people have publicized them (Larson 1995). These limitations Larson (1995) discusses are very true, and do include the life history. However, that is why I offer the argument in this study for the importance of a multiscalar approach. That is, macroscale and microscale. One should have a good understanding of macroscale reconstructions, which in this study is the documentary collection, in order to truly appreciate the richness and “flesh” afforded by the microscale reconstructions, to fill out the “bones” of the macroscale reconstructions. In this study the microscale reconstructions are the three interviews.

Although history may in hindsight appear as a *fait accompli*, when events are unfolding, participants are afforded choices. The decisions different people make at different times set the course of history. It is not just “great men” or vast numbers of people who determine events. The actions and decisions of individuals holding critical positions can have vast consequences. Even though women did not formulate military strategy, more than a few held critical positions. For women in war, one of their most crucial roles has often been in the area of intelligence. Women make good spies and analysts because of their educational levels and social skills, and because men often
underestimate them (Larson 1995). Larson (1995) points out in her book that she is “not coming from an academic background,” (Larson 1995:xv) but the conclusions and points she makes here would certainly stand up well in academic circles. This theoretical viewpoint that she presents here is one of the agency theoretical paradigm. This theoretical paradigm suggests that people are active agents of culture processes and culture change rather than passive recipients (see Dobres and Robb 2000).

I am including a review of a book on Life magazine because of the magazine’s representative, even biased, nature. It is not a straight-forward reporting of the news, like The New York Times. The Life magazine needs an instruction on how it is to be interpreted. In her book, Life’s America, Wendy Kozol (1994) examines news photographs published in Life magazine, one of the most popular American magazines in the 20th century and the most important picture magazine of its day. At the height of its popularity in the 1940s and 1950s, Life appealed to an audience largely composed of middle-class readers. Photojournalism’s ability to capture the image (if not the experience) of news took on great immediacy, in the 1940s and 1950s when broad social transformations altered the lives of Life’s middle-class readers (Kozol 1994).

The credibility of Life’s photographs carried great weight in conveying a specific ideal as a transparent or unmediated visual truth about society. In her study, Kozol (1994) is interested in the pictures the magazine published—its product and its statement. Her analysis of the layout of photo-essays reveals the narrative drive of Life’s format for reporting the news and the ideological power of that narrative. Audiences did not, nor were they meant to, read isolated photo-essays; they read them
along with other photo-essays and advertisements and related them to other cultural discourses. Much of one’s current knowledge of social life derives from visual imagery. *Life* was instrumental in codifying the visual aspects of the news and was influential in establishing the prevalence of the image in advertising, education, and politics (Kozol 1994).

Kozol (1994) acknowledged that in the 1936 prospectus for publisher Henry Luce’s (1936 in Kozol 1994) new magazine, Luce (1936 in Kozol 1994) (the chair and founder of Time, Inc.) wrote of assumptions about the camera that were essential to *Life*’s project:

To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things...the women that men love and many children; to see and to take pleasure in seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed; thus to see, and to be shown, is now the will and new expectancy of half mankind (Luce 1936 in Kozol 1994:8).

This statement reveals a belief, and also a conceit as far as Kozol (1994) is concerned, that the camera, and therefore *Life*, has the power to reveal the world. Luce (1936 in Kozol 1994) writes of the expectancy of half of mankind to see, but which half is shown and which half does the looking? For instance, the reference to gender roles implies that women exist solely as the object of men’s gaze. Kozol (1994) finds this an especially interesting comment in light of surveys demonstrating that men and women read *Life* in almost equal numbers (Kozol 1994).
Women and the Social Sciences

Most feminist criticism of social science methods comes from the criticism of content. According to this criticism, the patriarchal bias is reflected in the ways in which questions about women are posed: the absence of concepts that tap women's experience, the viewing of women as an unchanging essence independent of time and place, and the narrowness of the concept of the human being reflected in limited ways of understanding human behavior. Although these criticisms address methodological issues, they do not directly challenge the epistemological basis of mainstream social science. The epistemological criticism remains implied or sketchy, although exceptions exist, such as the work of Canadian sociologist, Dorothy Smith (Westkott 1979).

The subject-object dichotomy in social science refers to the distinction between the person conducting the research and the person about whom knowledge is being developed. The ideal of objectivity was advocated by 19th century positivists, including Emile Durkheim, who argued that the object of social knowledge should be regarded as any other physical phenomenon and that the subject who conducts research must always be on guard not to let feelings “infect” research (Westkott 1979:61). More recent versions of this ideal of objectivity have emphasized the importance of the universal application of social science methods as the best guarantee against the bias of subjectivity (Westkott 1970).

Marxists, especially those affiliated with the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt, criticized this ideology of objectivity and challenged the positivist idea of
generalizing science and the notion that truth can be expressed in causal relations independent of time and place. They charged that positivist methods shatter and abstract concrete social relations into ahistorical relationships among things (remove context). Dorothy Smith underscores this Marxist critique with a concern for women as agents of knowledge. She argues that the methodological norm of objectivity is itself socially and historically constituted, rooted in an ideology that attempts to confuse the social relations of the knower and the known through procedures that appear anonymous and impersonal. This feeling of objectivity can be maintained so long as the object of knowledge, the "known," can be an "other," an alien object that does not reflect back on the knower. Considering women only as objects of social knowledge, fails to challenge this disassociation. Also, it is consistent with the wider cultural objectification of women, in which one's basic humanness is denied, but one's externally determined characteristics can be categorized and related to one another like other phenomena. It is only where women are also brought in as the subjects of knowledge that the separation between subject and object breaks down (Westkott 1979). Smith comments:

So long as men and the pronouns he, his, etc. appeared as general and impersonal terms, there was no visible problem. Once women are inserted into sociological sentences as their subjects, however, the appearance of impersonality goes. The knower turns out not to be 'abstract knower' after all, but a member of a definite social category occupying definite positions within the society (Smith nd in Westkott 1979:61).

I personally have not encountered this disrespect of women, and downright misconduct of the social sciences (if and when this is the case), owing most likely to the context in
which I grew up in. I was born in 1978 in California and educated there up through the University of California, Berkeley, and I know that all played a part. I am sure if I looked hard enough I would have found it, but nothing stands out in my mind as ever having made me feel any less human or important than a male. However, I also realize and acknowledge that a lot of this is due to the work of the feminist movement which has been going on in this country for a long time, but has been accelerated in times such as war.

I have chosen to approach my research from a feminist perspective because, since the 1970s some of the basic assumptions of anthropology have been called into question by women anthropologists. Specifically, they have been questioning some of the male-centered assumptions within anthropology, focusing their research on women's statuses and roles in societies around the world. Many feminist anthropologists have documented the failure of the discipline to fully explore human experience because it has neglected women and gender as significant dimensions of social life (Morgen 1989 in McGee and Warms 2000). While I am not a feminist anthropologist, I am a woman anthropologist who is researching, primarily, a woman subject. Therefore, on the one hand, I don't want to contribute to a male-bias that the feminist anthropologists speak of. And on the other hand, I do want to draw from approaches that tap women's experience (Westkott 1979), that allow for women to speak for themselves, thus revealing hidden realities: new experiences and new perspectives that could emerge that might challenge the "truths" of official accounts and cast doubt upon established theories (Nielsen 1990); and to examine and challenge
linguistic deceptions that might oppress women, practically using language that makes sure that the term or usage contributes to clarity and accuracy, and not to "fudging" the meaning by the use of the male pronoun "he" to include women and men, etc. (Miller and Swift 1991). The approach, therefore, that I find to best suit my study from interview questioning through discussion and conclusions, is from the feminist perspective.

Feminist research has been described as contextual, inclusive, experimental, involved, socially relevant, multimethodological, complete but not necessarily replicable, open to the environment, and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced (Reinharz 1983 in Nielsen 1990). Feminist inquiry is much more than this list of characteristics, but the point is that given the obvious contrast between it and textbook definitions of scientific research, the expression "feminist research methods" does seem to be a contradiction in terms. It would seem that feminist research cannot be methodological in the sense of scientific method. Nielsen (1990) argues, however, that the sketch of the scientific method as presented in textbooks is a false or at least incomplete picture of the scientific research process as it is now known (Nielsen 1990).

Without agreed-upon, demonstrable criteria, how does one argue for a given feminist interpretation? One could argue that there is no need to determine one view more correct, that a plurality of views could prevail. But at some point—such as when important decisions have to be made—some view of reality must be approved. One's agenda for knowledge construction, then includes removing the structural features and barriers that distort or limit open, free dialogue. Both theory and praxis are vital to
feminist inquiry (Nielsen 1990). As Margaret Conkey (Conkey Lecture 1/28/1997) lectured to Anthropology 2, the very first day of my very first Anthropology class—“In order to use inferences or use analogies, (one) must have theories: all ‘facts’ are theory-laden” (Conkey Lecture 1/28/97). If there is one thing I learned from “Meg” Conkey, it is that essentially EVERYTHING is theory-laden.

Oral history is one basic tool in one’s efforts to incorporate the previously overlooked lives, activities, and feelings of women into one’s understanding of the past and of the present. When women speak for themselves, they reveal hidden realities: new experiences and new perspectives emerge that challenge the “truths” of official accounts and cast doubt upon established theories. Interviews with women can explore private realms such as reproduction, child rearing, and sexuality to tell one what women actually did instead of what experts thought they did and can interpret the personal meaning and value of particular activities (Nielsen 1990).

Historians Kathryn Anderson and Susan Armitage (1990) initially worked together on the Washington Women’s Heritage Project Exhibit, which illustrated the everyday lives of women with photographs and with excerpts from oral history interviews. But in doing their research they found that it was much easier to document activities rather than feelings and values. Surprised by this realization, each historian pursued the question further. Anderson’s (1990) critical scrutiny of her own oral history interviews revealed a strong bias against the sort of information they had hoped to find and led her to reformulate her questions and interview goals. Anderson (1990) turned to a colleague, psychologist Dana Jack, and found useful insights in her work and the work
of other feminist psychologists. Thus their first interdisciplinary connection was made, and they developed a perspective on women's historical activity that incorporated a methodology to explore and validate personal feelings (Anderson, Armitage, Jack, and Wittner 1990).

In their theoretical discussion of feminist scholarship, Anderson et al. (1990) describe that the restriction to study women's realities and perspectives raised methodological as well as substantive issues. Dominant ideologies distorted and made invisible women's real activities, to women as well as to men. For example, until recently it was common for women to dismiss housework as "not real work." Yet, unlike most men, women also experienced housework as actual labor, as a practical activity that filled their daily existence. In effect, women's perspectives combined two separate consciousnesses: one emerging out of their practical activities in the everyday world and one inherited from the dominant traditions of thought. Reconstructing knowledge to take account of women, therefore, involves seeking out the submerged consciousness of the practical knowledge of everyday life and linking it to the dominant reality (Anderson et al. 1990).

In order to understand women in a society that limits their choices, one must begin with the assumption that what they think may not always be reflected in what they do and how they act. Studying women's behavior alone gives an incomplete picture of their lives, and the missing aspect may be the most interesting and informative. So one must study consciousness, women's sphere of greatest freedom; one must go behind the veil of outwardly conforming activity to understand what particular behavior means
to her, and reciprocally to understand how her behavior affects her consciousness and activity (Anderson et al. 1990).

Anderson (1990) realized two things from analyzing her own oral history interviews: (1) oral historians should explore emotional and subjective experience as well as facts and activities; (2) oral historians should take advantage of the fact that the interview is the one historical document that can ask people what they mean (Anderson et al. 1990).

To accomplish the first of these, one needs more and better questions about relationships of all kinds, questions that explore feelings of competency—when women feel good about what they have done and how they have done it—as well as feelings of incompetence, when they feel like failures or that things have gone wrong, and why. Oral historians need to be sensitive to what women value and why. When women reveal feelings or experiences that suggest conflict, one needs to explore what the conflict means and what form it takes. Finally, one needs general questions that allow women to reflect upon their experience and choose for themselves which experiences and feelings are central to their sense of their past (Anderson et al. 1990).

Judith Wittner (1990) warns that in pursuing these goals one should not be too quick to dismiss the insights of generations of scholars in one's field. Often feminist critiques go too far in rejecting or ignoring research traditions that, despite their lack of direct concern with women, offer important ideas and research tools for women's studies. In order to build truly interdisciplinary approaches, it is important that one
become familiar with these theories and methods so that one may adapt them to their
own purposes (Anderson et al. 1990).

I particularly agree with Anderson et al. (1990) that, essentially, no one scholar
should become “wedded” to any one theory or method, whether it is qualitative or
quantitative, positivist or feminist. Instead, it makes sense to take them on a case by
case basis. One should listen to what a scholar is actually saying before labeling one
“sexist” or “feminist,” and not dismiss them before they have been heard. Anderson et
al. (1990) are fair, yet firm in their critique, and they don’t alienate either tradition.
Without offending they present their arguments and make reasonable conclusions for
any scholar to logically be able to contribute to, as long as the particular scholar really
does believe that women are human beings, worthy of being subjects of knowledge
rather than objects.

Phyllis Stock-Morton (1991) writes that there is still no agreement on how to write
the story of an individual woman’s life, except that it is essential to modify the
traditional “objective” methodology, particularly by taking into account the gender
structure of the subject’s society. Much of the discussion revolves around how to
interpret autobiographical texts. In their attempts to reconstruct women’s lives,
historians of women usually try to find means of depicting their subjects as agents,
molding their lives rather than enduring them (Stock-Morton 1991). This observation
active agents rather than passive participants.
Turning to the subject of language, it is only in the last decades of the 20th century that significant numbers of people have begun to examine and challenge linguistic deceptions that oppress women. On the frontiers of this long-overdue endeavor are poets and theorists who have chosen to dismantle both syntax and lexicon as they defy established meanings, often using daring puns and punctuation to suggest alternative insights into the human condition. There are many critical thinkers, who in questioning the psychosexual origins of patriarchal systems, who have begun to examine patterns of thought and behavior, codified in language, that threaten the well-being, perhaps even the existence of life on earth. Still others, working at a more practical level, have chosen to concentrate on the ordinary discourse people use daily in all forms of written and spoken communication (Miller and Swift 1991).

The question for the latter approach is, how does one know when to abandon a word or phrase or grammatical rule that is still cited by language authorities as correct? Casey Miller and Kate Swift (1991) think the answer depends on a simple test: does the term or usage contribute to clarity and accuracy, or does it “fudge” them? (Miller and Swift 1991).

When one is faced with a particular problem of usage, this approach also helps to produce an alternative that would avoid the original difficulty. For example, if it is one’s understanding that male human beings were solely responsible for the domestication of animals, then a sentence beginning “When man first domesticated animals...” conveys one’s meaning (even if its accuracy is highly suspect). If the possibility exists that women played some part in the process, however, then in the
English one speaks today the phrase, "When man first domesticated animals," conveys misinformation. "When human beings first domesticated animals" or "our ancestors" or "early people" do a more accurate job (Miller and Swift 1991:168-169).

A problem of incongruity may remain. At what point does one make the translation from an outmoded old usage to an awkward-sounding new one? The kind of person who tries to be open to change has an easier time moving with linguistic evolution than those who habitually react to change as unpleasant or frightening. But even the latter have given up whalebone corsets and starched wing collars without assuming they have to switch to miniskirts or tank tops. To address someone's great-grandmother as Ms. could be insensitive, but to speak of her only in terms of her late husband's life and achievements is rather like saying that she should always wear widow's weeds (Miller and Swift 1991).

-ess Endings

Since authors, poets, sculptors, and actors may either be female or male, the significance of a word like authoress is not that it identifies a female but that it indicates deviation from what is consciously or unconsciously considered the standard. Tacking an -ess ending onto a common gender English word because the person referred to is a woman is reasonably resented by most people so identified. When it is relevant to make a special point of someone's sex, pronouns are useful and so are the adjectives male and female (Miller and Swift 1991).
-Ette Endings

The suffix -ette indicates feminine gender in French words and frequently has nothing to do with sex, as in bicyclette, which means "bicycle". In English the suffix has three functions: to indicate imitation, as in flannelette; to denote small size, as in dinette; and to suggest that females need not be taken seriously, as in farmerette and astronette. By implication an usherette is a frivolous little woman hired to replace a bona fide usher (Miller and Swift 1991).

Feminine and Masculine

Except in grammar and rhyme, the terms feminine and masculine and their noun forms, femininity and masculinity, are so inconsistent that they always call for careful examination. They do not refer to femaleness and maleness but to arbitrary categories of appearance, personality, behavior, and activity that a given society or individual holds to be suitable. Since what is considered "masculine" or "feminine" will be different tomorrow from what it was yesterday, using either word carelessly may reinforce arbitrary double standards that suppress spontaneity and individuality in people of both sexes (Miller and Swift 1991).

He as a Common Gender Pronoun

The use of masculine pronouns to include female referents, as in "the average reader...he," is a part of the linguistic male-as-norm syndrome. Since English lacks a truly generic third-person-singular pronoun, those who want to avoid both exclusiveness and ambiguity sometimes feel obliged to use "he or she" and sometimes "she or he." This device works unless the phrase must be repeated frequently, in which
case it becomes ridiculous. Another approach is to recast the sentence to omit third-
person pronouns entirely: “If a student is unable to complete the course, he may apply
for a refund” can be said more succinctly, “a student who is unable to complete the
course may apply for a refund.” Or the sentence can be phrased in the plural. “The
visitor is invited to familiarize himself with the map before entering the park” is less
cold when cast in the plural, and more to the point—unless, of course, the park is
reserved for men and boys (Miller and Swift 1991).

Male as Noun

Who knows when a reference to “our forefathers” is intended to include “our
foremothers” or when a suggestion of “brotherhood” is meant to include the ladies’
auxiliary? Words like forebears and ancestors are more accurate when
inconclusiveness is the aim, and a phrase that brings to mind the humanity common to
both sexes leaves the words brotherhood and sisterhood to describe the special bonds
that members of each sex feel for one another (Miller and Swift 1991).

The term Womanly

This word is not parallel to manly because instead of describing human attributes, as
manly does, it is limited to qualities assumed to be appropriate to or characteristic of
females—and inappropriate to or uncharacteristic of males. A woman who is
courageous, strong, and resolute cannot be called either manly or womanly. The only
solution at present seems to be to call her courageous, strong, and resolute (Miller and
Women's Life History Examples

In the book entitled *Life Woven with Song* are snippets of author Nora Marks Dauenhauer (2000) and her family in the contexts in which they worked—work they enjoyed doing and work they did to keep alive. Not all of the memories are of childhood. Many of the author’s poems are of new images and memories of her grandchildren. She thinks that everyone is left with memories of their heritage, and these memories continue to teach us. They are a gift that keeps on giving. In a way, this is what her writing is, her poems, plays, and prose. Her family left her these images and memories, and she would like to keep them alive (Dauenhauer 2000).

Dauenhauer (2000) found that in gathering her work of many years for the collection in the book, it was interesting for her to see several themes unfold. There are the recurring themes of food and land, salmon and the rain forest. The treatment may be serious or silly, but the themes are there. In editing for the collection, she discovered how the themes are explored from different perspectives (from her point of view as a child, as a mother, and a grandmother) and through different literary forms (as poems, stories, plays, and autobiographical pieces). She guesses that they are all ultimately autobiographical. She hopes the separate pieces come together for readers to form a larger cultural and literary landscape (Dauenhauer 2000).

Dauenhauer (2000) is bothered by the “endless chatter” of TV sitcoms and of much of children’s literature. She is trying for a more quiet “inner dialogue,” and for conflict not among the characters, but within the individual, as the individual finds herself in the natural and cultural environment. She first presents a look at salmon in a more
conceptual, adult, academic, and anthropological way, then she invites the reader to share in "other slices of salmon from different points of view" (Dauenhauer 2000:6): childhood memories of trolling for king salmon; memories of her family's traditional dryfish camp; a short story; some modern plays based on old Raven stories; and all of this "spiced" with poetry (Dauenhauer 2000).

Dauenhauer's (2000) life history is one excellent example of the modern, qualitative, life history. She seems to have asked herself, the culture contact history, and her family all the right questions (and got the right answers). Her presentation of Tlingit cultural history and her own personal history as a Native Alaskan woman is very modern, but very rigorous at the same time. She includes all the elements of a solid macro- and microscale approach to culture history, in a very creative, culturally flavorful book.

On a similar, yet different life history presentation, Hans C. Buechler and Judith-Maria Buechler (1981) spent several years doing field research in northwest Spain. Their study was focused on the process of migration from Spanish Galicia to other European countries and its impact on the hamlets of origin. Since the region remained marginal to the economic development of Spain, migration, including massive temporary and permanent exodus to other parts of Spain, to Latin America and more recently to other European countries was part of the complex strategies developed by Gallegos. Since the early sixties, industrialization has added a new dimension to these strategies. One of Buechler and Buechler's (1981) concerns was to show how specific individuals developed workable strategies for survival and how these affected others.
The authors recorded the life history of Carmen, one of the many Galician women they came to know in their field research, in order to know in their report greater immediacy and to complement the material gathered by more extensive social scientific methods (Buechler and Buechler 1981).

The authors explain that anthropological inquiry involves a constant feedback between the particular and the general. The broader picture emerges by comparisons among individual cases, consolidated, when possible by statistical and other extensive data. Once patterns are established, however, the particular is usually sacrificed, appearing only in the form of illustrative examples in the ethnographic account. This loss is perhaps to a large extent unavoidable given the sheer volume of ethnographic data. The deletion, however, makes it difficult if not impossible for the reader to reconstruct the means of arriving at generalizations and obversely to know how the patterns manifest themselves in concrete cases. Life histories are one way of restoring more direct access to the accounts upon which conclusions are based. They present the particular in the specific context of other events in the same life and those of others closely associated to the person whose story was recorded (Buechler and Buechler 1981).

The potential value of life histories has long been recognized by social scientists, psychologists, and historians, but the ways in which they may enliven theory are still being explored and have recently gained new adherents. The life history or autobiography is by its very nature processual and so especially suited to the formulation of dynamic models of social relations and to the testing of theories of
social change. It allows one to abstract on a number of different levels. On the most abstract level one becomes aware of the constants of human experience, on another the variations attributable to general social positions and general cultural patterns. It also permits a conceptual and practical differentiation between the dynamics of individual strategies and choices at different stages in life from those caused by events and processes external to individuals. By illuminating the individuals’ options as well as the constraints on actions, social change becomes the end process of creative new strategies rather than the product of nameless forces. Carmen’s life history is therefore a step towards “showing” the relevance of personal experience to social institutions and the impact of personal choice on social change (Buechler and Buechler 1981).

*Carmen* begins in the more traditional style of life history than *Life Woven in Song*. The authors present the learnings of their study in the prologue. From there, Carmen’s life is presented in autobiographical form in nine chapters. The introduction gives Carmen the chance to start from the beginning of her life and introduce her background. The chapters then proceed in order from one through eight with childhood experiences, courtship, Carmen’s mother, Carmen’s father, her older brother, her brother Rogelio, her life today, and the emigrant’s luck. The epilogue follows where Buechler and Buechler (1981) introduce a follow-up to the life history they gathered in 1972-73, this time in 1978. They report that some major changes had taken place in Carmen’s life, changes which for her outweighed the historic transformations which were then taking place in the nation. The authors felt this information was important and so included it in the epilogue. An appendix is also included in Carmen’s
voice, illustrating an important concept from her life history: cooperation. She briefly narrates the lives of some of those people she cooperated with in her community for survival (Buechler and Buechler 1981).

This example provides an altogether different approach to and presentation of the life history. No less rigorous or informative than the previous example, it does present some differences. For one thing, Buechler and Buechler (1981) are very explicit about their framework, sample, methods, etc. and keep a very traditional categorization based on social science techniques. This example is not as modern, or postmodern, as Life Woven with Song, and provides a good example of how one could perhaps satisfy both positivist and feminist critiques with the life history method.

Both are equally good studies, just very different styles of research and presentation. The audience would affect my decision in the case of deciding which style of presentation to use. For now I am using a more traditional social science style of presentation for this study, whereas later on I may decide to re-style it into something more creative like Life Woven with Song.

Litoff and Smith (1997) point out that as a result of the 50th anniversary commemoration, a lot of historical and literary works about the war were produced. But, nearly all of them were produced for male readers. This leaves out the female gender. So, the method for this study needs to recognize this bias and contribute to the female reader. The authors believe that just how the events of the war affected the lives of American women has not yet been determined. Therefore, a life history would be the ideal method to address this issue. Since Litoff and Smith (1997) believe that
authors in the 1940s didn't use the term "girls" as we use the term "women" today in a
derogatory way, then a linguistic analysis of the historic documents is not necessary for
my study. Instead, in my interpretation I can change the references of girls to women
so as not to offend the contemporary reader. However, in the sections that I have
written, I will follow the information provided by Miller and Swift (1991), in order to
make sure that I do not unknowingly provide derogatory labels, or mis-information
about gender; especially since this study is one of gender roles and status. Since Litoff
and Smith (1997) provide incontrovertible evidence that women played an active and
resourceful part in the war effort, it is a worthwhile study to pursue.

Litoff and Smith (1997) state that the women of WWII provided the foundation for
the emergence of the modern feminist movement—a generation later. This will
definitely be an important question for me to ask of Dora’s life history information in
my discussion and conclusion chapter. It will be interesting to see how Dora may or
may not have contributed to the modern feminist movement. Nancy Wilson Ross
(1943 in Litoff and Smith 1997) tells of the steps each of the branches of the military
took to make sure that the public was well informed about admission requirements,
training, and the duties of women in the military, and that these would be found in
popular magazines, newspapers, and radio stations. This gave me the idea for my
study, that since I had so much trouble finding any history specifically of the WAVES,
it would be necessary to sample these documents to provide a historical context from
which the life history and perspective interviews would be taken from—especially
since the event of WWII happened so long ago from the time of contemporary readers.
It is also interesting that Larson (1995) says that most individual accounts don’t give enough meaning to women’s work. This is true enough. But then she goes on to say that when individual’s tell of their personal experiences and accounts, they don’t explain, or connect, these experiences and accounts to the larger, macroscale of the women’s situation. While this is a good point, it is not meaning that the women are necessarily leaving out. Instead, it is context. In my study, the real meaning comes from this individual experience and account. Larson (1995) is correct, one does need both in order to fully realize the situation, but her goals of reconstructing this situation are arrived at differently than in my study. Larson (1995) starts out with nurses’ letters from the war and then aims at generalizing the women’s experience by exploring the documented history. In this study, by contrast, I begin with the big picture and reduce it down to the individual in order to achieve meaning and subjective truth. Larson (1995) also discusses how that when events are unfolding, participants are afforded choices. That the decisions different people make at different times set the course of history...that it’s not just vast numbers of people who determine events...actions and decisions of individuals holding critical positions can have vast consequences. This is important for the theory of the feminist perspective. This being that even though women did not formulate military strategy, more than a few held critical positions.

Kozol’s (1994) analysis of the photo-essays of Life magazine provides the necessary information that Life magazines are not simply to report the news, as The New York Times is. The essays, instead, should be viewed as the author’s interpretation of the events as he or she observes them, firsthand, unfolding. These authors have a specific
agenda and audience for which these representations, or interpretations, of photojournalists (who actually witnessed the event). Kozol (1994) also points directly to Editor Henry Luce’s (1936 in Kozol 1994) target of men for the audience of the magazine. This Kozol (1994) finds interesting because half of the readers surveyed during that time, were women. This is just the gender-specific bias I want to avoid. At the same time, I don’t want to contribute to sexism by leaving out the male audience. My expressed hope is that my study will be interested and read equally by all genders. The feminist perspective that the study is approached by is meant specifically for the subject, or informant, not the audience. However, from this literature review, it is apparent that all too often the gender of women is disregarded and left out, therefore mention of that needs to be made so that it is clear to every reader that this study does not do that, in fact it makes sure to address the gender of woman by using the feminist perspective to guide the methods and topic.

Upon Westkott’s (1979) criticism of patriarchal bias in content, I made sure in this study that the questions I asked Dora tapped the women’s experience, did not view her as an unchanging essence independent of time and space, and with an openness of the concept of the human being reflected in unlimited ways of understanding human behavior. These are reflected in my methods. In my study’s theory, I made sure to approach all of my informants—Dora, Wayne, and Lou as subjects of knowledge, rather than objects of knowledge, so that their basic humanness is not denied.

Nielsen (1990) argues that in order to construct knowledge into some sort of reality that can be approved, one’s agenda must include removing the structural features and
barriers that distort or limit open, free dialogue. This is what happens in the interviews with Dora, Wayne, and Lou. Instead of interviews with pre-written questionnaires, the process is that of an open dialogue, with a few points to overall address at some point, for all three interviews. Nielsen (1990) also says that when women speak for themselves, they reveal hidden realities: new experiences and new perspectives emerge that challenge the “truths” of official accounts and cast doubt upon established theories. This is one of the ways the traditional "patriarchal" social science approaches have ignored women’s experiences. In this study, the methods account for this revelation of hidden realities: within the open dialogue, I asked my subjects questions that asked them these types of things. Things like cognition, ideology, and meaning. Then, later in the discussion and conclusion chapter, I determined whether or not their perspectives challenged established accounts or theories.

Anderson et al. (1990) say that in order to understand women in a society that limits their choices, one must begin with the assumption that what they do and how they think may not always be reflected in what they do and how they act. This is similar in methods to Nielsen’s (1990) idea to have women reveal hidden realities. But, what is interesting is the assumption that society limits their choices. This is especially true of the 1940s, rather than it is so much today, but even some today. For the women of the WAVES, that apparently needs to be taken into account; assumed even. Hearing Dora’s description of her own behavior, and her motivations behind it, can certainly be more important for the study of women, than having someone looking on, even at the time of the event (if the person is male and unaware of this unconscious behavior of
women in a society that limits their choices) observing her behavior. This is why, although the documented history is good for making sure there is context and that the big picture does not go unrecognized, having the open dialogue with one woman is important in order to study women's sphere of greatest freedom—consciousness. One cannot just assume that a woman will behave the same way as a man would in the same situation, given women's status in society.
CHAPTER 3 METHODS

The Life History Method in Anthropology

Any discussion of historical methods in anthropology must address the life history. Although a form of oral historical data, a life history is distinct in being an extensive record “of a person’s life told to and recorded by another, who then edits and writes the life as though it were autobiography” (Langness 1965:4-5 in Brettell 1998).

Emerging from research to recapture the past of Native American populations, the life history method flourished during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s and culminated in a Social Science Research Council seminar focusing on the use of personal documents in the social sciences. As a method of research, life history has been controversial, largely because of questions of reliability, validity, and representativeness. These questions led to its dwindling use in the postwar years. However, in recent years life histories have resurfaced, to a large extent in connection with reflexive and feminist anthropologies. Although the method can be studied indirectly by looking at specific ethnographic applications (Crpanzano 1980; Shostak 1981; Blackman 1982; Friedrich 1986; Kendall 1988; Gmelch 1991; Behar 1993; Brettell 1995), there are also some publications that deal with it more directly (Langness 1965; Bertaux 1981; Bertaux and Kohli 1984; Crpanzano 1984; Watson and Watson-Franke 1985; Behar 1990; Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992; Linde 1993). Certainly, many of the concerns that pertain to participant observation more generally—rapport, language facility,
interviewing techniques, and ethics—are equally pertinent to the collection of life histories (Brettell 1998).

Although life histories have been used to study personality, to examine the relationship of an individual to his or her society or culture, or to explore the "phenomenology of subjective experience" (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985), in the context of the question of historical anthropology methods one needs to ask about the nature of life history as a historical method. Here, the conceptual distinctions outlined by Peacock and Holland are useful (1993 in Brettell 1998). They contrast a life-focused approach with a story-focused approach. One treats the narrated life as a window on objective facts of historical and ethnographic events, and the other focuses on the subjective experiences of the narrator. Issues of validity come into play in the first case, but the emphasis is largely on the way that change can be documented through its impact on individual lives. However, the second perspective is equally relevant to historical analysis. Indeed, historians have borrowed the life history method to gain access into an inside view of slavery among women in East, West, and Central Africa, colonialism in East Africa, caste and ethnicity in Central Africa, labor among Chinese women, or migration between the wars in Europe (Brettell 1998).

Generated by the anthropologist in interaction and dialogue with an informant in the field, life histories are similar to a range of other personal or subjective documents—letters, diaries, autobiographies, oral narratives—used by historians to reveal the participant's view of the experiences, in which he or she has been involved (Brettell 1998).
What is the Life History?

The life history is one distinctive type of personal document. Personal documents as a generic category include any expressive production of the individual that can be used to throw light on this view of oneself, one's life situation, or the state of the world as one understands it, at some particular point in time or over the passage of time. The following productions are definable subspecies of personal documents: life histories, autobiographies, dream reports, diaries, letters, various kinds of test performance, and forms of artistic expression such as written fiction and painting (Watson and Watson Franke 1985).

What, then, is distinctive about the life history as a personal document? As Watson and Watson-Franke (1985) see it, the "life history" is any retrospective account by the individual of his or her life in whole or part, in written or oral form that has been edited or prompted by another person. The life history account may close at an earlier point of time or at the moment the subject is relating or writing it down. The authors use the term "autobiography," by contrast, to refer to a person's self-initiated retrospective account of his or her life, which is usually but not always in written form (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

The life history is ordinarily written by the subject or recorded in a sequence of occasions or sessions, especially if it aims to be fairly detailed or complete. This recording occurs, as a rule, within a limited time span so that the individual reviews his or her life from a more or less consistent perspective. It must be recognized, however, that during the time one is committing his or her life to record, a person may
experience some change of outlook or character that makes one start reassessing his or her life in a way that was impossible when one started. Sometimes the very act of recalling one’s life can bring unexpected insights that change the view of past experiences, particularly under the promptings of the one who does the interviewing. Since the subject is recalling one’s life for the benefit of another person, to a greater or lesser degree, changes in one’s relationship to that person will seriously affect what one says about oneself. Indeed, because of the very intervention of the “other” in the elicitation of life histories, one must consider the issue of the constructive nature of the life history text itself within the encounter situation, involving the informant and his or her interviewer (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the life history as authentic subjective report and the “biography,” where the recorder tampers with and rearranges the material to such an extent that the result ends being the recorder’s report of the subject’s life. What makes this problem so very sinister is that the recorder may completely rewrite the account in the first person without indicating that one has done so.

The life history obviously must be differentiated in a technical as well as existential sense from a diary, where events of the life are recorded daily from an immediate perspective that is constantly changing. Thus, in a diary the life of a girl is seen through a girl’s eyes; the life of the woman through the woman’s eyes. In the life history, by contrast the whole life course is seen from the point of view of the person as she is currently trying to make sense of her relationship to past events, and she may not
remember or choose to emphasize the things that were once important. Even a diary, however, can in its own way be retrospective of the subject in recording the events of the day refers back to earlier experiences, or reinterprets the past, after some delay in writing it down, in terms of what she is presently experiencing. Some published life histories, in fact, are an amalgamation of true retrospective recall and events set forth in diaries (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

Because of the extremely subjective nature of the life history, it is important to identify the specific and immediate conditions under which it was written or related that influenced its meaning for the subject and for the person who obtained it as dialogue and recorded it. In no true sense can the life history be separated from the subjective mental sets or orientations that produced it in the encounter, for it is through those meanings that it is mediated to the audience in textual form and poses its special interpretative challenges (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

Since interpretation is frequently what one is concerned with in approaching the life history, one must know something about the context in which the text was suggested before one can begin to make any sense of it. This fundamental consideration is always an essential aspect of all life history research, but until recently it had often been neglected. All too often, the relationship of the final life history product to the subject, to the social context in which the subject wrote it, and/or to the investigator, recorder, or catalyst whose operations have helped bring it into being is not in the least bit clear. Yet one must take all these factors into consideration in life history research, if one is in a position to do so, for obviously all of them in their various ways have
played a part in determining the eventual form of the finished product, that is, the life history as it appears to the reader as text. If the reader, the potential analyst of the life history, is removed from all immediate control over the situation, it is helpful for them to have some information from the original investigator about the original context out of which the life history emerged (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

What one understands in any course of study depends to a large extent on what one defines as constituting understanding, which is to say, what is important to understand and the methods one uses in pursuit of that objective. The etic orientation emphasizes generalizing and model building in an abstract frame of reference that is externally imposed on phenomena. On the other hand, the emic approach, which contrasts to the etic, concerns itself with the specific and unique richness of a phenomenon, so that one understands the particular (the individual, the subjective) rather than the general. No two cases are alike in their total gestalt, or wholes. In approaching the life history from this view, one is led inevitably to consider the obvious and compelling subjectivity of its production, for, after all, this is what makes it unique: the personal and irreplaceable creation of one person as one sees his or her own life, a life unlike that of any other (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

In a philosophical sense this is a fundamentally valid alternative to the "scientific" approach to the study of personal documents, which has long dominated research in this area. The phenomenological approach, which is concerned with "meaning" and subjective "truth," restores some much-needed balance to the runaway tendency in the social sciences to reduce people to categories and abstractions in the service of model
building and model testing. So long as this attitude prevails as the standard for social science research, the unique existential texture of phenomena will be reduced to the status of the extraneous, and the individual will eventually be lost in the maze of scientific generalities. While one can see the justification of generalizing approaches in dealing with large-scale social processes and certain kinds of comparative research, there is little reason to accept this tendency in the study of individual lives as subjective products where a reasonable alternative exists (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

Presenting the Life History

When presenting the life history, the chronology strategy may be useful if one's focus is an individual. A common organizational strategy, chronological order presents events in the order that they happened. This strategy is especially powerful if the story lies in its history. A phenomenologic study, an ethnography, or a case study may result in a descriptive life history. Here one presents an account of another person's life, framing the description with analytic points about the significance of that life in light of one's questions and the genre (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

Ethnohistoric Methods

What exactly are ethnohistoric methods? Ethnohistoric methods, or rather approaches, are the scales of study of a population. That population can really be anything, economics, people, whatever subject one is studying. For this study it is
people. Specifically, the WAVES on the macro level and an individual WAVE, individual Navy seaman, and an individual civilian woman, on the micro level.

Chapters 4, News As it Reached the People, and chapter 5, Period Representations of Women in WWII, provide the documentary history necessary for the macroscale study, for context. The internet was my first stop on the search and I obtained very specific, small amounts of information mostly from the Department of the Navy. This primarily gave me administrative history. Therefore, I had a lot of questions remaining. Then, I left the world wide web and went to the Valley Library at Oregon State University in search of two sources of documents: The New York Times and Life magazine, because these two sources alone were so representative during WWII. From these sources I searched for answers to my low-order questions: the who, what, when, and where questions. Usually these are ones like subsistence, technology, settlement patterns, etc. Once I found this data, I felt confident that I knew enough of the bare bones to begin asking some higher-order questions to flesh out those of meaning, cognition, consciousness, etc. For these I went directly to the source—a WAVE, a seaman, and a civilian woman.

Observing People, Actions, and Events

Observation is fundamental to all qualitative inquiry. Even in in-depth interview studies, observation plays an important role as the researcher notes body language and affect in addition to the participant's words. Observation takes one inside the setting; it
helps one discover complexity in social settings by being there. It entails systematic noting and recording of events, actions, and interactions. The challenge is to identify the “big picture” while noting huge amounts of detail in multiple and complex actions (Rossman and Rallis 1998). I observed some things about the setting and described them further on in this chapter. However, since the event in question happened so long ago and in many other places other than in Dora’s living room where I interviewed her, the Vallejo Times Herald does a better job of describing the observations of people, actions, and events, as Dora experienced many of them.

Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data

Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is the process of systematically organizing the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials one has collected; bringing meaning to them so they tell a coherent story; and writing it all up so that others can read what one has learned. It entails organizing these materials into “chunks” (analysis) and bringing meaning to the chunks (interpretation). One important thing about the analysis is that it begins at the same time as the study does—at the conceptualization stage. Decisions made early on shape the study. Furthermore, as one collects data, this framework constrains and directs just what data one collects. Decisions made in the field focus one’s analysis as one discovers important but unanticipated ideas and shift emphasis in interviews or observations. All this is part of data analysis and interpretation (Rossman and Rallis 1998).
Open-ended analysis was one type of analysis used for this study. Open-ended studies pose “grand tour questions,” are open to the unexpected, and let the analytic direction of the study emerge as it progresses. Forecasting or closely stipulating analytic categories does not occur with open-ended studies (Rossman and Rallis 1998). Specifically for this analysis, I conducted the interview as I will describe later on in this chapter, with a few “grand tour questions,” but essentially asking Dora to start from the beginning of her life, focus on the WAVES, and what she has done since the WAVES. I transcribed these notes, and then analyzed them for emic themes. I took out many ideas and lumped together the ones that both told about a specific part of her life that were similar, but also including ones that seemed to fit with how Dora had described each one. The interview itself did not proceed purely chronologically. Dora would remember various things at different times throughout our conversation, and so we just talked about it at all those times—the same was true for Wayne and Lou. I did not analyze theirs in this way, however. The three overall categories that developed out of the lumping of these themes were fairly plain. So, I looked up Navy terminology on the internet and found more interesting terms that corresponded exactly to the plain ones that the analysis developed.

The process of category generation involves identifying patterns in the data: recurring ideas, themes, perspectives, and descriptions that depict the social world one is studying. Early category generation links back to the conceptual framework of the study. In reading related literature, one will have identified what other researchers
found significant about the topic; what they wrote about can be a preliminary guide (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

Inductive analysis is a strategy to identify significant categories or themes. I constructed indigenous typologies (classification schemes)—the emic view to describe patterns in the data. Indigenous typologies are expressed by participants and are generated through one’s analysis of how they use language and what they express (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

The other analysis I conducted on Dora’s life history, as well as the other two interview segments, was that of generic analysis, which included coding for themes. Coding is the formal representation of analytic thinking. Coding entails thinking through what one takes as evidence of a category or theme. Categories are concepts—abstractions. In coding the data, one must be clear about what words or phrases illustrate and elaborate each of these concepts. Because abstractions are ephemeral and vague, the researcher’s task is to make them concrete through snippets and segments of data. These decisions—what constitutes evidence of a category—should be solid and grounded in the data (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

The mechanics of coding vary, depending on one’s style and what works for them. Despite this age of software alternatives, many researchers use hard copy and code the data by hand (Rossman and Rallis 1998). I formatted my hard copy data by hand. I formatted my hard copy data by leaving wide margins on both sides of my transcriptions. I read through the first coding process and underlined particular phrases that recurred throughout. Then, for each underlined phrase I generalized it, and put it
in the margin to the right. I did this throughout the transcript. For the third reading, I read the generalizations, decided if any of them could be merged together, and wrote themes for each one on the left margin.

Writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the analytic process. In fact, it is central to that process because, in the choice of particular words to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape and form—meaning—to massive amounts of raw data. The interpretive process illuminates the multiple meanings of events, objects, activities, experiences, and words (Rossman and Rallis 1998).

Reflections

My interest in the WAVES goes way back to when I was a child, listening to my grandfather's stories about being involved as a GI in WWII. I grew up knowing how much the war had shaped his life, as he was barely 18 years old, as well as these mysterious women who were also in the war—the WAACS and the WAVES. From about 1990 on, I was 12 in 1990, dozens of movies were coming out about WWII and I couldn't help getting all-caught-up in the romanticism. But, although some of the movies showed women in uniform, none of them were main, let alone supporting, characters. They were just there—as background. So, I kept waiting patiently, for a movie to come out about the WAACS and the WAVES, some heroes for us young girls. Well, ten years goes by and nothing, that is, until Pearl Harbor. Finally. But, I was so disappointed in this depiction because it was nothing more than a love story;
and a bizarre one at that. So, I finally got fed up. I had completed all of the prerequisites to be a film major at Berkeley, before declaring Anthropology instead, and so I decided to take matters into my own hands, and write one myself. The only problem was—I couldn’t find any information on the WAVES (the women I decided to write the film about). Sure, I had great ideas for stories and plot lines—but I needed to know their history before I could write something based on them. That’s where the idea came for this study; to write a thesis researching the WAVES that could then be accurately written into a screenplay following graduation.

Therefore, my bias comes out of being a fan of all parts of WWII, but feeling “left out” as a girl; later as a woman. The boys had their heroes, but the girls didn’t have any. And since this was “everybody’s war” then everybody should be represented. So, my bias lies in yearning for a more complete picture. There really were women there, who really did serve very important functions, so I want to know about it.

The internet was my first stop on my documentary search and I obtained very specific, small amounts of information mostly from the Department of the Navy. There were a lot of pretty pictures and the bill FDR signed into law in July 1942 was there, but not much else. In fact, one got the impression from reading the Navy's history page that women simply stayed in the WAVES from 1942 until 1978 when they became regular military personnel (as opposed to only reserve personnel). This left a lot of questions open for me such as—what happened during the war or after that overrode FDR's decision to only let them stay in six months after the war? So, I left the World Wide Web and went to the Valley Library at OSU. I came searching for two
sources: the *New York Times* and *Life* magazine to see if I could find out the answers to all of my low-order questions: the who, what, when, and where questions; those of subsistence, technology, settlement patterns, etc. Once I found out these answers, I felt confident I knew enough of the bare bones to start fleshing out the WAVE experience, and catching some of those high-order questions—the why important and meaning questions—those of cognition, social systems, and cultural practices that cultural anthropology can provide methods and models for.

It was now time to locate a WAVE. I decided that one WAVE would be sufficient under the method of life history. But I also couldn't choose just any WAVE. Since my major is Interdisciplinary Studies, I needed to include in my original research that of Adult Education and Human Biological Adaptation. Since I didn't know any WAVES personally, and didn't know where to find one that fit those characteristics I knew I needed to find a gatekeeper. A gatekeeper in cultural anthropology language is a person who has access to the type of informant the anthropologist is looking for. While I was searching for this gatekeeper, a gatekeeper actually found me to my surprise. My own godfather, who we will call Don—an appropriate name for a godfather-gatekeeper I'd say. Don is Donald Beauregard, a retired Colonel of the United States Air Force who now works for California State University, Fresno in the Education Department, and who I've known my whole life. Little did I know, however, he had a longtime family friend who was a WAVE. So through a very informal interview with godfather-gatekeeper Don in Davis, California, I came to find out she would be the perfect WAVE to interview for my thesis. Don told me Dora was
a nurse in the WAVES during World War II and that she was stationed at an amputee center in California. I knew this would certainly lend itself to Human Biological Adaptation and Cultural Anthropology, but I still wasn't sure about Adult Education. But, I figured, Don knows everyone in the Fresno education world, so she probably had something to do with adult education during or after her World War II experiences.

Since Dora lived in Fresno, California, my hometown, and I was in Corvallis, Oregon for school I knew planning to meet would take some logistical work. But leave it to Don, the logistics godfather of gatekeepers—he called Dora and set up a time to meet that very weekend I was home!

Upon meeting with Dora, I decided I would begin the interview process by explaining the project to Dora and simply have her start from the beginning of her life story. I wanted to capture the meaning of Dora's experience as a WAVE as she experienced it, rather than me trying to interpret the meaning from what she told me.

Therefore, the questioning throughout the interview, which resulted out of our dialogue, essentially went like this:

1. Let's start with where you grew up, at the beginning.

2. What was training like?

3. What is Mare Island?

4. So you had to march?

5. What would a typical day be like at boot camp from when you got up in the morning?

6. What did folks in your hometown think of your decision to join the WAVES?
7. What year did you enlist?

8. How many years were you in the Navy?

9. That's when the war ended, isn't it?

10. At the time did you see the women in the Navy as a temporary phenomenon, or did you think it would go on forever?

11. Do you think your life has been changed, or would it have been different if you hadn't enlisted in the Navy?

12. What did your parents think? What did your Dad do (career wise)?

13. Can you tell me the story about meeting your husband?

14. You said you met him on a blind date?

15. Did you get married in the WAVES or after you got out?

16. What did you do at the amputee center at Mare Island?

17. Were the patients from different services, not just from the Navy?

18. Would these people be coming from overseas, from battle?

19. How did you and your friends react to that, did you just do your job, or was it sad?

20. Did they do all of the rehabilitation there?

21. Really, I didn't know that?

22. Did you make pretty good friends with anyone? Did you stay in touch afterwards?

23. What would you girls do when you had some free time?

24. Did you go to San Francisco?

25. Did you go on the jitney? (Shuttle transportation on and off base).
26. So it wasn't just something you did, if you look back on it and had to do all over again, would you do it again? (A leading question—I deserved the one word answer I got!).

27. When you said the Bronx, is that the Bronx, New York? (Where her boot camp was held).

28. Do you remember how many weeks boot camp was?

29. How did you get from town to town?

30. Did you see the movie *Pearl Harbor*? (I wanted her reaction to the presentation of Navy nurses).

31. What color uniforms did you wear?

32. Have you ever seen any books about the Navy WAVES?

Dora then turned the questioning on me and we had a terrific time conversing back and forth about a topic we both loved—military history.

Overall the rapport was incredible between Dora and I; she is just sharp as a tack. Her home is spotless and beautiful, exactly how she describes her habits as a WAVE. Her husband Johnny whom she met and married as a WAVE has now been gone for a few years. I could tell she missed him but she's a survivor and very independent, not the least bit shy as she describes herself as a young woman in the WAVES, but conservative and slightly reserved at first, like myself.

To be honest, I only spent one day with Dora, but I feel like I've known her my whole life. We had so much in common even though we came from two very different places, me from a large city in California and Dora from a small town in Indiana.
When I asked at the end of the day if there was anything I could do for her she said she would love to read my thesis when I finished. I both can't wait for her to read it, but I also feel lots of extra pressure to do it perfectly because the person I am researching is going to read it.

Dora also gave me the only piece of material culture she kept from her time as a WAVE, the local newspaper that covered the hospital and everything about its operations at the time and the people who worked there—the doctors and nurses. I was ecstatic of course. I had it copied later on professionally and the original returned to her. Here was a window into the people and patients of the hospital in their own words, but as the feature story writers and newspaper editors represented them as well, at the time. This piece of living history shows a critical part of World War II history that has largely been forgotten—that is, how and where the men from battle who were injured were rehabilitated and converted back to civilian life. This was a very important transition period that is so important to any humanist story. It also gave me the necessary link to my other minor concentration—Adult Education.

I learned from this feature story that immediately upon arriving at the hospital the men were interviewed as to how far they had gone in their education before they went to war, what they could do, and what they wanted to do. This way no time was lost in getting them interested in learning and fitting back into civilian life. The entire program was learner-centered and was outcome-based. Each patient is evaluated individually for where he is at and what his goals are, and his training is then programmed based on his intended outcome. As soon as the men could physically get
on a bus they were taken to area schools like Napa Junior College, Gomper's Trade School in San Francisco, UCBerkeley, Stanford University, etc, and participated in obtaining or furthering their trade so they could acclimate to civilian life.

Unfortunately, as of the writing of that newspaper (April 1945) and the time the training was going on, they did not appear to have anticipated the competition for any and every job once the war ended and all the servicemen came home, injured or not. Although, the men in this program would have had a head start of the men coming home anyway, not only with timing, but also in training.

While generically analyzing Dora's information by coding for themes, it was becoming clear to me that she was so caught up in what she was doing at the time, and communication back home was not as it is today, that she didn't really know what the rest of the country thought about the idea of women in the military. I thought this was an important question because it could have impacted a WAVE's (not necessarily Dora's) experience whether she realized it or not. So I set out to ask a male who served in the Navy at the time and a woman who did not serve in the military at the time (but could have had she not married a Navy man), to see what their reactions to this phenomenon were then and now. Finding these two proved much easier than finding the WAVE because I wasn't looking for any specific characteristics.

So the following pages are the results of my research. I begin with the historical context of WAVES in general in World War II, followed by the specific historical context of the site of Dora's primary experience—Mare Island Hospital. Dora's life history follows, presented thematically according to my interpretation of Dora's
construction of meaning. Hopefully the course of the interview followed Dora's own meaning enough, and not my imposed meaning. Following Dora's story are Wayne Feaster's thoughts on the WAVES then and now and Lou Etta Sikes Feaster's thoughts on WAVES then and now. A closing discussion brings all the results together in conclusion.
CHAPTER 4 NEWS AS IT REACHED THE PEOPLE

Chapter four is a report of the recognition the WAVES received during WWII, as the American people read about it. The *New York Times* was selected because it was so widely read at the time, as it still is today. Even if every American household did not subscribe to the newspaper itself, the local newspaper most of the time used the news releases reported by The *New York Times*, and still do. The 16mm film *The Hidden Army*, is also presented in chapter four because it was also a primary piece of news that Americans would have viewed in their local movie theaters as newsreels before the feature presentation.

**The New York Times 1942-1948**

On July 31, 1942, the US learned of a new organization in which 1,000 women would become commissioned officers in the Navy for the first time in history. The *Times* (Baldwin 1942) reported that the first limit on the reserve would be 11,000 members, which was about the same as the total number of *yeomanettes*, who were the only females, other than nurses, who served the military in WWI. *Yeomanettes* were the female versions of the yeoman (clerical) positions that the men held, and they were discharged right after the war in 1919, never to be *yeomanettes* again. Officer quota was to be fulfilled before recruitment of enlisted personnel. The candidate procedure for the WAVES was to submit a written request for a preliminary application blank, stating one's age and educational background, to the Director of Naval Officer
Procurement for the naval district in which one resided. These offices were located in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Richmond, Virginia, Charleston, South Carolina, Miami, New Orleans, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. A college degree was almost mandatory for a person desiring a naval commission, the exception being that of acceptable work experience plus two years of college (Baldwin 1942).

The group of officers chosen for administrative work was to be nominated by the various directors of Naval Office Procurement, and the Bureau of Naval Personnel would issue the commissions after viewing the recommendations. About 300 other women would be appointed in appropriate ranks on a probationary basis and given one month's instruction in the Reserve Midshipmen's School. Those who completed that course would be commissioned to perform technical duties and then assigned to active service or ordered to special schools for training that would qualify them for technical positions. All other women candidates for commissions as officers were enlisted as apprentice seamen in class V-9 and given an indoctrinal course lasting one month, following which those who qualified became Reserve Midshipmen and underwent additional training to fit them for assignment as specialists. Upon completion of the latter training, they were commissioned Ensigns in the Women's Reserve (Baldwin 1942).

On August 4, 1942 the New York Times (Baldwin 1942) printed the High Standards Set For Navy Women, along with an announcement that Smith College was the training center for officers. The educational standards set by the Bureau of Naval Personnel
required that all applicants for commissions or appointments as officers possess a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university or college, or in place of a degree, have completed of 2 years' work leading to a degree. The women also must have had not less than 2 years' professional or business experience in fields that would have fit them for administration or technical positions in the naval service and must have had not less than two years of math in high school or college (Baldwin 1942).

Members that were on a probationary status had to be citizens of the United States, not less than 21 years old or over 50, have passed physical and aptitude tests, have no children less than 18 years of age, and be of "good repute in the community." The status of V-9 had the same rules except that the women could not be less than 20 years old and not more than 30, with no children (Baldwin 1942).

Those candidates who were especially desirable were those who majored in such subjects as civil, mechanical, electrical, radio, or aeronautical engineering, electronics, meteorology, astronomy, metallurgy, physics, math, business statistics, or modern foreign languages. Almost as desirable were those who majored in industrial or chemical engineering, psychology, architecture, government and political science, history, library science, English, journalism, business administration, finance, commerce, or transportation. Also desirable were women, otherwise qualified, who had had experience as supervisors of cable, telegraph, telephone and radio commercial offices; maintenance women and operators of teletype, simplex and multiplex transmitting machines; licensed radio operators, lexicographers, amateur cryptanalysts, instructors of touch-typing and typewriter maintenance, statisticians, instructors in the
use of file systems, demonstrators and operators of business machines such as sorting, punch card machines, etc. Also, junior executives, superintendents, supervisors, etc. of banks, finance and insurance companies, brokerage offices, large retail and printing establishments; bookkeepers and accountants, executives of circulation and linotype departments of newspapers, and librarians (Baldwin 1942).

When the applications had been filled out and returned, selection boards sat in each district to review them and required those who seemed qualified to appear for interviews, aptitude tests, and physical examination. An official transcript of the applicant's college record and three letters of recommendation of character and experience from "responsible citizens" had to be submitted upon a report for an interview. Furthermore, a native-born applicant had to submit an original or official copy of her birth certificate or an affidavit from her physician or parents. A foreign-born applicant had to submit a certificate of naturalization of her parents during her minority years together with an affidavit of a parent claiming parenthood (Baldwin 1942).

At Smith College the Navy leased one classroom building and three dormitories, the use of the alumnae gymnasium, playing fields for drill and recreational purposes and other recreational facilities. The Northampton Inn had also been leased (Baldwin 1942).

Male Naval officers served as instructors of the first class, which included women understudies for each instructor. Upon completion of their indoctrination and training, the understudies became officers and instructors, some at Smith and others at new
training centers, including a school for enlisted personnel of the Women's Reserve which was to have opened about November 1, 1942 at a site that was to be selected in the Midwest (Baldwin 1942). Oklahoma A&M, now Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK was the chosen site.

As of December 13, 1942, the New York Times (New York Times Staff Writer 1942) reported the number of women enrolled in Federal Service: WAVES—Potential total, 28,000; current enrollment, 3,290; commissioned, 300.

- WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps)—Potential total, 150,000; current enrollment, 12,000; commissioned, 1,400.
- SPARS (Semper paratus "Always Ready" women's coast guard reserve)—Potential total (est.) 8,000; current enrollment, no figures.
- WAFS (Women in the Air Force women's reserve)—Potential total 3,683; current enrollment (about) 75 (New York Times Staff Writer 1942).

Also reported in the same article was the numbers of the various volunteer groups:

- CDVO (Civil Defense Volunteer Organization) national—3,666,666.
- Red Cross—2,715,000.
- USO (United Service Organizations)—500,000.
- AWVS (American Women's Voluntary Services)—325,000.
- American Women's Hospital Reserve Corps—10,000.

On January 26, 1943, the Times (NYT Staff Writer 1943) reported that equality was being demanded for service women. Equal status for women and men in the armed
services was advocated on January 25, 1943, at the conclusion of the mid-year meeting of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., at their national headquarters in New York. The suggestion that WAVES and SPARS serve abroad when needed; the granting of equal compensation to all women in the armed forces in the case of injury or death; and the permitting of payment of allotments for dependents to members of the WAACS, WAVES, and SPARS, were made in a 10-point program of Federal legislation advocated by the Federation. It was then sent to the six women members of Congress. The other points included: legislation that would permit women physicians to serve in the Medical Corps of the Army and Navy; jury service for women, which would authorize active support of Federal legislation permitting women jurors to serve in Federal courts; opposition to discrimination against women in any form, which included the positive support of all government action regarding equal pay for equal work; and adequate appropriations for the Women's Bureau of the US Department of Labor (New York Times Staff Writer 1943).

The Times (NYT Staff Writer 1943) reported on June 9, 1943, that the House passed the Smith Bill for WAVES' Overseas Service, introduced by Representative Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican from Maine, allowing the WAVES assignments overseas, raising their maximum rank from lieutenant commander to captain, and entitling them to allowances for dependents such as Navy men received. Representative Melvin J. Maas, a Republican of Minnesota, added an amendment that removed any limitation on the number of WAVES commanders. The bill had stipulated 15. The Smith bill stipulated (1) there shall be only one captain in the WAVES; (2) WAVES qualified to
fill an available position in the Navy Department proper in Washington DC shall not be sent overseas; (3) no WAVE who entered the Naval Service prior to enactment of the bill shall be assigned to overseas duty without her consent; (4) none may serve aboard ship or in combat aircraft; (5) in entitling WAVES to the allowances or benefits provided Navy men with dependents, WAVES "husbands shall not be considered dependents" (NYT Staff Writers 1943). Also on June 9, 1943, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt denounced stories of moral misbehavior among members of women's military units as Nazi propaganda and reiterated her belief that women should be permitted to serve overseas (Associated Press 1943).

Good news was delivered by the Times (Darnton 1943) on July 11, 1943 that women in uniformed services were proving invaluable in the war and their ranks were to be greatly expanded. Women were being moved up by this time faster and further in the uniformed services of the US than had ever happened before in history, and more was being demanded of women in war. All of this happened because they were needed and because they followed orders, did a good job, revealed unexpected abilities, efficiency and, when given the chance, heroism (Darnton 1943).

These women were serving in the WAACS, the WAVES, the WAFS, the SPARS, the Marine Reserve, and the medical and nursing corps of both the Army and the Navy. Their number ran over a hundred thousand and was expected to double that before the year 1943 ran out (Darnton 1943).

Approximately 5,000 Navy nurses served under Captain Sue Dauser. Three commanders and six lieutenant commanders headed the corps. They served at base
hospitals and on hospital ships, which were really floating base hospitals. The Navy tried to keep its nurses away from the front. All combat vessels were staffed with male medical personnel and hospital corpsmen, but there were 31 nurses at Pearl Harbor and 13 on the hospital ship Solace, all of whom saw action. Five nurses were captured at Guam, more in the Philippines; five had been released by July 11, 1943, two were still missing. Eight women physicians had been commissioned lieutenant [junior grade (j.g.)] in the Navy and 68 women were serving as medical technologists with commissions either as lieutenant (j.g.) or ensigns (Darnton 1943).

The WAVES, SPARS, and Women Marines were based far from the fighting as of July 11, 1943, much to their apparent frustration. The bill which would have permitted them to serve overseas, after having passed the House of Representatives, had not yet been reported out of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, and the July date was not anticipated to be acted upon before the impending Congressional recess. This news disappointed the women because they would have liked to at least have been storekeepers in Puerto Rico or radio operators in Iceland—jobs they knew would serve the Navy well, releasing men for sea duty—as well as follow the understandable and more romantic urge to get nearer combat and the far edges of the earth (Darnton 1943).

Approximately 20,000 WAVES who served under Lieutenant Commander Mildred H. McAfee at this time were expected to become 47,000 by the end of 1943. Unlike the WACS (name changed by this time to Women's Army Corp, no longer an auxiliary to the Army), they were neither an auxiliary nor a separate corps within their service.
They did any job they could do, anywhere (except overseas) that would have released a man for sea duty (Darnton 1943).

By August 31, 1945, WAC enlistments had reportedly ended, apparently allowing those who were already enlisted and commissioned to remain in until six months after the war ended, as stipulated by law. This was the date the WACS halted enlistments, but the WAVES, SPARS, and Women Marines had already ended theirs. This date falls after the defeat of Germany on June 6, 1945, and before the date of Japan's formal surrender on September 2, 1945. However, Emperor Hirohito had already announced the surrender to the people of Japan on August 15 (New York Times Staff Writers 1945).

It was not until June 13, 1948, that the New York Times (Associated Press 1948) could announce that President Truman had signed a bill setting up permanent units of WACS, WAFS, WAVES, and Marines. Under the bill's terms the WACS were to have a maximum strength of 1,000 officers and 17,500 enlisted women. The WAVES and Marines were to have 1,000 officers and 10,000 in the ranks. This compared with a peak of 100,400 women in the WACS and 97,800 in the WAVES and Marines during the war. They were enlisted under wartime authority, which expired promptly, as promised by President Roosevelt when he signed them into law for the "wartime emergency" six months after the official end of the hostilities (Associated Press 1948).

A joint Army-Navy-Air Force (which separated from the Army on September 18, 1947) announcement at this time said it planned to build up the following strengths by the end of 1950:
Army—500 officers, 75 warrant officers, 7,500 enlisted women (at the time its strength was 875 officers and 6,000 enlisted).

Navy—500 officers, 20 warrant officers, 6,000 enlisted women.

Marines—100 officers, 10 warrant officers, 1,000 enlisted.

The components together at that time totaled about 425 officers and 1,800 enlisted women (Associated Press 1948).

At the outset the women were enlisted in the Navy and Marine Corps from among those who served during WWII. Enlisted women for the WACS and WAFS came first from among present members and later from former service women or women with no previous service. The directors of the Army, Navy, and Marine women's groups at the time were expected to remain at their posts (Associated Press 1948).

**The Hidden Army: Wartime Propaganda Film**

While this film is not specifically about the WAVES, it is included here because it supports the overall fact that women were volunteering in great numbers to all areas of labor, military and civilian, but that for various reasons discussed above, they slowed down their contribution. Therefore, production fell from not enough women working in factories, and men died from not enough military nurses (US Army Signal Corps 1944). This shortage is discussed in the *Life* editorial essay presented in chapter 5, “American Women—Draft Them? Too Bad We Can’t Draft Their Grandmothers,” and this film provides concrete numbers and reasons for the shortage, and what the Army intended to do about it.
This 16mm official war film was shown in movie theaters all over the country in 1945, before the end of the war was in sight. In early 1945, the question on everybody's lips was: "Should women be drafted?" (US Army Signal Corps 1944) Manpower by this time just wasn't enough. Women in America were being criticized and labeled "play girls" for spending more money on nylons than planes. All the while factories were appearing overnight to try and fill the need for materiel. Only 24% of industrial manpower was womanpower at the end of the war. It may have been the first time America used womanpower, but it was not to be the last (US Army Signal Corps 1944).

The Axis powers did not believe that American women could succeed in industry or the military. Germany declared: "It will pass!" But woman-power did not pass. A number of women did go to work in the factories and joined the military. And the ones that did earned respect. In fact, many thought women did a better job than the men due to their "delicate touch" (US Army Signal Corps 1944).

In 1943, 30% of the labor force was made up of women. But the offense needed more materiel. As the armed forces grew, the need for materiel grew, and more women were needed. All of a sudden things changed, production slowed more and more each month. Production then swelled with the promise that "victory was just around the corner" (US Army Signal Corps 1944).

But the swell of 1943 was short-lived. Women were not accustomed to long hours of hard work. The effect was that more men became wounded, and for lack of enough nurses and supplies, more men died. Women learned in bitter heartache that there was
no such thing as a slight slowdown in production. Women then began recognizing what war really was. If America was going to stay, the Axis needed to be defeated (US Army Signal Corps 1944).

All at once, during this slowdown women's needs became recognized. Victory store hours were posted. Basically, contemporary war living was made easier. Everything was put within a few yards of the assembly line. Women could have their laundry done and pick up a hot meal to bring home to the waiting children. Women no longer had the excuses that they were too tired, or that war work interfered with their shopping. Democracy was in a jam and it needed its women. Otherwise its men were going to die. American culture had to change to win the war and keep the American way of life. For the first time in America's history, this was a woman's war, too (US Army Signal Corps 1944).
CHAPTER 5 PERIOD REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN WWII

*Life Magazine*

The March 15, 1943, feature (Munkacsi 1942) was a photographic essay done not too long after the WAVES began their service. The article declares that as of the previous week, the WAVES and WAACS were no longer military experiments. They were military realities, having appeared for duty with surprising effect at Army and Navy posts all over the country. The writer of the article assumed that they were undoubtedly doing good work, but that old-time officers and enlisted men still could not get used to the idea. A Marine commanding officer at a Marine base said, "Damn it all; first they send dogs; now it's women," when he was informed that female marines were to be sent to him at his base. In Des Moines, Iowa, even the civilians were emotional. One old man leaped out of a window and killed himself, leaving an estate of $60,000, rather than move out of his hotel to make way for WAACS (Munkacsi 1942).

Unlike the WAACS, WAVES had separate training centers for officer candidates and enlisted women. WAVES in the article were training at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, to be officers. Other officer candidates were in training at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts (Munkacsi 1942).

To be a WAVE officer, a woman must have had at least two years of college, be between 20 and 50 years old, and pass a difficult physical examination. At the officer-candidate school she learned naval law and traditions, naval organization afloat and
ashore, and ships and aircraft. If she became commissioned, she became an officer in
an organization that already had 4,000 women on active duty at that time, thus freeing
at least that number of men for sea duty (Munkacsi 1942).

When the enlisted WAVES, also shown in the article, got off the train at Stillwater,
Oklahoma, ready to enter the Naval Training School on the campus of Oklahoma
Agricultural and Mechanical College, they looked like a bunch of women going to a
college prom. Although they were advised to travel light, they came lugging suitcases,
hat boxes, overnight bags, and even trunks. They wore veils and furs. They chattered
and giggled about what it was going to be like in the Navy (Munkacsi 1942).

But they soon learned better. There were no porters at the station to carry luggage.
They were loaded into buses and a cattle truck for the trek to their dormitory—the USS
Willard, formerly Willard Hall. There they were given physical examinations and
injections, uniformed, taught how to sit and march and started on their naval
indoctrination courses (Munkacsi 1942).

In a short time the women depicted in the article, trained as yeomen, were ready for
active duty. Along with other WAVES who had learned such things as aviation
mechanics, meteorology, parachute rigging, supplies and accounts at other Navy
schools, they were prepared for working with sailors. They even knew Navy
terminology. To superior officers they answered, "Aye, aye, Lieutenant." They knew
what "hit the deck" and "double to the rear" meant. They were even aware of the
enigmatic phrase, "You're flying an Irish pennant," which was Navy for "Hitch up your
shoulder strap, your slip's showing" (Munkacsi 1942:77).
The life of a WAVE was not designed to be like that of a nun. The Navy approved of an active social existence, and unlike the Army, permitted enlisted women to date officers. No WAVE, however, was allowed to be married to a man in the Navy when she entered service. Although make-up was largely up to the woman's discretion, WAVES were not expected to wear eye shadow or mascara. Heels could be worn 1 ½ inches high for work and skirts not too short. Silk stockings were worn only for dress-up. A $200 clothing allowance left the choice of underwear up to the women themselves (Munkacsi 1942).

Even in Stillwater the WAVES found time for recreation. Between 6:30 and 7:30 pm every evening was free time during which they could visit or dance with sailors and Air Force men, also in training at Oklahoma A&M. From Saturday noon until Sunday night came weekend liberty, when they were permitted to go anywhere within a radius of 50 miles from their campus, provided they were in their bunks on the USS Willard by 12:30 Saturday night. On special occasions, either if invited to stay at the home of a relative or friend, or if accompanied by another woman, a WAVE could get permission to spend a weekend in Tulsa or Oklahoma City (Munkacsi 1942).

But not many of the women went very far on the weekend. After hard studying, they preferred to hope for a letter from home, and then to "hit the sack" peacefully and happily for a long Sunday's sleep (Munkacsi 1942).

Mail from home was the WAVES' single form of recreation, as it was for soldiers, sailors, and marines stationed everywhere. When spoken to, enlisted WAVES were
always addressed, not by their first names, but solely by last names. "Shoot the breeze" was known as a bull session (Munkacsi 1942).

Through indoctrination courses, WAVES learned the Navy's way of thinking and acting. A class is pictured in the article on types of ships and aircraft, and the male instructor is explaining the intricacies of a torpedo (Munkacsi 1942).

WAVE messengers sit primly on duty during the morning watch on the "quarterdeck," which was the name of the foyer leading to the dormitory. All terminology was nautical. Floors were "decks"; the dormitory was the "ship." Leaving the station was "going ashore." Only one hour a day was actually assigned for drilling. Being "Shot at Sunset" was a novel experience to new WAVES, but they stood up bravely. Injections were for smallpox, tetanus, and typhoid, and doctors said that, unlike male sailors and soldiers who were timid, not a WAVE had ever fainted (Munkacsi 1942).

In an article written on January 11, 1943, the writers of Life (Life Staff Writers 1943) painted a supernatural vision of the WAVES. A staff writer wrote that if, "as the natives whisper, Daniel Webster sometimes revisits his childhood haunts when the wild winds whistle through the New Hampshire hills, he would have found no more baffling sign of the US at war than the sight of 650 rugged bare-legged girls drilling on a bleak snow-covered field" (Life Staff Writers 1943:49). These women, students at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, were the first organized college group in the United States to undergo pre-graduate training like men's ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) which would fit them specifically for service in the WAAC, WAVES,
and other auxiliaries of the armed forces (the writer is incorrect here in naming the WAVES and others as auxiliaries, instead they were regular reserve units). For the last six weeks (prior to January 11, 1943), they had been embarked on a new intensive physical education program which was to be duplicated very soon in many state universities and colleges. This new program was worked out in Washington, DC, by a committee representing the Army, Navy, WAAC, WAVES, Army and Navy Air Corps and college teachers of dancing, sports, games, and physical education. It abandoned purely recreational activities in favor of military drill and calisthenics (based on US Army Basic Field Manual), emphasized body building and toughening achieved through hiking, conditioning exercises, and a going-over on the rigorous, man-sized obstacle course (*Life Staff Writers* 1943).

Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors were required to put in at least three hours a week on the new program. Most seniors who expected to join one of the auxiliaries (incorrect again), or to undertake work in war industries, took the course on a voluntary basis. Although they had no official uniform, the women wore light-blue shorts and blouses for indoor exercise and sometimes for more strenuous outdoor activities. Thus far the only hitch in the rigid training regime developed when the university's imminent Military Art Ball made it necessary to let up on all exercises for a few days because the women were too stiff to dance (*Life Staff Writers* 1943).

The most hazardous ordeal in the University of New Hampshire obstacle course, originally built to toughen male students for the Army, was the raised narrow planking, which had four zigzag sections each 36 feet long. The women easily lost their balance,
and fell off. Clearing a four-foot fence, commando style, was a strenuous test of the hand and arm muscles. From a running start the women firmly grasped the two parallel rails, and then quickly swung in the air. Crawling under a two-foot rail on the snowy field with the temperature just above zero took cool determination. This exercise was designed to train future soldiers to keep their bottoms low when they were wiggling forward on a battlefield. Scaling an eight foot wall was the one part of the men's obstacle course that the women had not been able to do by themselves. In the very difficult climb to the top of the barrier, each set of four was boosted up by the next group of women to come along. Dropping down the other side of the imposing eight-foot wall was comparatively easy for the women, who landed without losing their footing and crunched onward through the deep snow to the next obstacle in their low shoes and cotton socks. Jumping a ditch eight feet wide required every inch of stretch that the women could muster. Failure to clear the ditch completely frequently caused a loss of footing and an enforced face-first plunge into chilling, crusty-topped snow (Life Staff Writers 1943).

Ice-skating in the university program was used to develop physical fitness and not spectacular figure eight's. A graceful bending exercise on a frozen pond behind the gymnasium was a stunt performed to strengthen their leg and thigh muscles, improve their balance and coordination. Corrective gymnasium workouts were prescribed for individual women who must reduce, gain weight, tone up particular muscles, or overcome specific physical inefficiencies before they could qualify as WAACS or WAVES (Life Staff Writers 1943).
Another article written in *Life* for the same issue, January 11, 1943, concerned the hospital wards on ships that WAVES served in. The hospital ward on a ship is watched over by a nurse on duty. Bunks are slung in tiers just as in any Navy ship of the time. Nurses were in charge of ship sections like wards, operating rooms, and diet kitchens. Their tour of duty extended for 18 months and most of their ship work was administrative. Corpsmen did most of the conventional nursing duties on hospital ships (*Life* Staff Writers 1943).

Even though it was seagoing, a Navy hospital ship was just like a hospital on land. Its doctors and nurses took care of patients with the same equipment to be found in any good modern hospital at the time. When new patients arrived on board they were assigned to a ward by one of the two medical officers of the day. From there they were taken to various medical departments for treatment. In the wards they were given their meals, prepared in a special diet kitchen, served piping hot from electrically heated food carts. In the wards, also, they were bathed, shaved, and entertained. As they grew stronger, they were allowed to move about the ship and to bask on deck in the warm Pacific sun (Morse 1943).

Because they were ships and not land hospitals, all hospital ships had to have a double personnel-line officers and crew to operate them as ships, staff officers and crew to run them as hospitals. The latter were made up of highly skilled doctors and nurses who were commissioned officers in the US Navy. They were assisted in their work by pharmacist's mates, who mixed prescriptions, helped with x-rays, dressed wounds, put on casts, and stood by to aid surgeons in the operating rooms. Catholic
services were held on deck each Sunday morning for the officers, nurses, crew, and convalescents who were able to attend. Other church services were held for wounded patients in the wards. Nurses' deck was at the stern of the vessel. The ship traveled the Pacific peacefully and alone, and was always brightly lighted at night. No escort or combat ships were even near this ship. The Navy ship had never been molested (Morse 1943).

The final article for this issue of *Life*, dated January 11, 1943 (Sanders 1943) concerning the WAVES was the cover story about children's uniforms for dress-up. Children in 1943 were living a kind of make-believe world. The transition started small with a few toy guns, tanks, jeeps, and P-T boats. So long as these were manned by civilians, the new military make-believe world lacked realism. Now there were "pretend" uniforms, sizes 2 to 14, for WAACS and WAVES, soldiers, sailors, marines, or aviators. Private, officer, general, admiral—the kids picked their service and rank (Sanders 1943).

Uniforms were important because not only were real-life heroes in uniform, but famous characters of the comic strips had also joined up for the duration. Tillie the Toiler was at that time a WAAC. Smilin' Jack was in the Air Patrol. Skeezix was a corporal in Africa and Orphan Annie had organized the Junior Commandos. To look like them took uniforms. The Red Cross nurse uniform wasn't new, but it was still one of the most popular. For aspiring young WAACS there was a suit which sold for about $3. The white summer admiral uniform was spectacular with gold buttons and braid. Any old floor became a blood-stained deck to a child in a sailor outfit. Accessories
such as insignia, gun belts, and a campaign bar of an Army officer were available. A little one may be driving an undersized jeep, but along with the soldier uniform he or she had stature (Sanders 1943). (One draw-back to these children's uniforms, for parents, was for instance, when my father and uncle wore theirs. They had seen a movie showing Nazis saluting Hitler, so they thought it would be really funny to salute various people, the Nazi way, while wearing these American uniforms. Kids. I believe they were three and four years old at the time).

On January 29, 1945, an editorial essay was written entitled "American Women—Draft Them? Too Bad We Can't Draft Their Grandmothers." The question of the essay was, since the manpower situation is so tough, why not draft women? It was thought by the author that it may come to that yet. War industries needed 700,000 workers, of whom many should have been women. The WACS were still below their enlistment needs. The Army and Navy needed 18,000 nurses right away and seemingly couldn't get them by voluntary means (Life Staff Writer 1945).

Those gaps argued for a National Service Act, a complete civilian draft of able-bodied men and women. Britain had one and Representative Wadsworth introduced one into the last Congress. The present Congress had turned to a stopgap, the May-Bailey bill, which drafted men 18-45 only. But nurses also needed to be drafted, and if the war lasted long enough, the National Service Act would have come up again (Life Staff Writer 1945).

If it were to have lasted long enough, the objections of labor would have been mild compared to the shocked objections of extreme conservatives, with Victorian ideals of
American womanhood. Those objectors would have been men, not women. Public-opinion polls showed that women were much more willing to be drafted than men were to draft them. To intelligent women a draft was not to enslave them. On the contrary, it would have been a milestone in an age-long process—their emancipation (Life Staff Writer 1945).

The fact needed to be faced that the status of women in America, which was changing fast enough before the war, was changing with lightning speed during it. Women were more powerful in America during the war than ever before in history. Women held increasingly important committee jobs in Congress. Mrs. Roosevelt was a more active politician than any other First Lady in history. More women than men voted in the last election (Life Staff Writer 1945).

Women's economic gains were even more striking. The war had put to work about 4,000,000 women who otherwise would have stayed home. Though they were paid less than men in many industries, this was becoming less and less the rule. The War Labor Board, the Army and Navy, the National Association of Manufacturers, the aircraft industry, and many others had adopted the policy of equal pay for equal work. A WAC private got as much as an infantryman, and an Army nurse got as much as other officers. Moreover, the women earned it. Forty-five women in uniform had been killed or wounded on duty; more than 250 had been decorated. Women were veterans of Bataan, of Anzio, of Normandy (Life Staff Writer 1945).

Of course, the trend toward sexual equality had been going on a long time. War seemed to accelerate it; after the war the tide recedes, but there was a net gain. That at
least was the experience in the last war, WWI; about 1/3 of the women who first
worked in 1917-1918 continued to work in the '20's. And their economic independence
brought them other kinds of freedom (*Life* Staff Writer 1945).

There was still lots of room, however, for female emancipation at this time,
especially at the psychological level. But while the question was important, no
prophesy could lay claim then to too much seriousness. For all of the social
revolutions that were going on in the world, that of the women was the least dynamic,
the least predictable, the most aimless and divided (*Life* Staff Writer 1945).

The scientists and philosophers had argued for generations about how much
equality women were equipped for. Some claimed they had no innate handicaps, that
even childbearing was not as incapacitating as society pretended. On the other hand
Amram Scheinfeld, in *Women and Men*, found that woman's independence and man's
chivalry were rooted in nature. No male, not even a male mouse, ever attacked a
female of the species. (The female always started it). As for talk of "matriarchy" in
prehistory or among aboriginal tribes, it was a myth. True matriarchy, according to
Scheinfeld, "exists nowhere and never did exist" (*Life* Staff Writer 1945).

However that may have been, it had to be allowed that in America the role of
women had always been pretty special. In the early days there was a great shortage of
women; in fact, only in the last couple of years had they begun to outnumber American
men (in 1945). But their security brought them respect; the frontier made them work.
The result was that America, in a few brief centuries, produced some of the greatest
women and one of the greatest types of women in the history of the world (Life Staff Writer 1945).

There was no need to recount the exploits of the pioneer wives who civilized the wild American continent, men and all, nor to celebrate the virtues of Abigail Adams, Margaret Fuller, Jessie Benton Fremont, Clara Barton, Frances Willard and the rest, or to criticize the exaggeration of the type in Carrie Nation. By self-reliance and moral force, American women helped create America and brought their gender worldwide prestige (Life Staff Writer 1945).

But were American women still earning the world's respect? It may have been doubtful. As a culture, the women were in 1945 themselves the greatest obstacle to their own further advancement. How brave, brainy, and competent some of them were. But how slack, unfocused, helpless were others (Life Staff Writer 1945).

More than in any other country, women did control an important part of America's wealth. They also handled the spending of most of America's consumer dollars. That being the case, it was hard to see how women could escape blame for the disgraceful contrast between department store sales, which reached an all-time high in 1944, and war-bond sales, which were way below what they should have been. A very grave shortage in America, partly responsible for the shortage of Army nurses, was in civilian hospitals, which needed 25,000 more volunteer nurses' aides. Yet the movies were full of so-called housewives all day long, and there was scarcely a woman's club where the war was not discussed solely in terms of the servant problem—over the bridge table (Life Staff Writer 1945).
In *Generation of Vipers*, Philip Wylie had created a symbol of American housewifehood that he called "Mom." Daughter and granddaughter of pioneers, she was America's idle class, the "candy-craving class" of "spiritual parasites." But "Satan himself has been taxed to dig up enterprises enough" for Mom's idle hands. She had given America its "national saga": the soap opera. "Rather than study herself and her environment with the necessary honesty, she will fight for this poisoned syrup to the last." She was the root cause of America's materialism in the '20s; her slogan was, "Everybody makes money but you." She was "the bride at every funeral and the corpse at every wedding." When man thought to build roads to the Andes or Moscow, she induced him to build girdle factories instead. Said Wylie, It is time Mom's slump became known to the desperate public. Said he, "Mom is a jerk" (*Life* Staff Writer 1945).

Anyway, Mom was having a harder time in 1945. It was she who got the telegrams from the Adjutant General's office and the Wylie caricature was softened by real suffering and by some real work, notably on the farms. Yet if America should really have mobilized all of its forces, as Russia and Britain did, Mom would have had to do the most catching up. There was certainly a connection between the amount of female idleness and the fact that, in public-opinion polls, women invariably showed up more apathetic and more poorly informed than men (*Life* Staff Writer 1945).

There was also a connection between those facts and the fact that women's emancipation was incomplete. One of the chief deterrents to WAC enlistment was the brother in uniform who said, "Stay home, sis!" Only the week before, the mayor and
the police commissioner of New York City, where the taxi shortage was acute, refused to permit doubling up for fear that women be subjected to indignities from strangers. The overdependent woman was at least partly the creation of the over-solicitous male (Life Staff Writer 1945).

A modern nation could give out with both, and America, it was hoped, was outgrowing them. There was no reason why more social equality between the sexes should threaten the family, the birth rate, or any other vital American institution. (The British birth rate had gone up despite the drafting of women.) Social equality did not mean the end of social differentiation, nor of chivalry, for those stemmed from nature. It meant merely that American women, as a class, even more than men, had a lot to learn about the responsibilities of all-around citizenship and their role in the modern world. They were perfectly capable of learning it. Their grandmothers did; too bad they couldn't draft them (Life Staff Writer 1945).

On April 19, 1943, the picture of the week in Life was captioned: "Uniformed WAVES at a New York style show gaze upon the forbidden fruit of fashion." One disadvantage of being a WAVE was that a woman could not change clothes as often as she changed moods. On duty, WAVES had to wear uniforms, and latest styles had to be forgotten. But a WAVE could still choose her lingerie, which could not be too frilly for easy laundering. Some attractive WAVES at the previous week's Ritz-Carlton fashion show in New York found it difficult to decide whether the almost transparent nightgown being modeled met Navy requirements (Hoffman 1943).
Also in the April 19, 1943, issue, *Life* (Life Staff Writers 1943) visited Penn Station in New York City. In wartime the big terminal was a place where soldiers said goodbye. Army nurses camped right in the station. They sat on their luggage, munching candy and reading to pass the weary waiting time. A WAAC was noticed, lost in thought, standing intently beside her suitcase. Hardly anybody came down to see the women soldiers go off (*Life* Staff Writers 1943).

*Vallejo Times Herald Newspaper*

The following section of the *Vallejo Times Herald* (Vallejo Times Herald Staff Writers 1945) provides a specific background for the life history to follow. The subject of knowledge in the life history, Dora Belinger, was stationed at this Navy Hospital as a Hospital corpswave from 1944-1945. This feature story provides detailed names and various people’s duties at the Hospital that Dora doesn’t remember now, or never knew exactly what they did. The story also provides the link for the thesis for the Adult Education minor concentration. Herein lies the details of the learner-centered, outcome-based methods that were used by the Navy personnel at Mare Island.

Under direction of John P. Owen [Marine Corps (MC)] USN, the first artificial limb department established by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery was developed at Mare Island. Skilled workmen were brought in to construct the arm and leg prostheses for amputees, and due to the success of this department, Mare Island Hospital was designated the amputation center for the West Coast.
Commodore Owen was not satisfied, however, solely with the physical rehabilitation of the war-wounded veterans. Varied educational and vocational opportunities were offered to each veteran, so that when the veteran left the hospital, he would be ready to take some type of employment in which he was interested and for which he was suited; secured for him, if possible, with the assistance of the hospital staff. Each amputee was made to feel that despite the loss of an arm or leg, or in some cases, two limbs, his physical handicap was not so insurmountable, and he could make a place for himself in the civilian world.

As commanding officer of the Navy's oldest hospital on the Pacific Coast, Commodore Owen supervised a huge staff of medical officers and surgeons, Navy nurses and WAVES, and an enlisted complement of technicians in x-ray, laboratory procedures, operating room technique, dental care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy departments, and clerical work. Also, under his supervision was the hospital annex at Napa, which carried on a specialized program for the evaluation and treatment of neuropsychiatric disabilities. Owen and his staff were instrumental in obtaining recognition as the center for amputation and rehabilitation for the entire Pacific area.

The Mare Island Naval Hospital of WWII, a huge establishment of about 30 buildings, covered 47 acres and had beds for nearly 2,000 patients. Under the guidance of Commodore Owen, distinguished members of the Navy Medical Corps and their assistants had made it possible for war amputees to wear artificial legs that enabled them to walk, run, and dance...artificial arms that would write, turn the pages of a book, drive an automobile, or dial a telephone.
Veterans of WWII, unlike veterans of WWI, wore "streamlined," custom built artificial legs, limbs that were tailor made to fit each individual, to allow them to walk comfortably and to reduce any limp to a minimum. This was in contrast to the former handling of such casualties, who were given medical discharges, placed under the guidance of the Veterans Bureau, and in most cases provided with incorrectly-fitted commercial artificial limbs.

World War II's heroes, men who had lost their legs or arms at Tarawa, Bourgainville, Okinawa, were not doomed to a life on crutches. And when they left the hospital with their new built-to-specification legs or arms, they went with educational or vocational training given them at the hospital, so they were ready to accept a position in the work of their particular choice. Many of these veterans already had gone out into the business world, as of April 1945, well equipped to meet the competition of civilian life. Their morale was high, experience had shown, since those men realized they were not being deserted by the Navy as soon as their usefulness as fighters was over.

Originally housed in one of the small buildings south of the main gate to the hospital, as of April 1945 the artificial limb department and brace shop covered almost the entire basement floor of the main building. There expert craftsmen fashioned the new temporary legs, first worn by the amputee, and then eventually his permanent leg.

As soon as the stump had healed sufficiently to bear the weight of the body a "Pylon" or temporary leg was fashioned of steel and wood in which a plaster of Paris bucket was fitted to the leg, with first a soft covering of glove leather immediately next
to the stump, followed by a layer of felt, and then the plaster, in moistened bandage form, was molded to the leg. Next the "Pylon" was attached to the bucket, and the patient took his first steps, needing neither crutch nor cane.

In the weeks that followed the patient learned to walk easily and comfortably, and in the majority of cases was given leave to return to his home for a few weeks. Upon his return the permanent leg was made to his individual requirements... a lightweight, comfortable plastic leg weighing about seven pounds, which, through a unique arrangement of springs and hinges, acted just like a normal leg. The foot, too, was fashioned with equal care, covered with soft leather, and made exactly the size of the real foot so that the amputee's own shoe size could be worn.

Visitors to the sprawling, busy brace shop at the hospital in 1945 found it filled with many of the amputees themselves, watching with eager interest the making of their own artificial limbs. They watched the soft plastic molded into shape, the hard plastic outside coverings take shape, the hinging in metal of the knee and ankle joints, and the use of rubber in the toe to give it flexibility. A pattern for each amputee was kept on file, so that if his new limb was damaged it could be replaced with the minimum amount of lost time. For those who had lost a hand or arm, there was an amazingly useful artificial hand, carved from wood, with the fingers operated by springs. These were attached to living muscles in the arm after a delicate operation, so that the amputee could operate it on precisely the same principles as his own.

Originally financed by outside contributions, the brace shop in 1945 had the official approval of the president and surgeon general, and was able to draw on Navy funds. A
new hospital was being built that same year and was nearing completion in April at the Navy yard. It included a theater seating 1000 people, a ship's service store, barber shop, reading rooms, post office, game rooms and library, a swimming pool, gym, bowling alleys, and occupational therapy rooms for convalescents.

Playing a vitally important role in the rehabilitation program at the Mare Island Naval Hospital was occupational therapy, a phase of rehabilitation that was supervised by Lt. (j.g.) Lucy S. Gore, USNR (US Navy Reserve). Realizing that rehabilitation in its broadest sense, began as soon as a person became a patient, and ended only when he was established in remunerative employment, or launched on an educational program which would make further special help unnecessary, Mare Island Hospital's program took the patient as far along that road as his treatment and physical condition would permit, before his discharge was received.

The chief value from this plan, according to Lt. Gore, was that, first, value during convalescence was not lost, and second, morale and attitudes toward work were not allowed to deteriorate during a long period of idleness and inactivity. Mare Island staff members had studied carefully how occupational therapy could best bridge the gap between the surgery and vocational training, the period when patients were most in need of something to occupy his time and talents.

In the case of the bed-ridden patient, it was essential that his interest in some form of activity be kept alive during the period when he was not able physically to engage in an active training program. That activity may have been in the form of a hobby, or perhaps some pre-vocational activity such as typing, drafting and blueprint reading,
sketching, or simple electrical assembly. Then later when he was able to leave the ward, the patient was able to do radio or auto repairing, printing, agriculture study, carpentry, or watch repairing. The Navy Department gave its definite approval to the use of such vocational activities as a means to an end both psychological and vocational.

Lt. Gore reported that in the total rehabilitation process there were three major elements: (1) physical restoration, (2) psychological adjustment, (3) vocational training and selective placement. She added that those were of equal importance in final accomplishment, but required varying degrees of effort in different types of patients.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of interesting the patient during the early days of his convalescence so that his interest and ambition for the future would be preserved and encouraged. Mare Island’s occupational therapy staff members had found that was accomplished most successfully by treating each ward as a group, by refraining from all urging and enticing, and letting the contagion of activity spread from the more energetic patients to the more stubborn.

Hundreds of war veterans who came to Mare Island Naval Hospital for physical rehabilitation left the hospital weeks or months later better equipped to take positions in the civilian world than when they gave up their civilian status to enter the service. This was made possible through the Educational Services offered during their convalescence, under the supervision of Lt. H.C. Lindgren, USNR, Educational Services Officer. Shortly after his arrival at the hospital the patient was visited by a trained interviewer who gathered data which would enable the rehabilitation staff to
evaluate his educational and vocational background. An informal talk with the rehabilitation officer would give an idea of opportunities in his chosen field, and if he was uncertain as to the choice of his occupation, or in doubt as to his ability to follow a certain field, he was offered an opportunity to take psychological tests, and to discuss his case with the rehabilitation staff or representatives of local industries.

The patients were grouped into four types: (1) The ones who could go back to a good job or who had a well developed skill, (2) The ones who had selected a job or an occupational field, but who had little or no experience and training, (3) The ones who did not know what to do, (4) The ones who intended to continue with high school or college.

Those who required further training were offered the facilities of the local schools as well as nearby educational institutions, seven of which were being used by the hospital at that time in its rehabilitation program. Those included Vallejo High School, Napa Junior College, the University of California—Berkeley, Stanford University, Gomper's Trade School in San Francisco, Pacific Radio School in San Francisco, and the Armed Forces Institute, which offered self-helping and correspondence courses under tutorial supervision.

Napa Junior College proved an ideal choice for many of the patients who wished to continue their college studies. Since the college already had been training workers for shops and offices at Mare Island, it was able to offer complete opportunities for vocational training to the patients.
Napa school officials were most cooperative, and with the assistance of the California State Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the local Red Cross chapter, the program got underway in February 1944, when six patients boarded the Greyhound bus in front of the hospital and prepared to make daily trips to college. Under that program, about 25 patients had attended Napa Junior College (as of April 28, 1945) for the past year. If the student had graduated from high school, he could work for college credits. If he discontinued high school, he could take up where he left off.

To accommodate those patients who could not make the daily trip to college, a member of the junior college faculty spent six hours a day at the hospital. Many students received coaching in special subjects, while others received high school or junior college credits for courses on the regular college curriculum.

Supplementing the purely educational program were the vocational advantages offered for individual cases. For instance, one patient was working at the Radio Material Laboratory at the Navy yard. Two others, who wanted to go into the grocery business, were given that training by a local chain store. The firm got the use of the patient’s time, and he derived benefit of training unobtainable on the hospital compound. Others were getting training in dental mechanics, drafting, accounting, the shoe business, as timekeeping, and in many other fields.

Playing a vitally important role at the Mare Island Naval Hospital were the 158 nurses who aided in the rehabilitation of war wounded veterans. With Lt. Commander Margaret A. Morris [Nurse Corps (NC)] USN, as their ranking officer, they proved the tremendous value of capable and efficient nursing service in the hospital's
rehabilitation program. Chief Nurses were on duty as supervisors in each building, and made the rounds of the wards to aid the younger nurses in their routine duties. Dressing-room nurses served in the central sterilizing room, the hospital blood bank where plasma was prepared from the blood taken from civilian donors, and in the Family Section, which cared for the families of naval personnel. Trained dietitians in the Nurse Corps supervised the special duties for patients, while the Chief Nurse's Office was occupied by Lt. Commander Morris and her busy assistants.

On a low hill to the southeast of the hospital was a rambling Spanish-style building nestled among California shrubbery. It was approached from the front by a winding driveway, which was bordered on the right by tall eucalyptus trees. A green lawn sloped gently downward and was dotted here and there with evergreen shrubs. For the 158 nurses stationed at Mare Island Hospital who made that building their home, the day began at 7am, when dozens of alarm clocks were heard ringing through the quarters. Nurses on pm duty pulled the covers up a little higher, yawned sleepily and turned over for another nap before getting up for late breakfast, which was served until 8:30. Morning duty nurses groaned and crawled out of bed wishing the nights were longer. Very soon they were murmuring sleepy "goodmornings" to their friends as they were washed and teeth brushed in the community baths that were located in each wing.

Downstairs in the galley the cooks had been on duty for an hour; the tables were all set, and breakfast was almost ready to be served. The dining room was a lovely large room with tall windows overlooking to the north the hospital grounds at the foot of the
hill, and on the east a part of the harbor where ships could be seen at anchor. Minutes were precious at this time of day, and there was very little conversation as the nurses came into the dining room a few minutes later to eat a good breakfast of bacon and eggs, hot cakes and sausage, cereal and toast, or whatever was on the menu for that day. Some of the nurses preferred to eat breakfast in their house coats and robes, a privilege which was given to them, while others would dress completely and go directly from the dining room to work. Whatever the order of eating and dressing, 7:45 would find a steady stream of nurses in starched white uniforms and dark blue caps making their way along the cement walk leading from the back-door of the nurses-quarters to the hospital.

Up to this point the activities of all the nurses were the same, but then as they dispersed and went to the various departments, their duties would be as varied as the departments themselves.

The supervisors and ward nurses went first to the Chief Nurses' Office where they met the night nurses and received a full report concerning the condition of the wards and patients during the night. From there they went to their respective wards. The ward routine in the Navy was essentially the same on all wards, but it varied in some respects according to the type of patients treated.

Chief Nurses were on duty as supervisors in each building and made rounds on the wards to help the younger nurses in their organization and supervision and to help with any problems that might have arisen.
The ward nurse was responsible for supervision of the work of the corpswaves and corpsmen. She assigned a ward detail to each one and saw that it was carried out properly and that the patients received the best of care. There were certain reports which she herself had to write in addition to her other work. Doctors' orders had to be written down carefully at sick call and copied into the individual charts and into the log; all records pertaining to the patient's progress card treatment had to be kept up daily. On some of the busier wards where two nurses were assigned, one nurse took care of the paper work while the other one stayed on the ward and worked with the WAVES and corpsmen and taught and assisted them in developing their nursing skill. In addition to the care of the patients and writing of reports, the ward nurse was responsible for the property and linen used on the wards and for the cleanliness, order, and discipline of the ward at all times.

Much of the work on the wards was done by convalescent patients. It gave them something to do and lessened the monotony of weeks in the hospital. They liked it and took a real interest in the various details. It was amazing to the story-writers to see the skill with which a sailor or marine would learn to help his buddy with a glass of water or with a steak that needed cutting. Others helped in the ward galleys, swept, dusted, took down linen for exchange and dozens of other things to assist the nurses and corpsmen. Giving them work to do did more to build morale and help a convalescent patient back to normal than almost any other treatment. It also made them feel less like patients, and many of their details took them outdoors in the sunshine and fresh air.
Working with the ward nurses were the dressing room nurses. For each two surgical wards there was a surgical dressing room with a nurse and corpsman on duty. The dressing room nurse and corpsman made sick calls with the doctor and assisted him in changing dressings and administering any treatment relative to the patient's wound. Sterile technique had to be carried out, and the procedures required skill. When a patient was scheduled for surgery, the dressing room personnel had to prepare the area. This comprised much of their work, as these preparations had to be done very carefully and took a great deal of time.

Although Mare Island Hospital cared for all types of patients, it was primarily an amputation center, and the majority of the cases were surgical. In the surgical building the operating suite occupied the top floor and was probably the busiest department in the whole hospital. Nurses who were specially trained for surgery worked with the doctors in teaching the corpsmen. These corpsmen had to be above average in intelligence and previous training, for their work was exacting; and what they learned at Mare Island enabled them to save many lives in the combat areas. They were taught by the nurses to assist the doctors with all operations, to choose instruments for all types of cases, to prepare and sterilize all instruments and linen used, and above all to observe sterile technique at all times. Since emergency cases were likely to come at any hour, nurses and corpsmen were on call day and night, so that no sick patient need wait to get the attention he needed. All types of surgery from the simplest operation to the most delicate brain surgery were handled with efficiency and skill, but most of the cases were either orthopedic or plastic surgery, or sometimes a combination of both.
Some of the nurses were trained anesthetists and took their turns with the doctors in seeing that patients were given the best possible anesthesia for their operations.

In the eye, ear, nose, and throat clinic a nurse was on duty helping with and supervising the work of corpsmen. There patients were examined and treated, fitted for glasses, tonsillectomies, and other operations of the eyes, ear, nose, and throat were performed.

A chief nurse, who was also a trained dietician, had charge of all the special diets for patients. She was assisted in this by younger nurses who, although they may not have had special training in dietetics, had learned enough from their nurses’ training that they were able to learn very quickly under her supervision and went out on the wards where they were ordered. The majority of the patients ate regular diets. This food was prepared in the main hospital galley and taken in electrically-heated carts to the ward galleys, where it was served on the ward under the supervision of the ward nurse, who was assisted by corpsmen or WAVES and patients. The convalescent patients went to the mess hall for their meals. This was another factor in their adjustment to a normal life. They got outside the ward and in the mess hall sat at tables with other patients, thus enlarging their circle of friends and adding interest to their lives.

Other nurses worked in the linen room, where linen was exchanged daily from the wards and other departments. The linen-room nurses had to see that a sufficiently large supply of linen was on hand to take care of the needs of the hospital, anticipate and
supply all special surgical linens which had to be made up by the civilian seamstresses, and see that the linen supply in all departments was kept up.

Since corpsmen and corpswaves had to go to work on the wards before their training was completed, classes were held by nurses trained for this purpose. In these classes they were taught the practical nursing procedures that they would later apply on the wards. Lectures and demonstrations were held in the classrooms, where the students were taught to give baths, make beds, give medication and injections, and perform many other procedures which they needed to know in caring for patients. The instructors also went on the wards where the corpsmen and corpswaves were assigned, to supervise any particularly difficult injections or other work that the student may have been doing for the first time.

Lastly was the Chief Nurses' Office where the Chief Nurse and her assistants worked. Records of all nurses were kept here, and the nurses who worked in here had to be able to use the typewriter. The duties performed by a Chief Nurse would have made a story all its own; but to put it briefly, she was there as a superintendent of all the nurses and was responsible to the Commanding officer and Executive officer for the conduct and work of the nurses at all times. She assigned all nurses to their details and was always glad to help them with any problems either on duty or off. She had to be familiar with the organization and work in every department in the entire hospital; she had to possess the tact of a diplomat and the patience of Job [the central figure in an Old Testament parable of the righteous sufferer (Costello 1992; 727)].
The nurses changed shifts at 3pm. Most of the work was done in the morning shift, so that it was not necessary to have as many nurses on duty in the evening, but all wards must be covered, and nurses were on call for the special departments in case of emergencies.

A few minutes past 3pm found the nurses off-duty variously occupied. Some took the 4:10 bus into San Francisco to have dinner and see a show. Others could be seen donning sports-wear to go golfing on the Officers Club course, to play tennis on one of the numerous courts provided, to go bowling, bicycling, or swimming. Some went down to the Rodman Store or to Vallejo to shop. Still others visited together in the quarters knitting or just "shooting the breeze." Perhaps some had taken the late bus to San Francisco the night before and would "hit the sack" for a couple of hours' sleep before dinner.

Many diversions were available to nurses on weekends off duty. Groups got together and went up to Soda Springs for skiing, others went to the nearby towns for a short vacation from their duties, while others attended the dances at the Officer's Club, went on picnics, and rode horseback.

An atmosphere of friendliness was felt throughout the place, and whether nurses were on duty caring for patients, mingling with the other women in the quarters, or going out, they were not only doing their part in the war effort, but were making friends and gaining experience which they would value for the rest of their lives.

Navy men admitted for treatment at the Mare Island Naval Hospital found members of the Women's Reserve on duty throughout the entire establishment. Only a small
group of WAVES reported for duty at the hospital in 1943. In 1945, WAVES at the
Naval Hospital numbered approximately 250. They served in the hospital offices, in
the laboratories, and in the wards.

The duties of the Hospital Corps WAVES were many and varied. The majority of
the WAVES were on duty in the wards. Some served as writers, or secretaries, to the
various ward medical officers. Others gave medications and general nursing care to
patients. There was a lot of record keeping to be done in a hospital; therefore, many
WAVES were on duty in the various offices necessary to perform that function.
WAVES were also serving as trained laboratory technicians, dental technicians,
operating room technicians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and x-ray
technicians. A WAVE pharmacist's mate, who was a regular pharmacist in civilian
life, compounded prescriptions and filled orders for the wards. Three WAVES were
assigned to the Brace Shop, where patients were fitted and equipped with artificial
arms and legs. Six WAVE specialists assisted in the running of the two WAVE
barracks. In their free time WAVES entertained their friends in the barracks lounge, or
participated in recreation such as swimming, horseback riding, and tennis (Vallejo
Times Herald Staff Writers 1945).

The spectacular records of WWII were written in the flaming
action of the bloody battle fronts, written, for the Navy, by the smoking
muzzles of heavyweight battleship guns, in the screaming sounds of dive
bombers, with the penciled trails of rocket batteries. But behind the
front, records of equally enduring significance were being made by
quiet, efficient Navy officers, men, and women whose names seldom, if
ever, reached the front pages, but whose deeds, in their fields, shone
with a luster undimmed in comparison to the headline history of the
battle areas (Vallejo Times Herald Staff Writers 1945:23).
CHAPTER 6 CATCHING UP WITH A WAVE

Gung-Ho

Dora Belinger grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, during the Depression. She had a job before high school graduation with General Electric, while her older sister still hadn't gotten a job. Since Dora had no money to go to college, she worked at General Electric until her 21st birthday, when she enlisted in the Navy.

Her adventure in the Navy began in the Great Lakes, and then moved on to New York where she was given first choice in whatever job she wanted. Dora chose the Hospital Corps and was soon off to Bethesda, Maryland, for four weeks, where she didn't work with patients, she just saw what all there was to do and decided what she wanted to do in the Hospital Corps. Dora wanted the amputee center on Mare Island. She figured, "Well, I'm already this far from home, I might as well go that far and see the other coast."

Dora thought it was very good work; she felt like she was really doing something. As time went on, they were all told that they could learn a trade—such as dental, optometry, pharmacy, for when they got out of the Navy they could work at it. Dora tried all of the trades, but when she got out had passed 2nd class nursing, but she hadn't completed all of the requirements, so she received pharmacy 3rd class. This training, according to Dora, was good for someone who was not married, with no ties or anything, to see what others were doing and to possibly help someone.
If Dora had not enlisted in the Navy but had stayed in Fort Wayne and worked at General Electric, she said she probably would have gone to college once she had the funds, because she really wanted to be a nurse. But right out of high school, just after the Depression when things were just starting to pick up, Dora went to St. Joseph's Hospital to see about nurses' training, and the way that worked was that she would have had to live there, work there, eat there, and all but live her whole life at the hospital. Dora knew that would not have worked for her. Even once she finished her training, she would have belonged to the hospital. It didn't cost anything to be trained, but that's the way it was. So Dora knew it was not for her.

Dora's father was a part owner in a VFW club. She had a brother who had had scarlet fever that had affected his eyes and ears, and her two sisters were not interested in joining the military.

Aye-Aye

Boot training required stamina. When Dora went into the armory, there were hundreds of WAVES in there, and she had to do all types of exercises, and no body stopped unless she fell down. Dora herself would get so tired, that she thought she couldn't go another minute. And they couldn't stand on one foot; they had to stand perfectly still, and if they got caught not standing perfectly still then "Boy you were called out, I mean out, and I wasn't going to have that," recalled Dora. "It was really something."

Dora became acquainted with some of the women during boot camp. No one was from Fort Wayne. She went in by herself. The other women were from all over the
country. One was from Ohio, but she became really homesick and "you couldn't do that either." Dora's best friend was Rita Callahan, whom she remembers as having lots of curly red hair, and the two went to Mare Island together.

Rita Callahan from New York was who Dora was closest to. For various reasons people were sent back home, so Rita was the only one she really got close to. For example, two women were in bed together. They both went home. Quick. Really Quick. Dora also had heard it had happened to others. But Dora never knew who they were. The Navy didn't tolerate homosexuality. If the Navy even had an inkling of that, the person was gone.

Boot training was what basic training was called back then. That's where Dora learned to march and take orders. Dora explained that "You didn't give any orders. You took orders." And the women marched there in the armory for hours and hours. A typical day at boot training began when the women got up in the morning. The first thing they did was make their bed. Immediately. Then they got ready. Everything was timed. And a woman had better be where she belonged when it was that time. Then they went to breakfast. Dora had never eaten breakfast her whole life. When she was a child, she never wanted breakfast; she always wanted to eat later in the morning, not when she first got up. But she soon realized she had to eat at 6:30 in the morning if she were going to do all that was required of her. There was a lot of food, but the women came from many different ethnic backgrounds, so some didn't want to eat this, others didn't even want to smell that. One day, Dora remembered, they had lamb stew for dinner. Dora's mother and father never cooked lamb, so she just had never before
had lamb. She went into the cafeteria and said "What is that smell? I don't like it." "I didn't eat that day." Quite a lot of the women went home; they never made it. They just couldn't do it. Dora thought a large part of the reason was homesickness. Some thought the adventure away from home was fun; some did not.

Boot training was held in the Bronx, New York. Dora stayed in the dormitories at Hunter College. One time she went with a woman from boot camp to see the Empire State Building in New York City. She remembers that day as being really windy, and dirt and papers were blowing around. She remembers that the elevator went up so many stories, and came down too quick. Standing up there with the wind blowing, Dora didn't exactly enjoy it, but she had to say she was there. But going to boot camp for Dora was not for fun or for pleasure; it was to do things the Navy's way and to learn, and learn quickly, and then she was on her own. This indoctrination period lasted six weeks, followed by four weeks in Bethesda for Dora to learn the "ropes" of the Hospital Corps.

Dora enlisted in 1944, on her 21st birthday. She was in the Navy for almost two years; in all, about 23 months, right up until the war ended. While Dora was serving in the Navy, things went on and on and on, she didn't even know what was happening in the outside world. Her world existed right there where she was serving. The women as a whole were so busy they didn't even think about whether they would want to stay in the Navy or just do their part in the war effort. Serving in the Navy for Dora was something that was needed then and so she did it. Her niece in Las Vegas went into the Navy because her aunt had. The niece went in because she didn't know what she
wanted to do with herself. She liked it, but she met a man, they got married, she got pregnant, and that was the end of the Navy.

Honor, Courage, Commitment

Dora was involved with everything at Mare Island as a WAVE. From giving morning care, bed baths, tending patients who first came in who hadn't had surgery yet, she just did what was needed, depending on the individual. The men were so embarrassed, she recalled, when it came to baths and getting taken care of. They wanted the males (corpsmen) to do it. But there just weren't enough. There were a few males but not very many. So Dora just did the best she could. She gave baths, changed beds, and got patients ready for surgery, or did anything else that needed to be done. And Dora got to go into the prosthesis room. She knew how they put the prostheses together and how they fit them to patients, watched the patients walk, helped them learn to walk; everything. The whole hospital was not solely for amputees; it also treated asthma and had various kinds of wards. Dora, however, worked strictly in the amputee ward. Everyone had to take turns doing night watch for a patient, which included taking his blood pressure and monitoring him around the clock. If it was her turn, Dora went with no questions asked. Many times Dora almost fell asleep. She didn't wonder why, though, since when she got to a ward at 8:00 in the morning and didn't get off until everything was done, around 8:00, or 9:00 at night. If a ship came in with a lot of patients, she and the others had to work until all was done. And the patients came from overseas, directly from battle.
It was difficult at times for Dora and the other nurses. She recalls that "so many were just kids, they weren't even men yet. One arm or leg, one had both legs off and an arm." But she just did her job. She didn't dare get sad. She can't remember the patients' names now, but she remembers their faces and the feelings she got when she saw them.

Free time was so short that Dora didn't have much time to think about what she was going to do. She went into Vallejo and went into stores. She didn't need any clothes; she was just looking around at what there was and to see if anything had changed. Nothing had changed. That was about it. She and Rita went up near the Redwoods one day and rented bicycles. That excursion provided them with something to do that was different.

Dora went to San Francisco when she had a weekend. The women could only go when they had a few days, because getting over there and back was a problem. They had to make sure they had enough time. But they went a couple of times. They took a bus and made sure it was timed so they would be back. Free time wasn't free like it is in the civilian world. If they weren't back on time, then they were out. But Dora enjoyed it. All the time she was there she was so glad to be there. She was so glad she had enlisted. And if one were to ask any of the WAVES who made it through, she would say the same thing. So, in the end, it wasn't just something Dora did; when she looks back on it and if she had it to do all over again, she absolutely would.

The uniform Dora had to wear was deep navy blue woolen Aberdeen, and was pressed really well. Dora always thought it was a sharp-looking uniform. It had a
white blouse or pale blue. She wore whatever was required at the time. In the hospital
she had a pale blue uniform instead of white. For as long as Dora can remember, she
has always been "picky, picky," about how her clothes looked. A lot of women were
not "picky, picky" and they didn't look very good. Washing and ironing the uniforms
was up to the women. They didn't have a laundry service. Some women would come
in a wrinkled mess. They weren't even ironed decently. Dora would just cringe every
time she'd see that. Dora's was starched and ironed well and she never sat down, so it
was never wrinkled. No one would have caught Dora with wrinkles in her uniform.

One time they had an inspection. An Admiral came in. They were just dead tired; they
had had to clean everything the night before because the admiral was coming the next
morning and everything had to be dusted. They had been warned that there had better
not have been anything wrong. When they were all lined up at the foot of the beds in
front of all the patients, the admiral came in, and he came right over to Dora, who was
shy as a mouse, and said, "Good morning, you look very, very nice." Dora just about
died on the spot. He never said a word to anybody else. It is funny now to Dora, but
not then. She really liked that admiral after that. Everyone really liked him. She knew
a lot of the doctors and nurses, but doesn't remember their names now. She thought
Mare Island was a nice place. She liked being there.

Dora's husband Johnny was from Visalia, California, but he was born and raised in a
small town in Kansas. Around 1917 or 1918 he and his family came out to New
Mexico, then on to California. He himself went to Sacramento to McClellan Air Base
as a civilian, but then enlisted in the Marine Corps. There was a small group of
Marines at Mare Island and he was a Sergeant of the Guards at the causeway that comes from Vallejo into Mare Island. Every car that came into the island had to be identified. If any personnel tried to get liquor onto the island, the guards would confiscate it. There was a car service there called jitneys, that took personnel into Vallejo and back. One time the car was stopped, a Marine came up, and said, "Everybody out of the car except her!" And he pointed to Dora, who just wanted to hide in the corner. She said she had already met him, but she seldom saw him out there. It just happened that one particular time that he happened to be out there. At that time Dora explains that she was really, really shy, which is why people were so surprised that she even went into the Navy. But the Marine and the WAVE got along real well from day one.

Since they were both getting out at the same time, they married on Thanksgiving Day of 1945. Then they came to Fresno, California, on Christmas Eve. They came down with Johnny's brother into the valley, the only time Dora recalls seeing the valley look so beautiful. When they got into Fresno, it was solid fog. Dora didn't even know what fog was. She had never heard of it before. That's how they were greeted in Fresno and their new life after the military: with fog (Belinger 2003).

After her 23 months in the Navy, Dora settled back into civilian life. Like so many others, the war had changed her life in more ways than she could count. Like many men and women who served in World War II, Dora was from a small town in Middle America and didn't have enough money to either go to college or leave the area she grew up in. For women like Dora, the Navy offered them a way to see the world, to do
SOMETHING with their lives that they would not have otherwise been able to do.

Dora lived and worked after the Navy in Fresno, California, where a young person had a chance of finding a job in postwar America.

Dora and Johnny raised two children, a boy and a girl. Johnny passed away a few years before this interview. Dora now works part time for her daughter's law firm along with another WAVE from the Hospital Corps who served some thirty years after Dora. Her home is beautiful, clearly sharp and "picky, picky," just as Dora described she has always been about herself and her environment. When she's not working, she enjoys reading books concerning ships, submarines, and all kinds of things. When asked if she had ever read any books on the WAVES, she replied that she never had. Nothing, not anything. I didn't find this surprising, as I found it difficult simply to find literature on the WAVES for the writing of this thesis. This is a very sad thing; for out of some people’s willingness and desire to simply do something for the war effort, anything that needed to be done to help, it became much more than that. They were really part of something bigger, something that could not have happened without their contribution. All the men out on the front lines, who fought and died or survived, usually get all the credit for winning the war. But had people like Dora not done something, the U.S. would not have won that war on fighting alone. It took much more than that. It took the women in blue, too.
CHAPTER 7 DOING THEIR PART

The first time seaman Wayne Feaster had heard that women would be taking over men's normal positions in the Navy, so that the men could fight, was perhaps when he saw a recruiting poster with Uncle Sam pointing his finger saying, "I want You!" But, he did not pay much attention to the idea until he got to Port Hueneme, California. In Wayne's understanding, the WAVES were women in the Navy who were used to fill in for men to go overseas, doing clerical duties and such things. He remembered one time when he went to Los Angeles and came home at night, late, and went back to Port Hueneme. There was a WAVE base a little ways from his base, the construction battalion (Seabee) base. When Wayne got home, he walked into the barracks, the same number of barracks that his was anyway; he went to where his bunk was, and there were some women's underpants hanging up there. He stepped back, said to himself, "Uh oh, what're these, souvenirs?" No, he guessed, just as someone grabbed him by the shoulder and said, "You know you can go to prison for this?!" Wayne said, "No, what're you talkin' about?" She then replied, "What're you doing in this WAVES barracks?" Wayne thought for a second, then said, "No, this is not WAVE barracks, this is number four, that's my barracks." The woman then said, "I beg your pardon, but you're in the wrong place." And she took him outside and proceeded to give him directions back to his number-four barracks. She then said, "That's the Seabee base...You didn't know that?" Wayne responded, "Well, I know my barracks number, and I saw this barracks and I thought this was my barracks." She continued, "Didn't
you see this clothesline here with all these women's undergarments on it?" He replied that he had not. Then she chased him out and back to his camp. That was Wayne's experience with the WAVES.

When Wayne got overseas in 1943 in the Pacific theater of operations there were Navy nurses. But he never saw any of them, probably because he never had to go to the hospital to be exposed to them. But he had heard they were there. He spent most of his time either walking guard duty or working in the ship; he didn't have time to go looking for them. In general, Wayne doesn't think the Navy men gave the situation of the women taking over their jobs much thought at that time, because they were too caught up in the situation right in front of them, the emergency they were fighting for.

Looking back, Wayne thinks that it was "neat" that women were in the military because women wanted to participate in things and to do their part. Wayne thought it was great that the "Rosie the Riveters," the WAVES, the WACS, got in and did their part. And he thinks it gave them a lot of opportunities as far as getting an education and training. It "got them off the farm" and into the military and learning about how the rest of the world, or at least the country, lived a little bit. He admired them for doing that.

If women had not taken part in WWII, Wayne thinks their roles would be different today. In particular, it would have taken a lot longer before women got accepted in industry. World War II industry found out that a woman could do what a man could do, that a woman was as smart as a man. Wayne really felt that after learning later on of their example in WWII. Even today, Wayne points out that almost all newscasters
are women. He says they’ve come a long way since WWII. And that started them on their way.
CHAPTER 8 CHANGING LIVES TO SAVE LIVES

Lou Etta Sikes married Wayne Feaster on February 16, 1943, the day before he shipped out for duty. Lou remained in Miami, Oklahoma, to provide support for the country and the troops on the homefront. While working at her stepmother's dress shop downtown, Lou met several servicepeople. She did not know any of the WAVES personally, but says after seeing them in their sharp uniforms and talking with them briefly, she admired them immensely. She did know women personally who went off to aircraft plants in California and Kansas from her area.

Lou felt that the women on the homefront (civilian and military alike) were very important to the war effort, and the women in the dress shop made up special garments and made up boxes for the servicepeople to show them their appreciation. They would try as best they could to make the men fighting realize that "we were here for them," although they were at home, and they were waiting for them. That was the one important thing Lou felt was what she could do with Wayne away. She could write him, be proud of him, and let him know how much she loved him and cared for him, and for him to come back home to her, and hoped for him to be safe.

Lou felt the WAVES were just as important as the men in the effort to win the war because of the different jobs they did. Especially the nurses. Lou knows they were trained well. She also realized they were sacrificing a lot, too. When she saw these women in uniform, she thought, "Oh, that was so wondrous, I could never do that myself." The general opinion in her community was the same regarding the job
women were doing. They realized that it was a great effort for women to do that because they all grew up in that time as mothers, as housekeepers; that's what they had always seen, and really women didn't think about being professionals at that time. But the war changed their lives and they were all doing something different, trying hard to make life normal when the men came back home. And many of the women were then working in aircraft factories and they were good at it, and they realized they could do a good job working outside the home.

When their men came home, there were not many jobs in their community. It was sad. The men especially had a difficult time adjusting to the fact that they had to leave the area that they were born and raised in and where generations had lived. But it was no longer the place they had left before the war, because companies no longer needed zinc from the mines, so the mines had to close; therefore, the jobs men had hoped to come home to were no longer available. They had to regroup, reeducate, do something totally different and leave the land they loved. They all came out well because they were fighters; they had been to war and they learned that life was very important because people lived so close to death. And that was the thing they were all aware of, because each day someone in some family would get a notice that some loved one had died. They all dreamed of the day when they would have peace and harmony, and all the women made such an effort for the war for loved ones that were gone. They worked hard and went away from their homes to serve their country.

For Lou, moving away from her home with Wayne to find work was necessary. They had lived in a sleepy, quiet time before the war, but that was no longer the way
their world was after the war. War had changed that for them, they had to get a better perspective on life, they had to get moving, and if they were going to succeed they had to do it themselves, because there were too many men who had come home to get a job. They needed to find a place where they could be good citizens and raise children.

Like the rest of the women who stayed home to keep home for the soldiers to come back to, Lou felt proud of the servicemen who stood up for their country and had succeeded (Sikes Feaster 2003).

War was hard; it made you grow up fast. We had to fight for existence when the war was over. We were all proud we were able to contribute to this. This was our life. I think we won.

--Lou Etta Feaster (Sikes Feaster 2003).
CHAPTER 9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The discussion and conclusions section serves two purposes for this study. The first purpose it serves is to interpret how the study has followed the advice and suggestions of the authors in the literature review section, i.e. the feminist critique. I did this by explicitly asking the significant questions from each of the studies presented in the literature review. Then I answered each question with concrete answers from the text. The second part of the chapter provides my interpretations and conclusions of the study.

The Feminist Critique

How might Dora’s experience have provided the foundation for the emergence of the modern feminist movement? Dora had the choice out of high school to (1) accept a good, hard-to-come-by job at General Electric, to maybe get married, to probably live a traditional woman’s life; (2) to receive training to be a nurse at St. Joseph’s Hospital, to maybe get married, and to probably live a traditional woman’s life; (3) to maybe join the women’s reserve of the Navy for training to be a nurse, to maybe get married, to maybe not live a traditional woman’s life. Dora chose option three, where she thought she could “see what others were doing and (could) possibly help someone” which meant that she had to leave home, travel from Indiana to Michigan to New York to Maryland, and, finally, to California. But, she figured: “Well, I’m already this far from home, I might as well go that far and see the other coast.”
Dora could have received training in nursing staying at home, attending St. Joseph's Hospital, but she knew that "was not for her." Dora thought that the adventure away from home was fun; but that others did not. Dora was committed to her decision to join the Navy and knew that she was there "to do things the Navy's way and to learn, and learn quickly."

Dora also recognized that in order to keep helping the men and to stay in the Navy, she had to decide to be brave in the face of the war-wounded veterans she tended to. She had to learn to "just (do) her job. She didn't dare get sad." She had to basically commit herself to all of the Navy's rules, including being "back on time," otherwise the women would "be out" just like the other women who were sent home.

What, if any, actions and decisions did Dora make herself that affected either her microscale culture (the WAVES), or her macroscale culture (America)? Dora's decision to join the WAVES to receive her nurses' training and then to serve the Navy in the amputee ward at Mare Island Navy Hospital was a decision that many individuals, like herself, made that helped fill a need that the United States had at the time for such women. This need required women to step out of their traditional roles at home as civilian daughters, wives, and mothers, who primarily worked at household jobs, to fill in for the men; otherwise, men would have had to do those jobs and there would not have been enough of them to do both jobs (fight and support). The real situation facing Dora was the lack of hospital corpsmen, because they were required to fight or serve as Medics in the fight. Her decision to join the WAVES freed up one more corpseman to join the combat crews in the fight overseas.
At boot camp Dora had to decide to inconvenience herself and eat breakfast earlier than she wanted to, to stand on two feet even when she was way too tired, and cut short anything that would otherwise cause her to not be on time. These things may seem trivial to some readers, but, as pointed out in the documentary chapters, many women were not ready and willing to do this. Dora’s thought on this decision was that “this training was good for someone who was not married, with no ties or anything, to see what others were doing and to possibly help someone.” If Dora had chosen not to sacrifice her comfort in order to do these things, then she would have let down her fellow WAVES, the officers in charge, the corpsman she is relieving, and a patient that needed her help. When it was Dora’s turn to do nightwatch for the ward, she made the decision to go with no questions asked, which allowed another WAVE to get some sleep and a patient to receive needed care. “If it was her turn, Dora went with no questions asked.” Dora also had to decide to not “dare get sad.” If Dora had allowed her emotions to overcome her, then she would not have been able to do her job, and that would have cost the WAVES a corpsperson and the war effort a supporter.

How has Dora been presented here as a subject of knowledge, rather than an object of knowledge? Dora is treated as a subject of knowledge through the way the interview was conducted, the types of questions asked, and through the way her data was analyzed and presented. I came into the interview with Dora with one primary question I wanted to have answered: “What was it like to be a WAVE during WWII?” I had a few topics to suggest, or to jog Dora’s memory with if that became necessary, but I came into the interview wanting her life history of constructed meaning, not
meanings that I had constructed. It was only in this way that I felt she could construct the meaning it held for her as an actual participant in the event that had happened in the past. It would then be my job to confer this meaning to the reader.

The types of questions I asked were the result of a dialogue Dora and I created, beginning with where she grew up, centered on her experience as a WAVE, and how her life had gone on since the event in question. Because I am a woman as well, who is as deeply interested and quite knowledgeable about military history as is Dora, our rapport was better than one could have ever anticipated. The questions I tried to ask throughout the conversation were those of thoughts, reactions, feelings, clarifications, deviations from the norm, etc. And, above all, I tried my best to assure her that I had the utmost respect for her and all of her accomplishments and that any wishes or requests she may have had for me I would follow through with.

I analyzed the data she gave me several times. Each time I did I had my question always front and center, as well as the approach I wanted to consistently take—the emic. I always made sure that every representation that I made of Dora was one that she had relayed to me. This was accomplished through direct quotes. In presenting her life history, I have made every attempt at accuracy, but also to not offend her in any way. I wanted to make sure that nothing in Dora's representation would offend her. I further hope that the documents and other interviews I have used do not offend her or any other WAVES; as that was certainly NOT my intention. I only wanted to establish micro- and macro-scale “truths” as people at the time saw them.
Has Dora’s life history challenged any “truths” of the official documents, or cast doubt upon established theories? Dora’s life history does not challenge any “truths” that either The New York Times or the Hidden Army film reported, or in the representations of the feature story in the Vallejo Times Herald. Her story does challenge the “truths” presented in the representations of Life Magazine, however. Most of the stories in Life presented the women as being very “feminine” even though they were performing men’s traditional jobs and roles. From Dora’s life history, it appears more that Dora had to give up a lot of these “feminine” traits if she were going to survive. And, give them up, she chose to do. The interviews of Wayne and Lou Feaster do not seem to challenge Dora’s life history. In fact, Wayne said that “Looking back, ...it was ‘neat’ that women wanted to participate in things and to do their part.” And, Lou said that “When she saw those women in uniform, she thought, ‘Oh, that was so wondrous, I could never do that myself.’”

Has my questioning sought out the submerged consciousness of the practical knowledge of everyday life? The questioning that came out of Dora and my dialogue did address the submerged consciousness. These questions were: At the time, did you see the women in the Navy as a temporary phenomenon, or did you think it would go on forever? Do you think your life has been changed, or would it have been different if you hadn’t enlisted in the Navy? How did you and your friends react to that (the war-wounded patients), did you just do your job, or was it sad? Really, I didn’t know that? The answers I obtained were: “Dora thought it was very good work; she felt like she was really doing something.” “This training, according to Dora, was good for someone
who was not married, with no ties or anything, to see what others were doing and to possibly help someone.” “Dora knew it was not for her.” “I wasn’t going to have that. It was really something.” “When she was a child she never wanted breakfast, she always wanted to eat later in the morning, not when she first got up.” “What is that smell? I don’t like it. I didn’t eat that day.” “Some thought the adventure away from home was fun; some did not.” “Dora didn’t exactly enjoy it, but she had to say she was there.” “While Dora was serving in the Navy things went on and on and on, she didn’t even know what was happening in the outside world.” “Serving in the Navy for Dora was something that was needed then and so she did it.” “Dora just did the best she could.” “She just did her job. She didn’t dare get sad. She can’t remember the patients’ names now, but she remembers their faces and the feelings she got when she saw them.” “Dora enjoyed it. All the time she was there she was so glad to be there.” “Dora always thought it was a sharp-looking uniform.” “She has always been ‘picky, picky,’ about how her clothes looked.” “No one would have caught Dora with wrinkles in her uniform.” “Dora just about died on the spot.” “At that time Dora explains that she was really, really shy, which is why people were so surprised that she even went into the Navy.”

In reconstructing Dora’s life, do I try to find means of depicting her as an agent, molding her life rather than enduring it? In questioning Dora, no, I did not do this because of my goal to achieve the emic perspective; to obtain Dora’s constructed meaning, not my constructed meaning of her life. However, in the discussion I did, in
question two, because Dora actually is an active agent in her Life as she has reconstructed it for me, not a passive recipient of it, thus not simply enduring it.

What words are used in the study that could contribute to sexism? I have tried to make sure throughout the study that I do not contribute to sexism. With that said, however, some terms and labels, such as “yoemanettes” and “play girls” have been kept because those were really used in the 1910s and 1940s, respectively, without intending to be overtly sexist at the time, and had I changed the names and labels in those cases to reflect 2000s definitions of sexism, I would be misquoting the names in context.

From coding the interview text, five themes emerged from the three interviews: (1) You’ve got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative—“You just did your job. You didn’t dare get sad.” “So many (of the patients) were just kids, they weren’t even men yet. One arm or leg, one had both legs off and an arm,” (2) Courage Under Fire—not always literally, but boot camp especially, even though “she was really, really shy,” Dora had “to do things the Navy’s way and to learn, and learn quickly,” as well as to realize that to survive “she just did her job. She didn’t dare get sad;” (3) Remember Pearl Harbor—One had to have a strong desire to want to help people and end the war; to do whatever it takes. “To possibly help someone” was one of the determining factors in Dora’s decision to join the Navy rather than to stay home. The men too, Wayne told me when we were discussing his life history (of which only a fraction is included in this study—the part that involves the WAVES) that the men too, had to remind themselves that they were overseas away from home, going through the terrible
realities of war, to “get themselves some Japs” after the way their fellow American Navy men had been attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor; (4) Admiration and attitude adjustments—American society was proud and surprised by the fact that “a woman could do what a man could do, that a woman was as smart as a man.” But, when the war ended it took awhile for this admiration to change attitudes and social roles. Lou says that this was largely due to the fact that “when their men came home, there were not many jobs in their community... the jobs men had hoped to come home to were no longer available.” Therefore, with everyone fighting for jobs after the war, and with trying to return to some sort of normalcy, women were relegated, for the most part, to the end of the line. There were too many men who needed to find jobs first, the way they had before the war. But once President Truman took office, he and his administration recognized the need for women and society to benefit from women in the workplace; whether or not this was a popular idea, never mattered much to President Truman. His legacy was that he did what he thought was the right thing to do; whether or not America agreed with him. And that’s how the WAVES became a permanent fixture in the American Navy. And, in 1978 these WAVES became regular Navy personnel, not limited to reserve status; (5) Life is a beach (at least that’s what we’ll tell them when they ask)—Women and men who were away from home serving their country during the war had to find ways to keep their morale up, otherwise it is doubtful that they would have survived the ordeal. Dora “just did her job. She didn’t dare get sad.” This quote has been used a lot in this discussion to support many conclusions that I have made, but I think that is an important idea in itself. Maybe it
was because Dora didn’t remember all the negative things, but I have to believe that she conveyed the feelings she had all to me; that these were her lasting impressions. With this in mind, my having to repeat one quote to support many ideas and themes must reflect the point that Dora must have truly felt that she had had a wonderful experience being a WAVE, in spite of the sad reality that the object of war was.

Interpretations and Conclusions

*Life* magazine represents the WAVES in mixed ways. Of the sample in this study, the photographic essays seem rather neutral, showing the women doing their jobs and actually seemed to me like a good recruiting tool. The editorial essay on drafting women, on the other hand, was very strong and persuasive in its depiction of women of WWII, and the fact that they needed to join these small numbers of women who are doing something for their country and for female emancipation. Among the individual photographs, I also found mixed representations. The photo of the women in uniform at the fashion show was rather demeaning and belittling, and yet the photograph of the military woman standing alone at Penn Station was very humanistic and endearing. It doesn’t appear that *Life* quite knew how best to represent the WAVES to its readers.

For example, in the March 15, 1943 photographic essay, *Life* Staff Writers and photographer Martin Munkacsi, represent the WAVES as novelties. Munkacsi is described by the staff writers as the world’s greatest photographer of women. His
photos are very descriptive, and it seems, pretty representative, of the training of the WAVES. If I were a woman in 1943 reading this essay and looking at the pictures, I would get very excited about the WAVES. In fact, I would probably want to join. The essay certainly portrays the women as having a very different occupation than what typical women in 1943 had. It looks challenging and fun from the essay. This essay does treat women differently than men, in its tone of women doing such novel things (for being women), but at the same time I see no evidence that they are being belittled of being portrayed negatively.

In the January 11, 1943 photo-essay of the Girls’ ROTC (Life Staff Writers 1943), the women are doing men’s activities, but they are still women. And it appears that everyone must allow for that. If the exercises are too tough, the cadre let up on them so that the women can still dance. Would they have done the same for men? It is doubtful, and if they did, would they have said so? Basically, anything that the women in the ROTC could not do was okay, they were just helped out by another woman. It is interesting that even today, when women cannot physically do the same training as the men, instead of adjusting this for the women, the military just expects everyone to do the minimum. The military does not seem to want to recognize the differences between men and women and try to compensate for that, instead it tries to not deal with the issue and just make everyone just do the maximum that the physiologically weakest person can do. That just doesn’t seem very efficient. Perhaps this is the military’s way of bringing equality to men and women, and not trying to single women out, or be
known for acknowledging that women cannot physically do what men can do
(although they do make this statement in the special forces).

In the photo-essay on the Hospital Ship from the same edition, *Life* reports that the
nurses on the ship are in charge of the wards, but that they do mainly administrative
work. Only the corpsmen do the conventional nursing duties. *Life* pictures the nurses
on the nurses’ deck, with a caption reading that the ship (which *Life* calls she) travels
the Pacific Ocean peacefully and alone and is brightly lighted at night. The ship does
not have an escort or a combat ship, and has never been molested. With a caption like
that under the picture of the female nurses sunbathing on the deck with sunglasses on
like they’re on vacation, is *Life* describing a ship or the women on the ship? The way
*Life* refers to the ship as she, and its descriptions lead me to believe it is really referring
to the women, or at least that the ship and the women are one in the same thing to the
men. From this essay, I get the feeling that the women are really only there as comfort
for the wounded men. According to *Life*, the women are only there doing paperwork,
which is one less thing that the men have to do, but other than that it looks like a
vacation from the photos. The women, who are officers and nurses, do not get to use
their training as nurses, only the corpsmen get to do the conventional nursing duties.

The editorial essay presented on January 29, 1945 on *The Women (Life Staff Writer
1945)* is different than the previous photo-essays. It seems to be speaking only to men
about the problem of American women during WWII. At first, the essay points out a
need—American women need to be drafted, since not enough are joining up
voluntarily. The essay claims that women in WWII America need to be more active in
their own emancipation—like their grandmothers were. The essayist assumes women in WWII have this ability, but that they are giving in too easily to stereotypes. The essayist actually appears to be blaming men for the overdependant woman of WWII America. But, the essayist also says that American women, as a class, and culture, even more than men, have a lot to learn about the responsibilities of all-around citizenship and their roles in the modern world. The essayist’s conclusion is that American women are perfectly capable of learning it. Their grandmothers did.

I find this essay to be very progressive, and very different, from the photo-essays previously discussed. The essayist is taking on American women at this time (WWII) as a whole status group and gender, even as their own culture, and analyzes their situation, and decides what has contributed to this situation. The essayist’s solution is to draft them, thus forcing them to take the next step in their emancipation. This essay is so progressive, in fact, that the question is still being asked and argued in Congress sixty years later.

So, are American women any closer to equality with men than they were in 1945? In regards to their situation and representation in the military, the answer is yes and no. Women can now hold almost all of the same jobs in the Navy (the exception being the Navy SEALS because of physiological requirements), but if a situation came to a draft of Americans for war today, I don’t think American women would be drafted. In fact, I think the same problem would be a problem today as in 1945, that of not enough women volunteering for civilian and military war jobs. In fact, I wonder if there would be an even bigger problem today. Many people would probably be against women
being drafted, but at the same time, less women than in the 1940s may be apt to volunteer for wartime support. Today, women as a whole in America are the multi-taskers. More women today hold a job, raise children, and run a household all at the same time, and many without partners. Men sometimes do the same thing, but many more women do it than men. The Harvard School of Medicine and the Mayo Clinic even report that American women today have a much higher incidence of heart attacks and strokes because of the myriad daily tasks they perform today, compared to when they only worked in the home. Therefore, I don’t know that women who do all of these things today could manage to also contribute to a war effort. I would hope, however, that they would recognize the need to help their country and really see if they could make the sacrifices to their personal success that it would take in order to help the country. I am not sure if they would or not.

As progressive as this essay was, the April 19, 1943 picture of the week (Hoffman 1943), was instead a step back. The picture showed WAVES in uniform at a fashion show admiring lingerie. The WAVES were described by *Life* as some pretty WAVES at a fashion show thinking about lingerie, which does not do much in the way of taking the military women very seriously.

On yet another view of military women by *Life*, a photographer in 1943 (*Life* Staff Writers 1943) noticed the military men leaving with their wives, girlfriends, and/or children saying goodbye to them at Penn Station. Then the photographer noticed a military woman standing alone, with no one there saying goodbye to her. This made me feel very sorry for the woman; and the possibility entered my mind that maybe the
women felt alone and alienated in their decision to take over men's roles, since not all areas can be substituted, like social roles. Sure the occupational role was filled by the women, and filled well, but what about the social cultural aspect of doing men's jobs?

Judging from this picture, it must have been quite lonely and alienating when the women in the military were in and around society. They seemed socially accepted among each other and in their everyday associations with the military, but when one was alone without her social group, she seemed vulnerable and alone, like this photograph suggests.

The stereotype *Life* presents of the WAVES is one of uniqueness. On the whole, American women in WWII are not responsible and are overdependent on males. But, the WAVES, are a unique class, or culture, that stands alone—not like American women, and not like military men—they are a class and culture all their own. They are women, after all, doing men's jobs, but are allowed, and expected to do men's jobs in a female way. If the obstacle course is too tough, these women can help each other out, so that as a whole they can do it. The women of the WAVES are really seen by *Life* as a group, and not as individuals with names. Women's names are never mentioned, but men's names are.

Dora's individual experience contrasts to the *Life* magazine stereotype in two ways. The first way is that she is actually given a name and is individualized, like Navy men are in *Life* magazine; and not just seen as a woman of the WAVES, as Navy women
are in *Life* magazine. The other way is that she is far from the stereotype and caricature presented in the editorial essay on whether or not to draft women. In one respect, a woman like Dora does not need to be drafted. She saw a need and wanted to help out where she could. In another respect, if Dora had been drafted she would not have needed to catch up and assume more responsibility. She would have gone with no questions asked and have done the best she could. Dora represents the type of woman I would hope exists today. If, for example, the war in Iraq escalates and more people are needed, I hope there are women out there today in America like Dora.

This study has impacted my thoughts on women's gender and status in WWII subtly, but also a little somberly as well. I went into the study with a very romantic view of what it must have been like having lived during WWII as a woman. I (inaccurately) saw the time period as having less responsibility placed on women, and yet having men want them even more for their femininity than men seem to now—for whatever reason. In short, a romantic view. From this study, I can see now that it wasn't so romantic. Women were kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, America was calling on them to become more responsible and save American men's lives by doing un-traditionally female jobs; men's jobs. The ones that could, who didn't have children to take care of, or ailing family members, or farms to keep running, or dress shops to keep in business, did. But many women couldn't or chose not to, mainly because their men told them not to. Then those few women who did take on the responsibility were then fired, in most cases, or discharged once the war ended, to make way for the men again.
Today on an everyday basis, it seems like American women are trying to do as a whole what a few did during WWII. What I found out through this study is that it really is easier for us women today doing the same thing, because society as a whole is in support of it. The concept of women working in traditionally men's jobs is not seen anymore as unique or unusual, and so there is not such a social stigma associated with women being successful and responsible citizens. Women today perhaps don't need to feel so alone and alienated when in society where people know they work outside the home. On the other hand, however, women and men expect women today to do and be all these things they want to be and do, which has its health consequences. It comes down to a trade-off. In the time and culture of WWII, the social cultural aspect may have been harder for these women, but that may have helped them stay healthy. Today, the social cultural aspect is better, and their health seems to suffer more. The positive effect that comes out of this social cultural change is that women now have choices and options. Both options (work in the home and out of the home) obviously have consequences, but women now, as men do, have the freedom as a whole gender to make the choice as individuals that is better for them. However, usually, like men, it will probably come down to what they need to do to survive and be comfortable. So, while I can still admire and respect these pioneering women for their contributions and their foundations they laid for the feminist movement, I now can recognize how alone and disenfranchised they could have felt in American society at large. They seem to have had a wonderful time within their peer group of WAVES, and for that I can still
be envious, but for the alienation they may have felt from society, I feel rather somberly about now.

This study means to inform Americans on how the first women in the Navy experienced gender stereotyping and status. It means to examine the reported history of women’s achievements in the New York Times. It means to analyze selected Life magazine representations of the WAVES to middle class America. It means to examine what the WAVES as a whole did during WWII, and especially at Mare Island Naval Hospital and Shipyard. It means to ask a Navy man and a civilian woman what each of them thought and do think of WAVES of WWII. And, overall, this study means to acknowledge the contributions and hardships of gender stereotyping and status of the WAVES during WWII, which will hopefully make Americans today examine the role of women in the military and make sure we treat them with the understanding and respect that comes out of this unique and honorable past.

This study informs us today about just how little we know about the history of women in the military. For that matter, how much do Americans really know about women in the military today? Not very much. And in both cases our information and knowledge base is usually very skewed and inaccurate, as mine was. How can American women be expected to contribute and participate on a large scale today, if we do not even know the history and success our own grandmothers had during the pioneering years of WWII? It is time that Americans become more informed about their history and how they can build on that history. If women constantly believe they need to become outcasts of society or their community simply to help fulfill a need or
cause for their country, then shame on us. Shame on us for not educating American citizens on how to be good citizens based on real, everyday Americans; based on our own grandfathers and grandmothers. America’s men seem to have learned this in school, so, what about the women?

This study informs us about women in the military by introducing a history of the women in one branch of the military: the Navy. It informs us about who the WAVES were, how they trained, and what they did during WWII. It also informs us of an individual WAVE and how she benefited and was affected by being a WAVE. The study primarily informs us about gender roles and status that played out specifically in the women of the Navy during WWII. Hopefully from this information and knowledge may come more studies on women in the military. Either studies from different time periods or different branches, but even a more holistic understanding through more individual life histories of women of the WAVES would be beneficial.

These kinds of comparisons could provide us with a lot more knowledge about these women than this study introduces, and could help us better understand and help women in the military today. If we can recognize and understand problems that women had in the military in the past, as well as what the military did or did not do to try and help alleviate the problems, only then can we begin to try and target problems and help women overcome them today. We might even be able to begin to see potential problems before they become problems. Once we get better at this, and women begin to realize that America really does care about them as individuals, I believe that more of them would be willing and ready to help out and contribute to the
military. As long as women see it is as only benefiting and accommodating and recognizing men, then the lack of participation of a lot of women will only get worse, not better.

This study informs anthropology about the culture of women in a male-only society (the Navy) at a particular time (WWII). It does this on two levels: at the macrolevel and the microlevel. At the macrolevel, it contextualizes the culture of the WAVES as a whole—what the women as a whole did and how they were perceived by middle-class America at large. At the microlevel, the study explores one woman's description of her own behavior, and her motivations behind that behavior in a society that limits her choices, as well as her general experience as a WAVE.

This study informs feminist theory by addressing each author's approaches and suggestions from the literature review directly in the study. In other words, the important issues these authors think are vital for the feminist approach are framed in the form of questions in the discussion (this chapter), and then specifically answered and cited with specific quotes from the life history. But overall, this study informs feminist theory about the absent other in the conflict of WWII. This study assumes we know already what the men in the Navy contributed to the war, but what about the women that we know were there? This study answers that question.

This study informs the life history method on ways to analyze a text in two ways for the same study—once for generalizing themes (etically) and once for meaningful categorization and actual interpretation/presentation of the life history (emically). It also informs the life history on how to approach and conduct the life history of a
woman differently than that of a man, in order to obtain consciousness, and yet still have equal purpose and value as a male life history to inform culture. Watson and Watson-Franke (1985) discussed how this was usually, if not always, a problem for women's life histories. Traditionally they have only been seen as informative as supplements to the male ones and not as important. Here I have tried to present a study of the gender and status of women in the Navy during WWII. I hope I have succeeded in my quest. Later on I could see some follow-up studies, perhaps comparing the experiences of the women of the Navy in WWII with the women of the Navy today—their feelings on gender roles and status. As well as with a blockbuster, historically-correct, yet entertaining Hollywood motion picture on the WAVES, that is not, in the words of Dassa Carvey, publicity chair of WAVES National, “fluff.”
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