

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
Dolores Raczynski  
United States Army Women's Army Corps  
World War II  
2003

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**Raczynski, Dolores**, (1921- ), Oral History Interview, 2003

User copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 45 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

### **ABSTRACT**

Raczynski, a Milwaukee, Wis. native, discusses her World War II service as a member of the Women's Army Corps working in communications as a switchboard operator serving with the 3341st Signal Service Battalion in France. She talks about enlisting in the WACs to please her father, a World War I veteran, and entering at the same time as many of her extended family members after learning her cousin was a Japanese prisoner of war (POW). She comments on trying to join the WAVES and being turned away because she did not weigh enough and drinking lots of water to meet the weight requirements for the WACs. She touches upon training at Fort Oglethorpe (Georgia), brief stay in England during the German air raids, and working near the front lines in France. Raczynski comments on switchboard operation, hearing of the terrible conditions at the battle front, learning to put the horrors of war behind her and focus on her job, living in Army tents, and applying for discharge after learning her mother was ill. She touches upon staying with a French family for a week and several other aspects of her service after looking at her photograph collection. Returning to Wisconsin, she mentions difficulty joining the American Legion because she was a woman, marrying a soldier she met while in France, and wish she could have done more for the war effort.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Raczynski (1921- ) served in Europe with the Women's Army Corps during World War II in one of the first WAC units to reach France. After the war she returned to Wisconsin and settled in Milwaukee.

Interviewed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2003.

Transcribed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2003.

Transcript edited by

## Interview Transcript

John: Good morning. I am John Driscoll, and I'm a volunteer with the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. And this is an oral history interview with Dolly - Dolores - Raczynski, of Milwaukee. Today is January [December] 3, 2003. We are at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, in the conference room, and good morning, Dolly, and thanks a lot for agreeing to the interview.

Dolores: Well, thank you very much for having me.

John: Okay. To get started, will you tell us something about your early life? Where were you born? And when?

Dolores: I was born in Milwaukee, 1921, and lived there most of my life.

John: Your birthday is?

Dolores: June 16, 1921. And I went to school, Catholic school. And I went to Pulaski High School. And from there I had small jobs in between, but I ended up with the telephone company, as a telephone operator.

John: How about family? Brothers or sisters?

Dolores: I have a sister, Virginia, and my mother and father, Martha and Walter. He was, well, I guess it all started with him. He was a Navy man in World War I. And, when World War II came up, he wanted to enlist. But being forty-four, the Navy wouldn't take him on the ship. He had to have an office job, which he refused. I heard him say, oh, he wished he had a son. So, I thought, oh, here is my chance. Maybe I can do something. And that is when I decided to join the service.

John: Now, let me back up, just a bit. Do you remember what you were doing on Pearl Harbor Day?

Dolores: Oh, very much so. I was working a switchboard, and it came over the switchboard, to us at the telephone company, and I had a cousin that was in Pearl Harbor, and became a Japanese prisoner. It was a very traumatic time. We went home and the whole family got together because of him. And that started everybody, all my cousins, everyone, we all started to go join the service. And this is when I went, well, I first went to the Navy office, because my dad was in the Navy. And I couldn't pass the test, because I was underweight. And they suggested, well, try the Army. So I went over to the WACs. And one of the nurses helped me to drink water, as much as I could hold, to meet the weight gain. And that is how I got in.

John: Okay, when was that?

Dolores: This was in December of 1944, right after Pearl Harbor.

John: 1941?

Dolores: No, this was in 1944. I'm sorry. My reception was in January 18, 1944. We went to Fort Oglethorpe, and basic training. And I wanted to be a Link trainer with the Air Force, so they sent me to Texas after my basic training and it so happened, when they found out I was a switchboard operator, I ended up in the hospital in the air base, running the switchboard. I wasn't there very long when we got out overseas orders. I went to Amarillo, in May, and then in June I went back to Fort Oglethorpe, for overseas training. Which was quite rigorous, we had the gas mask training, crawling under barbed wire and all of the things that they do. They showed us many, many movies of the atrocities in Germany, and trained us for the events that we would face in Europe. After the training there, they sent us to New York City, on June 13. And I ended up in London, on June 15.

John: 19?

Dolores: 44. And we were in London a few weeks. We were there when they dropped the V bombs over England. And we were very well protected. We couldn't go out alone. We had to be with someone in authority, wherever we went. We couldn't eat any of their food, because they were all on rations. And we were billeted in old doctors' homes. The doctors had given up their homes and we were billeted there. And the people were very kind to us.

John: Now, you would have got there just a week or so after D-Day?

Dolores: Yes.

John: Okay, what was the attitude among the American service people, with that. Did you notice anything?

Dolores: A lot of excitement and I think a lot of fear. Anticipation. Everybody was afraid to talk. In other words, they were amazed at what happened, so fast. There is something that I don't want to put on the record because I don't know how true it is. It was just gossip at that time, but we had the black outs there. We worked the switchboards there, too, also, between England and France at that point.

John: What outfit, unit, were you with at this time?

Dolores: I have to look

John: That's okay. Oh, we can skip that and maybe come back to that later.

Dolores: I have the papers. I have to look.

John: Oh, you have a lot of papers. Yea.

Dolores: We were in the 305th, 3701 Air Force Base Unit when I left Amarillo and I have so many, we were transferred so many times.

John: Yes. You still have your orders. That's great.

Dolores: I was in Headquarters Command, I don't know that we ever had any.

John: That's okay.

Dolores: I don't have something, somewhere, that says what unit I was in. Oh, a T-5, I was a T-5 in the 3341 Signal Service Battalion.

John: Okay. Okay. Now, a Tech-5 would be about where?

Dolores: Just below a sergeant. And we ran the switchboard. You know where the department store, the great big department store, and they had underground rooms in it, and they put the switchboard there. And we used to go in covered trucks. I don't know anything about the city at all, from that time. Except when we were off duty, and we'd get away to go to Convent Gardens or something like that. But we manned the switchboards. And then we got orders to go overseas.

John: Oh, okay.

Dolores: This is when we left New York.

John: Okay, you flew over.

Dolores: And this is when we took the ship from England to France.

John: Okay.

Dolores: And this is when we landed in France.

John: Oh, yea. Okay. Wow.

Dolores: And we landed at Boulogne, France. Boulogne, yea. July 31, and we shipped to Paris. We set up our switchboard in the fields in Boulogne, in the fields. We had the switchboard that connected the, what did they call the radio reporters that were on the front line? Walkie?

John: Walkie-talkies?

Dolores: Or, whatever. Their telephone systems on the front lines that would come through us to headquarters.

John: Okay.

Dolores: Like Charlie calling so-and-so. And I don't remember many of the names because I was actually the supervisor of the switchboard, so didn't actually know all of the names.

John: Well, you were actually in the field, you were fairly close to the front.

Dolores: Yes. We were bombed in Paris. They bombed the railroad station in Paris. But then after that it was very quiet. And then I was in Paris until June, 1945.

John: Okay.

Dolores: And we went to Frankfurt, Germany. We had the switchboards there where the hospital is in Frankfurt, the American hospital. There too we were transferred back and forth in covered trucks. We were billeted in the old, like Quonset huts.

John: Oh, yes. I'm very familiar with them.

Dolores: And we made friends with some of the people there. They were very nice to us. They brought us fresh eggs and things. We weren't supposed to eat them, but we did. And then from Frankfurt, that is when I received the notice that my mother was ill and I had applied to headquarters, to General Eisenhower, and I got my release to come home.

John: Okay.

Dolores: And that was in August, or September, my release.

John: You were over there for V-E Day. What was that like?

Dolores: Pandemonium.

John: I can believe that.

Dolores: All our restrictions were removed, and everyone was out on the streets, and we had a great time with the people there. Like I say, it was a great adventure. Because we met some of the people. I had very good friends in Paris. In Paris, we were billeted in hotels. They took over a few hotels. We were in the George V Hotel. And there were three others before that were smaller but then we finally ended up in the George V, right off of the Champs Élysées. And like I say, we

were always taken by trucks to where the switchboards were.

John: Was that for security? So you wouldn't?

Dolores: Yes. Very secure.

John: Okay. That makes a lot of sense.

Dolores: Because there was still a lot of underground going on, and they didn't let us free very much at all. We had to have passes. Our captain had to know who we were going with. They had to show credentials. One of my cousins was on R and R from the Battle of the Bulge, and he came in through Paris and found where I was. And he got permission to see me.

John: Oh, tremendous.

Dolores: And we spent an evening together. We went to some of the bars and had dinner. It was hard, some times, but it was fun some times. A little bit of each.

John: Earlier on, what did a girl from Milwaukee feel like, getting into the Army? That was like going to the moon, wasn't it? It was, for me.

Dolores: I'm that kind of a person. You give me a chance to do something and I'll go for it. You know? Everybody said I was crazy and, of course, all my friends said "Oh, no, no." I had two girlfriends who, after I got in, I wrote to them and said it was pretty nice in basic training. They joined, and never made it. They quit. They couldn't go through the whole thing. Basic training at Oglethorpe, Georgia, was very difficult in January. It was muddy, and rainy, actually we had to keep our shoes clean, and you couldn't possibly.

John: Yes, I know. You were trained, I assume, by other WACs?

Dolores: Yes, we had officers. There were my officers that trained us, at basic training. And I have a picture of our whole unit. I can't find myself in here, I am so little. Here.

John: Oh, way up there. Okay. Oh, yes, sure. Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, February 8, 1944. Wow. That's very--

Dolores: We learned many things. We learned how to march. We learned, well, naturally, first to make up your bed and keep your area spic and span. And we learned the history of the United States, a lot of the history. And we learned the commands, and what our responsibilities were. To the United States.

John: Ah, any reunions? Did you get together with anyone, any of the girls? Girls, or women, when you came back?

Dolores: No, in my situation, I left alone, so that I didn't know where the others ended up, and we never got to say goodbye to each other, and it was like, the letter came and I presented it to my officers, and they said, "Well, you write a letter of appeal." And within about three days I was on a Jeep, going from Wiesbaden, that took me right into Paris, and I was on a troop plane. You know what those were like.

John: Oh, yes.

Dolores: With all the seats on the side. And they brought me to Washington, and I took a train to Fort Sheridan.

John: I just, fifty years later, my son got on the Internet, and five of us from fifty years ago are in touch with each other.

Dolores: I have some of the names of the girls from Wisconsin but I never got in touch with any of them at all. The reunions that I do have are with my high school class.

John: When you came out, you had the G. I. Bill. Did you ever use it?

Dolores: I tried. They offered it to me, yes. And I was, well, I was concerned about my mother at first. I didn't use it, but then, when I went back to use it, it was too late.

John: I see.

Dolores: I couldn't benefit from it.

John: Okay. What about the VFW? The AmVets? Any of the organizations?

Dolores: I belong to the VFW. But it's the national, and I don't go to any of the meetings, or anything. It's just that my name is there. And I get these mail, donations. I belong to the American Legion Post in West Allis, the [unintelligible] Post. Sixty-one years I'm a member there.

John: Tremendous. That's great.

Dolores: A lot of the people there don't know me from before. A lot of them have passed away and those that are left don't know me. One of my schoolmates is a member there also. Through her husband, she is a member of the Auxiliary.

John: Okay.

Dolores: I was quite upset when I came back from the service, though. Being in the Auxiliary at that time, I wanted to transfer into the American Legion. They don't take women. Then, after a while, they appealed, they said, "Come on in, join the

Legion, the men's group." And I said, "No, thank you." I stayed in the Auxiliary. So, that was something funny.

John: Going in, again, out of a, I assume, fairly comfortable home in Milwaukee, Army food, Army living, Army clothes, what was this like for a young woman?

Dolores: I just made up my mind to do it, no matter what. The only thing I didn't like was the cornmeal mush in the morning. But the other meals were pretty fine. I couldn't eat the cornmeal mush. In basic training, it was fine. In Texas, it was much better, although in Texas, being such a sandy area, there were a lot of cockroaches. When you turned over your cup in the cafeteria, you had to be very careful. But the food there was very good and, in England, we had our rations, we had to eat our C-rations. And some of the people would make tea for us, tea and scones in the afternoon. I remember when one of my cousins from the Air Force came in to London and I got passes. You couldn't go with officers, either. We had to stay with enlisted personnel. So he got passes, he came to the billet and we got passes to go. He had a friend with him, and I got another girl, and we were allowed to go out. We went to the Astor Hotel.

John: Oh. okay.

Dolores: And we had dinner there, and that is where I saw, who was the famous movie star who was in the Air Force?

John: Clark Gable? Jimmy Stewart?

Dolores: Jimmy Stewart.

John: Oh, yea?

Dolores: He was there with his wife, and I got his autograph. In fact, the English were very perturbed with me because I disturbed a customer of theirs. I used to send the autographs to my sister, but she doesn't have anything that I sent her. I'm not sure what she did with it. When we were in France, Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire came.

John: Tremendous.

Dolores: I got their autographs. And when I was in New York, I got the autograph from Lawrence Welk and Harry James, Betty Grable.

John: Oh, wow.

Dolores: My children, when I tell them all the things I did, they can't believe it was me. They say, "Boy, you were a wild one." I didn't think I was wild. I was just anxious

to get all the knowledge I could.

John: Sure. That's great. Well, in total, how long were you in, Dolly?

Dolores: Twelve, a year and a half, a little over a year and a half. About eighteen months.

John: How about Reserves, and that? Did you do any Reserves, or did you get out when you got out?

Dolores: I got out.

John: That's what I did, too, yea.

Dolores: It seemed that when I got home, there were a lot of demands for my time and I didn't have time to do it.

John: Yea, when I got out, I was finished, then.

Dolores: And one of the GI's that I met, I met him first in Paris and then he was in the military intelligence. He knew five languages. He was one of the people who dressed like a civilian and went behind the lines to get information as to where the Germans were billeted and that kind of information. And he was trapped in the Battle of the Bulge. And I thought that he was lost, but he did come back several weeks after, he looked like a tramp because they were living in the woods all that time.

John: Oh, yea.

Dolores: But he survived that. And then I got home, and he was released, and we were married.

John: Oh, then--?

Dolores: No, that was someone else. And that didn't work out. And later on, I met my husband.

John: How about, after this big adventure, coming back to civilian life? Any problems there, adjusting?

Dolores: Yes. I wanted to go back. I wanted to make the service my career. But my mother was very possessive of me. "No, no, no, no, don't go." And all this hardship. I regret it, but what do you do? You have to do what you have to do.

John: Yea, yea. I think we all had a problem getting back in harness.

- Dolores: It is a very different life style. You are living with people who are like you are, adventurous.
- John: It is regimented and controlled, but at the same time, you are very independent. You are on your own and when you come back, family, home, neighborhood, friends, it's sort of--
- Dolores: They welcomed us with open arms and everything, but everybody had a job. Well, no, that's not true, because there were rations. When I married my husband and he worked for the Office of Price Administration, is that what it was?
- John: OPA? Yeah.
- Dolores: Then after that closed up, there were no jobs. And that is probably what broke up the marriage.
- John: The economy fell, yeah.
- Dolores: And I went back to the telephone company, and I worked there for a long time. And then became a housewife and mother, with four children. And I told my children, "Don't stay around the house. You travel and do as much as you can do." And they are all independent people. And they travel. Now they take me on a cruise every once in a while. I go on a cruise, a family cruise.
- John: Oh, that's great. That's great. Would you want to go through any of these [photos and documents], Dolly? And just mention this. Who is the officer, the WAC officer?
- Dolores: This is Lieutenant Cooper, was my main officer. And this was Lieutenant Bidwell. I have some things written on the back of them. This was a whole group of officers. This was in basic training. This, I don't know, what does it say? And the newspaper article.
- John: Oh. "Ten Wisconsin WACs brought in from Milwaukee were in the first contingent of WACs which arrived at Paris by truck just a week after the French capitol had been liberated. The WACs from Milwaukee are Private Dolores Urbanic [?] — that's you? Staff Sergeant Helen Antross, Corporal Carole Fromm, and Corporal Rose Schreiner. Oh, that's terrific.
- Dolores: See, I didn't know any of these because I was pulled out of Texas to go into here.
- John: "The first ten women into Paris." That is tremendous.
- Dolores: And then you get letters from the girls. See, we had a chance to say goodbye at Oglethorpe but not in. Here are more pictures. Doris Hedeger. I believe she was

from Wisconsin. That is before I went, that I knew her. And Ortiz. Those are the two that left Milwaukee with me. And our group. This is when we were on the planes, going to Paris. These are the women that are listed in that newspaper article.

John: Oh, tremendous.

Dolores: These are pictures of England. When we arrived in England. Yes, our baggage and where we stayed in the billets. This is how we landed on the beach. I don't know if it was Normandy beach, or Omaha. I don't remember which. Does it say anything?

John: "Utah Beach, July, 1944." Oh, wow.

Dolores: And this is how we were living in the tents.

John: Living in tents, yea.

Dolores: We washed out of our helmets.

John: The handiest thing in the world is a GI helmet. You can sit on it, you can wash in it.

Dolores: This is how we had our classes. Our mess hall.

John: Out of doors. Right. Oh, boy.

Dolores: Here are all the girls together. In front of the place where the switchboards were. I call them Quonset huts, but they weren't really. They were wooden shacks, like that. The Communications Division. And this was in Ste. Eglise. Montberg, France.

John: What a bunch of pictures.

Dolores: This family used to do our laundry. And my mother used to send boxes of things, and I was putting lipstick on the little girl here. Right there. And this is in front of their farm. And this is there when we saw Bob Hope.

John: These are great. These are just great.

Dolores: We found a parachute in a field.

John: I just interviewed a fellow who was shot down over Austria. And he bailed out of his aircraft. And three young Austrian women came and got him, and took him to their family farm. And eventually, he became a prisoner of war. And recently he

went back, and met the three young women. And they said, “Do you know why we came and got you?” And he said, “Well, to help me.” And they said, “No, they wanted the parachute, for underwear. There was a war on.” And he thought, “Oh, it was me.” No, they wanted the parachute.

Dolores: See, I made a scarf out of the parachute.

John: Oh, yea.

Dolores: They took them all. They did something with them all the time.

John: Isn't that great. That is a nice scarf. Yes. Tremendous.

Dolores: I have some pictures, oh, this is of the cathedral, and this is the little girl. This is one of the girls I worked with and there is a little girl in here that took care of us. At the hotel. This is her baby. She wrote to me a few times, and I sent letters there, but I don't know if they ever got to her because of the address.

John: Here you are standing in front of the Eiffel Tower.

Dolores: Well, we had time off after we had--

John: I am going to stop and turn this over, okay?

**[End of Side A of Tape 1.]**

John: Okay, this is the beginning of Side 2 of Tape 1, and we are taking a look at this wonderful collection of photographs that Dolly has. Oh, yea, Churchill, himself, and DeGaul.

Dolores: That was the victory parade in Paris.

John: And Eden. Oh, the victory parade in Paris. Oh, wow. Oh, what a remarkable thing. The Arc de Triumph. Yea.

Dolores: At the Tome of the Unknown Soldier.

John: Oh, this is tremendous. Wow.

Dolores: We lived in those buildings off of the main street.

John: Oh, from the top of the Eiffel Tower. Isn't that tremendous? What a great collection of photographs.

Dolores: And you know what that is. The outdoor toilets that they have on the streets.

John: Oh, yes.

Dolores: And some more pictures. This is from the Follies Bergere [?].

John: Oh, okay.

Dolores: One of the captains took me to the Follies, and I went to the opera there. This is the girl that took care of us in France, and she wrote me. That is her husband.

John: Oh, this is tremendous. What a great collection.

Dolores: And this is my first husband, here. He was Greek, and he went to the Greek embassy in Paris, and this man befriended him. Very rich furrier. And he had a home in, I don't remember what the town was. But he arranged for us to spend a week at his home. In the southern part of France. With his family, at his home. And, I have a story to tell about that. Because we got there. We took the train and we had to stand all the way. It was about a two-hour train trip south of Paris. And she had dinner made for us. Well, my mother used to send gift packages all the time. I didn't know what to take. I didn't know the family. But I took cosmetics because he said they had two daughters. And I took a can of pineapple. I gave it to the mother at the dinner table. We had eaten. She made poached eggs, just perfect little round things. And they had lamb, I guess, from their property. And she brought out this can of pineapple after dinner. And there were holes in the top. And she made the children smell it, and she explained what pineapple was. And she opened it, and took one slice, and cut pieces. Each girl had one piece. And that is how they learned what pineapple was. And she said that she would treasure it, she would keep that, I don't know for how long. But she said that they could only have one piece at a time.

John: Oh, wow, what a story.

Dolores: That doesn't really make sense. I couldn't believe it.

John: That is great.

Dolores: And this is when we went to Frankfurt.

John: Yea. Look how that is all bombed out.

Dolores: And this is the Jeep that I took when I was coming home.

John: Yep. Tremendous vehicle.

Dolores: They drove me from Frankfurt to Paris in the Jeep, to the airport. And these are

my friends, on vacation. Some letters, and V-Mails.

John: Yes, I remember V-Mails.

Dolores: I want to say e-mail, but it is V-Mail. And this is--are pictures they took those few days when we were in New York. We were able to get out. And here are some from Germany.

John: This is so tremendous. What a collection. Ah, one of the questions that I ask everybody, thinking back, just in general over the whole thing, what is your feeling? You were living at home. You were nice and safe and secure. And this thing happened. And you jumped into it, you said, but what is your feeling about having done that? Having served that?

Dolores: Well, I am glad I did. I am very glad that I did. I wish I could have done more. I gave them everything that I knew. Being a switchboard operator, they put me in charge of the switchboard women. I think my records say there were thirty women that I directed, scheduled for the switchboards, and everything. And, I don't know, it was just like another part of a different part of me. I wish I could do it again. I wish I could keep doing it.

John: Yea. I have, I had a good friend, Stephen Ambrose, the writer. He just passed away. And he wrote several books on World War II, primarily on the people in the war, not the big stuff. The guys and the gals. And he was talking to a group one time and he, a lot of the people were saying, "Well, we didn't do a lot." And he said, "You know, you were giants!" And people backed up. And he said, "You went and you saved the world." And everybody was thinking, "Well, I didn't." But, you know.

Dolores: Together, we did. I don't feel like it was much, you know. I traveled, I saw different parts of the world. I met different people. I was very well protected. I was safe.

John: But, you were there.

Dolores: I was there. And, oh, yes, we saw a lot of bad things. We saw the injured, and those who were coming back from the front lines. And we heard a lot of the stories that they brought from the front lines. And we saw results of the atrocities, and things. But you kind of push that to the back of your mind, and you forge ahead. You just keep going. And it's like you are doing something for a good cause. I mean, today, I feel sorry for the veterans that they don't know who they are fighting. They are there, and, I mean, there is no battle lines.

John: That's true.

- Dolores: When we were in Paris, you could tell the Parisians, and you could tell the Germans, or the different nationalities, of the people that we mingled with. And you could see someone who was not, who was like sort of like questionable. And you didn't associate with them, and you'd get away from those things. But, now, in the war, I don't know what they do. I don't know how they know each other.
- John: That's true. It's a much different thing.
- Dolores: I don't know, if I had a gun and one of the Germans came up to me, if I could fire it. I don't know if I could do that. I mean, they were really in the war. They were the ones that should be honored.
- John: I have another friend, John Patrick Hunter. He just died the other day. He was a newspaper man, a newspaper correspondent. And he landed on one of Aleutian Islands, I don't know which one. And in the course of landing, came face to face with a Japanese soldier. I asked, "What did you do?" And he said, "Well, the Japanese fellow was as smart as I was, because we both turned and ran as fast as we could." Well, what a remarkable, remarkable story. And you have got a tremendous memory for all of this. Before we wrap this up, anything that you want to add to it? Comments? I am sure, if you are like me, tomorrow you'll come up with fifteen things.
- Dolores: Well, it's been a long time, and like I say, I don't remember the names of the towns, or some of the people that I even met. But I had a very traumatic experience when Sherry called me and she said that they want to interview. And this book, I couldn't find it.
- John: Oh, wow.
- Dolores: I had spent three months in New York with my son, and I had my photographs there, and I thought that I had left it there. He looked through everything, and couldn't find it. Two of my other sons looked through all the boxes and they couldn't find it. When my husband passed away, I moved to my daughter's home. I went through every box. Everything, and I couldn't find it. And then, just about a week, well, Thanksgiving was Thursday. The Thursday before that I was taking a nap and I opened my eyes, and "Go in the basement one more time." I stood in the basement, and I looked around and I thought, "I've been through all these boxes. I can't do that again." And then I noticed two cedar chests against the wall. And my daughter only had one cedar chest. She never had two. I wondered if it might be mine. And that is where I found it.
- John: That's great.
- Dolores: It was right on top. I was so glad, because without this I wouldn't know the dates, or anything. I couldn't remember the dates.

John: This is a tremendous story. Well, what we will do with this, I will, when we finish up here, I'll transcribe it, I'll type it up. And put it on our computer, and make a disk out of it. And that is what I'll give to the Archives here. And then I'll mail you a copy of the transcript. And as I say, if there is anything in it that you want to change, get in touch with the Museum.

Dolores: I remember one little story. When we left New York, took the plane through Newfoundland and Iceland, or Greenland, one of the places where they had an Army station, then we flew over Scotland and landed in Ireland. But, on the way, when we got close to Ireland, you know, we were in a little plane, about ten people. In the bucket seats, and looking down at the ocean. And I saw this big yellow spot. And I remembered in our training that was someone in a life boat that had put the color in the water.

John: The dye, yea.

Dolores: And I called my captain, and I said, "Look at that. It looks like somebody is in a lifeboat down there." And she said, "You're right." So she went to the pilot and he radioed, and there was a ship nearby, and they did save three people. I don't know if they were military people, but they saved the three people in the lifeboat.

John: Oh, that's tremendous. Just looking out the window.

Dolores: Yea. The yellow color in the water. I was watching it, because when we went over Greenland, the water there is emerald green, just beautiful. And then when we got to that side, it turned kind of gray. And then I saw it and I thought, "Oh, my gosh, that looks like what we learned in basic training."

John: Well, three people should be very grateful for someone looking out the window of that aircraft.

Dolores: We don't know anything about it, but when the pilot radioed, a ship that was nearby went and went and saved those people. That was another little story. So it was a very exciting time in my life. And I think it helped me to face the future.

John: That's great. I need a release from you. The files here, the archives, will be here forever, as long as there is a state government. And this will, the release, allows students, people like that, to take a look at them. It allows the museum to show them. But while I am making that out, after you did mention, my aunt was a switchboard operator, also. Not a WAC. Okay, this is the, I am going to shut this off. If you think of anything, tell me and I'll turn it right back on.

**[End of Interview.]**