



Martha Shipp
United States Cadet Nurse Corps
Registered Nurse
World War II—Homefront

Martha Goldenbogen Shipp

**Veterans
History
Project
Transcript**

**Interview conducted
May 17, 2005**

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Veterans History Project Interview Transcript

Veteran: Martha Goldenbogen Shipp

Rank: Registered Nurse

Branch of Service: United States Cadet Nurse Corps

Theater: Homefront

Interview Date: 5/17/2005, 1:30-3 p.m.

Place: Large Meeting Room B

Equipment: Panasonic Standard Cassette Transcriber

Interviewer: Neil O'Shea

For the purposes of the record here, can you please state your name in full?
(Interviewer's words)

Martha Goldenbogen Shipp. (Veteran's words)

Thank you.

This Veterans History Project interview is taking place on Tuesday afternoon, May 17th, in the year 2005.

This afternoon, we are conducting this interview in the large meeting room. Today's interview is historic in its own way, as we are interviewing our first lady veteran of World War II, Martha Goldenbogen. And what's also interesting about this interview is that Martha Goldenbogen is now married, and her last name is Shipp, and Mrs. Shipp is the wife of Bill Shipp, whom we had the good fortune to interview last month for the Veterans History Project. So, the Shipp's will be our first team, our first husband and wife team although they were not husband and wife at that time. They first met at a wedding in 1948. So their perspectives will be interesting on World War II. My name is Neil O'Shea, and I'm going to move on now to the first general question. Martha, what branch of service did you serve in?

017- entering the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps

The United States Cadet Nurse Corps.

I see. And I'm guessing, like so many of our veterans, you were probably a recent high school graduate at the time of the war, or how did you come to be...?

I was. I worked for three years after graduation from high school before I went into the Corps.

And was that in a medical field?

No. It was an electrical service.

And then

In other words, it was the Detroit Edison Company.

The Detroit Edison Company.

Yes.

And then how did you wind up going from the Detroit Edison Company to the Harper Hospital, it says here?

Well, I heard about the Corps, and so I was sitting there in the office, and I thought maybe I could do better. So, when I heard about it, I investigated it and decided to go.

And this involved young women from any particular background or field joining this Corps?

Yes.

To develop more nursing personnel or

Yes. We were to become registered nurses at the end of our three years.

So you had to undertake three years training then...

Yes.

And I suppose while you're undergoing training, you're also working in a hospital too.

Definitely.

Yes.

035 – training at Detroit's Harper Hospital

We had --our classes were part of the day and, the rest of the day, to make up an eight-hour day, we worked in the hospital with the patients.

And that was there at Harper Hospital in Detroit?

Yes.

And were any of those patients veterans or?

No.

Was there a national shortage of nurses at the time of the war or because of the war, do you think?

Yes, a lot of the registered nurses had gone into the service and, more or less, the students kept the hospital going.

You asked about did we work with veterans. The last six months, I worked in the Veterans Hospital in Maywood.

Here in Maywood, Illinois.

Yes.

047 – working in Maywood, Illinois, at Hines Veterans Hospital

So you were transferred then from Harper Hospital in Detroit to Maywood, Illinois, or

It wasn't really a transfer. We had a choice of what kind of nursing we wanted to go into in the last six months, and that was one of our choices.

And you chose

The veterans.

The veterans.

Yes.

And, so, did you find the training difficult at the Harper Hospital or was it

Well, no, I don't think so. It might have been a little hard to get back to the books after being away three years, but other than that, no.

Had you enjoyed biology or science in high school?

Yes, I took biology in high school.

So that probably helped a little bit, I'm guessing.

Probably.

Yes.

So you arrive in Hines then, would that have been in--

1940-

Let's see

`46 or `47

1947

It would have been the last six months of our training. We were at Hines Veterans Hospital until September, 1947.

You might have been helping or ministering to war veterans who had served overseas.

Yes, they were all veterans at that hospital.

From the European or Pacific theaters both or

Yes, I think they were World War II veterans, and some were World War I veterans.

Oh, of course.

078 - remembering the paraplegic veteran

Any particular ones that you remember that had great stories that were

Well, the one young man that I really remember, he was unique because he was a paraplegic. And, I don't know, he had been there for some time. And he always was in bed. He never sat up. He couldn't anymore. He was rather stiffened. His muscles didn't work anymore. But one thing he did, was he painted, and he learned to hold the brush in his teeth.

Wow.

And they would set up a stand over top of him, and he would communicate his pictures through painting. He also could talk. I think his accident was that he jumped into a pool, and I guess he hit his head at the bottom of the pool.

Was that while he was in the service?

I think so.

Of course, Hines Hospital is still an important service center these days for veterans. I mean it's

It's lots smaller, though.

Is it smaller now?

Yes. Because Loyola is out there now.

And they have taken over a lot of those buildings.

094- getting in that chemistry course requirement

Continuing on with our interview now, and I may not have mentioned, but Martha's husband Bill is also present at our table here, and Bill has suggested that we ask his wife Martha about a chemistry course so I--

Well, I didn't take chemistry in high school. And that was one of the things I had to have to get into nursing was chemistry. So, I went back to the high school, and I talked to the chemistry teacher. And he happened to be the same one that was there when I was in school, but he gave me private chemistry lessons after I finished work. I would go to the school and we would do experiments. He sometimes had them set up already, so it wouldn't take so long to get going. And, so, I spent a few months with him taking chemistry.

That made for a long day.

Well, it was before dinner.

Before dinner.

Yes.

And you didn't blow up anything in his house -- sodium or

No, I went to the high school and had the chemistry lesson.

And the lab was there.

I had my lessons there in the high school.

So did you enjoy being back in high school? Did you feel funny?

I don't know. I was the only one there, so it didn't make any difference.

And was that in Michigan that high school was?

Yes, where I went to school. Yes.

Detroit area or

No, I grew up in Mount Clemens, which was 20 miles north of Detroit.

115 - the Cadet Nurse Corps Uniforms

Now the-- you were kind enough and Bill was kind, also, to retrieve them for us-- these pictures of yourself in uniform. So, were these the uniforms that you wore all the time that you were on duty?

Oh, no. We wore regular school uniforms on duty. We, sometimes, not too often, we would wear these uniforms when we went out.

So how-- the United States Cadet Nurse Corps that was then founded after the war began like '41 or '42 or

I would presume so, but I'm not sure. (1943)

And I wonder, did it continue after the War or was it pretty much a World War II phenomenon?

It was. No, it didn't continue after those who were already signed up finished their course, and then I don't think there was any more after that.

So, did you stay in the field of nursing as an RN then after your time at Hines Hospital?

Yes.

And you felt your training that you received was first class?

It was very good.

Very good. What were some of the other students like in the class at the-- in Detroit Harper Hospital, were they all ...?

We were a mixture of recent high school graduates and some of us who had graduated previously.

Were you all Midwesterners or

No, we had a Canadian girl in our class. We had a girl from, I remember, from Texas.

So were there other training centers in the United States, other campuses, as it were, for this?

Oh, yes, the bigger hospitals in Detroit all had them.

Many hospitals had one.

Yes. A friend of mine trained at Ford Hospital-- Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

So the bigger hospitals in Detroit had them. So, could you have gone into the-- could you have specialized in service to veterans and stayed in the Detroit area? Or did you have to go to Hines in Maywood for that placement?

145 – job placement

We had to go-- there were different sections of the United States, cities that had veterans. There was one in Detroit, and I know there was one in Indianapolis. We had no choice which one we were going to, whichever one they sent us to, and there were probably others around the United States.

When they say United States Cadet Nurse Corps, it sounds, sort of, it sounds like a branch of service. Did they have ranks? Did they have corporals, corporals and privates?

No, nothing like that.

And they don't pin wings on you or something when you graduate?

No, we didn't get that. We only got our school pin, which was on the picture here, and we got our school diploma.

Did you

and that didn't say anything about being in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps.

157 – staying in touch with classmates

Did you stay in touch with any of the other nurses that you went through training with?

Oh, yes. I have some dear friends, close friends, and then there was, we used to have a reunion. I can't remember what year we had the first one. But after that first one, we had them every five years. We would get together, and we are still getting together. Was it 2000 or 2001 we had the last one?

I don't remember for sure. (Bill)

I think it was 2001 because, I remember, we talked it over, and we decided since the group was getting smaller and smaller that maybe we should have them more often and then, they decided, we would have them every two years. But I don't know what happened because we didn't have it in the two years.

Was it in the Chicago area then, the reunions, or

Yes, the reunions were in Detroit.

In Detroit.

Yes.

And those started like in 1950.

I don't remember the first one.

That's wonderful I think that's

Yes. But some of us are getting disabled and can't come anymore that far, because the ladies live all over the United States now. And so, and the last time, I don't know how many we had. We didn't have too many the last time.

Fifteen.

Fifteen or twenty, something like that.

So you, like the soldiers, you had a great sense of camaraderie, too, then.

Yes.

You were going through this different experience at a formative time in your lives.

Yes.

So your wartime career, it was responsible for your having that career then after the war. Now, of course, it probably wouldn't be necessary, but the GI bill wouldn't have applied in your situation, would it, or would it have?

No, that wouldn't at all.

Not at all.

190 – terms of service commitment

We were signed up for the duration of the war, or, if the war was still going on, we would have to stay in essential nursing, but as soon as the war was over, our commitment was over.

So, none of your, it was part of the terms of your signing up, as it were, that you didn't go overseas.

No, we didn't have to.

Did any of your friends wind up going overseas in ...?

Not that I know of, but, see, the war was over before we graduated.

Yes, that's right. Because you graduated in

In 1947.

And the training at the hospital, was there tuition? Did you have to pay fees for that or was...?

The government supplied it.

The government supplied it because they needed you.

They supplied our uniforms. They paid the hospital for room and board and training. And they gave us a small stipend.

Now some of the gentlemen that we've interviewed, they say that, this time in their lives, it was, you know, it was difficult, but it probably was among the best times in their lives, that they experienced so much, and they had a lot of fun, and all kinds of different experiences. But it was, never forgetting about the danger of it, but it was, but they wouldn't trade the experience for anything. Did you--would you say your years, your training years, were kind of a special time in your life?

Yes. We had fun. It was fun times too.

Could have fun in Detroit and?

Ah, yes.

So, you stayed then in Illinois, then? You didn't go back to Michigan after your required service or whatever at Hines, then?

No. From Hines, I went back, and I was at Harper Hospital for nine months or so, and then I took a position in Colorado.

Nothing to do with veterans' war effort.

No.

But again in the nursing

Yes

in the nursing field. So you had to undergo training for three years?

Yes.

And then your commitment was until the war was over.

Until the war was over, but the government would take care of our training until we finished. They paid our way until we got through.

So

Let's see, when was the war over? In June?

August of 1945. (Bill)

August of 1945.

See, we didn't graduate until September of 1947.

So, did you remember where you were when you heard that the war was over in Europe or that the war was over in the Pacific or that they had dropped the bomb?

Yes. I was in 3 center in the hospital, and some people had the radios on, and that's how we found out. We were working.

And was there a lot of yippee or yahoo or?

Oh, yes. People were excited.

240 – contributions of sisters to war effort on homefront

And, so, do you think that, I'm just wondering, that the contributions that the women made at home on the home front during the War, I have a sense that maybe they're not fully known or appreciated as perhaps as they should be, I don't know.

Yes. I had sisters who worked in the automobile factories making parts for different vehicles.

For the Army or

Yes, Army, Navy, whatever they needed.

Did they continue after the war was over-- that went?

You mean my sisters?

Yes. Yes, the ladies who were filling in on the assembly line, or what, if that's what it was, Yes.

I don't know how long my sisters were there. Probably until their husbands came home because all of them were married at the time before, except Marie, one of my sisters, she wasn't married at that time.

It's interesting, in the case of interviewing the gentlemen, that some of them come, most of them come, from families with other siblings, and all their brothers were in the Army or the Services. And, then in your case, your sisters, they were also helping out in the Services, one of them. On the assembly line or wherever.

Yes, they all went to work in wartime factories.

Wartime factories. So, one of them was in the automobile or the vehicle production in

I think they all worked in the automobile factory because they worked in the same place.

And that all would have been in, I suppose, in the Detroit area which was a hub?

On the outside of Detroit.

On the outside of Detroit.

Yes.

270 – they were different times

So how do you-- those were different times, I imagine, I mean, that

Yes.

The War Generation.

Definitely.

Yes. How do you think

There were no men around.

(Laughter)

Was that a good thing or a bad thing?

I don't know.

I wasn't expecting that one! So, do you remember the last day that you worked as a Cadet Nurse, that would have been back in back in Detroit then or

Yes. I suppose it was, the same, it would have been September the 12th, 1947.

And then how long

I went to the director's office, and she handed me my diploma and my pin. And I was free. I was out of school.

You must have had a sense of accomplishment. I mean, you had earned an RN and graduated.

Definitely.

Yes, Yes, and from there, you, how long was it before-- did you mention you went to Colorado then?

Yes. I worked in a hospital at Pueblo, Colorado.

And how long before you went to Colorado from Michigan there?

About nine months.

Nine months.

So, was it easy to get a, to find a, nursing job at that time?

Oh, Yes.-

Or was it a case where everybody was-- RNs were coming back from overseas or

There were ads in the paper for nurses.

Seems like we still need --seems like there always is a need for good nurses, I don't know.

Yes. There still is.

I think so.

One time, though, wasn't it a few years back that they had too many? Wasn't it not too long ago that they had too many nurses and now they're crying for them again?

309 – meeting Bill

So you didn't meet your husband, Bill, -- that didn't have anything to do with-- you didn't meet him in-- it wasn't a war-related meeting, or was it?

Well, a little, yes. My roommate, she introduced me to him. She met her husband when we were at Hines Veterans Hospital. He was a buddy of her husband. And, so, when they got married, we stood up for their wedding.

Oh! I wonder if Bill knew then, huh, or shortly thereafter.

I don't know. I was on my way out to Colorado.

Colorado, Yes, so that wedding was in Michigan then or?

Yes, in Michigan

two weeks after that wedding, I went to Colorado.

And did you find a lot of your conversations were about the war then when you were dating?

I don't think so. I don't know that we talked too much about that, no.

Very good. I think we're moving a little bit toward the end of the interview. Is there anything that I haven't asked that I should have asked, or is there something that I don't . . .

I don't think so.

Ask about her specialty. (Bill)

Of course. I'm sorry. So, what was your specialty, Martha?

Oh. I was an operating room nurse.

Oh.

I enjoyed that very much. And when I, after I left Detroit, I went to smaller hospitals. And being in smaller hospitals, we got to do different things than you do when you go to a large hospital. So, there were times I would assist when we were short of interns. And some hospitals I went to didn't have interns so....

So, you're not squeamish about sight of the blood or anything?

No.

That was the best part of training.

When the doctor asked for a scalpel that's?

Yes. And other times we assisted him. And someone else was standing next to me handing the instruments.

Wow. So did you continue in that specialty after the war?

Yes.

You were always an operating room nurse then or?

Yes.

Did you work in the Chicago area at any hospitals as an operating nurse or?

No.

No. But you're probably a pretty handy person to have around the house, huh?

Oh, I don't know.

"What do you think I ought to do about this," you know.

He's a handy person around the house!

Is he good with injuries and cuts, or whatever?

No. No. He's not good with that.

355 – the unsung heroes

There's some unsung heroes that you hardly hear about. And one was a teacher who taught her chemistry, and how much did he charge her? (Bill)

Nothing.

He charged you nothing.

Yes.

So, he was making a contribution to the war effort. Can we say his name, is it ok, or?

I don't know. I guess I would rather not.

Oh. Ok. Anyway, the faculty at that particular high school were a great -- must have been a good bunch of people.

Yes.

Yes. Martha and I were talking before the interview and I was saying it seems, in cases, a lot of the veterans, they all had wonderful high school educations. It really meant something to have a diploma-- to think what they faced when they came out and how they handled it, Yes. Any other heroes we should mention or anything, or?

I don't think so.

Was your family surprised to hear that you were going into nursing?

I really don't know what they thought. I don't think anything was ever said. I came home and said I was going.

She quit her job! (Bill)

I came home and told them I was going to go to nursing school. So, and that was it.

Yes. And did it.

So, Martha, as we are winding up here again, I was just wondering, you were mentioning about the commitment that was expected of you by the government. And the contract called for you to work as a nurse upon the completion of your training until the duration of the war.

Yes, we had to work in essential nursing until the war was over.

So, the end of the war -- that was a reason to celebrate too.

Another year and a half or something, I think, before I was finished, but the government supplied our fees and paid for our training.

You knew it wasn't going to go one day beyond the three years, as the war was over.

No.

Well, if there's anything you want to add to the interview, we can.

I don't think so. We covered most of it, I think.

I think so.

Thank you very much for being my first lady interviewee. And, thank you, Bill, for being here and helping to, aid the proceedings a little bit and helping me out, so that concludes this interview. Thank you.

Reader's Note:

Please continue on to see:

one page of 6 scanned photos of Martha Goldenbogen in United States Cadet Nurse Corps uniforms;

two photos of veterans cared for by Nurse Goldenbogen at Hines VA Hospital,

and a copy of "Cadet Nurse" World War II Recruitment Poster.



United States Cadet Nurse Corps
Uniforms

Gray flannel uniform is winter wear.

Summer uniform below is white
seersucker with
blue stripes.



Summer, 1946, home



July, 1945



Summer, 1946, home



March, 1946, home

**Some of the veterans cared for by Nurse Goldenbogen
at Hines VA Hospital, located at Roosevelt Road
and First Avenue in Chicago's western suburbs**



William Renwick from Utica Michigan
and a Mr. Payne, both paraplegics
August, 1947



Mr. Ladendecker, a paraplegic, at Hines.
August, 1947

Cadet Nurse Recruitment Poster

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[Poster, 71 x 51 cm, artist: Jon Whitcomb](#)

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