

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Preserving Stories of Service for Future Generations

Interview with

Louise Jones

conducted by Martin W. Thomas

January 17, 2003

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Part 1: Introduction:

This interview is being conducted on January 17, 2003 in the home of Mr. John and Mrs. Louise Jones. My name is Martin Thomas. I am speaking with Louise Jones, nee Stringfield. Mrs. Jones was born on July 30, 1917 in Waynesville, NC and now lives in Downers Grove, IL.

Mrs. Jones and I are fellow members of the Downers Grove (Indian Boundary) YMCA, and we first met there. She learned of the Veterans History Project through a discussion we had at the Y, when she mentioned she had been in the US Marines in WWII and I mentioned this project. She has kindly consented to be interviewed for the project. Here is her story:

Part 2: Entering the Military:

When did you enter the service?

8th of February, 1944.

Where were you living at the time?

I was living in Raleigh, NC.

What were you doing before entering the military?

I was working for the State Auditor.

You were working for the state of North Carolina?

Yes, but in the State Auditor's office.

You were a state employee?

Yes.

What made you decide to join the military?

The two recruiting ladies in Raleigh that were just so good. I admired them, and that's actually what took me.

This was the Marine Corps?

Yes.

Were they in the Marines themselves?

Oh my, yes. They were recruiters.

How did you come in contact with them? Advertisements?

No. You'd see them on the streets as they'd go about their work, and they had offices.

Were their offices near where you worked?

Yes.

So it was because of the impression these two ladies in the Marines made on you that made you decide to join?

Yes. That and thinking of the pride of being a member of the service.

How did your family feel about you joining the military?

Well, I had to ask my father, who was Chief of Police of our little town, if he had any objections to my going into the Army. And he said yes he did. Even though I was 25 at the time I honored his... (decision). So then, (laughs) when I had the opportunity to go into the Marine Corps I didn't ask anybody. I just told them when I was in. And he was just as proud as he could be.

Did you know anybody other than the two recruiting ladies that were in the Marines?

No, but I found out after I got in that a friend of mine had gone in prior to my going in. I have pictures of her and myself together. She was a Raleigh girl.

Did any of your friends join with you?

No.

Was it common for women to enlist in the armed services at that time?

Well, sure. What we didn't know was that there were only two years left at the time I went in. They were recruiting all the time.

At the time you went in, what was the general public perception of women in uniform?

Oh, maybe not that good. I think the men, the men I dated and saw, they were all in the Navy. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they looked down on it.

On women being in uniform?

Yes.

Did any of them ever make any comments that would... (reinforce that feeling)?

Not that I remember. That's not something I would harbor, I don't think. (laughs)

Where were you inducted?

In Raleigh, NC. And sent to boot camp in Camp Lejeune, NC.

Did you have any time with family and friends after you were inducted, before you were sent to Camp Lejeune?

I was at home with my parents for a short time, because there is a certain standby period there. And then I was given tickets to get on a train and get down to the eastern part of the state.

What was your farewell like when you left home?

Oh, I don't know that I even remember it, but I just know that my mother and dad put pride pictures that we had, that I had joined the Marine Corps and that they were proud of it.

Part 3: Training:

So you went to Camp Lejeune for your basic training. How did you get to the base from the train station?

(laughs) Good heavens, that's 60 years ago. (both laugh) I am sure that the Marine Corps had a vehicle there to pick up, because I was not the only recruit on that train. We were taken to the women's area. Then later, one of the things we did right away was get our uniform. I remember walking down the street, and of course I knew all about saluting but I'd never had to salute. I had on my hat, and here came a Colonel, a woman Colonel, and what did I do? I looked at my hand and I did not bring it up to my forehead. And she said "GOOD MORNING PRIVATE!", and just kept going on and gave me a salute like I'll never forget.

What were your first impressions (of the camp)?

Well, you were so involved in what you had to do, I don't recall having...I was just delighted to be there.

You were delighted to be there. You weren't having second thoughts about having joined?

Oh no. I was interested in whatever we did. Because we immediately began to learn to march, and all kinds of protocol. We had indoor classes and outdoor practices.

How long was your boot camp?

Six weeks.

Can you recall for me what type of training you did have? Like calisthenics, marching, close order drill?

Yes. Actually, I led a calisthenics class in the barracks before we ever left in the morning. I guess the reason I led it was because I volunteered when they asked.

Besides calisthenics, what other type of conditioning or training did they give you? Did you march?

We marched. Oh sure, we had to learn to march, and there were classes about the Marine Corps that we attended daily.

Did you do any long distance marches?

No.

Did you have bivouacs? Did you go out and train in the field? Tent camp?

No.

Did they train you in any type of combat procedures? Hand to hand combat, for example. or weapons training?

We learned to fire arms, rifles, and how to put on a gas mask correctly.

Do you remember what rifle they had you train with?

No.

Did you have to qualify, or was it just familiarization?

Just familiarization.

Any other weapons besides the rifles?

I don't recall any if we did.

What was the food like, and what were the mess facilities like?

Oh, I wrote my mother a long letter about that, and drew the mess tray that we had. I had to learn that "mess" was not the dining room. That was the mess hall. And showed her how the plates were all sectioned off, and then when you walked along the food line, the potatoes went in one section, or whatever you were eating. It was good food, as far as I was concerned.

As a recruit, did you ever have to do KP?

No. How I got out of that, I do not know. But I never, in my two years in the Marine Corps, did KP.

But your fellow recruits did KP?

Oh yes. I don't say all of them did, because I don't know.

So, you say the food was good, in your opinion?

Yes. I either was hungry enough (laughs) or it tasted good to me.

What was your housing like?

We were in barracks. Two stories. We had double bunks, and were assigned to those bunks. We were given a trunk to put our clothes in.

When you say a trunk, you mean like a footlocker?

Yes, a footlocker, exactly. And it had to sit at the bottom of the double decker cots.

Sounds identical to what the male recruits had.

I'm sure they were.

Did you have inspections?

Oh my, yes. You not only had inspections, you had instructions as to just how to make your bed. You had to keep the "head" clean- a new word for me to call the bathrooms- rows of sinks and toilets. The toilets were enclosed, but not the showers.

Was boot camp a big lifestyle adjustment for you?

I don't think so. I think it was a new experience, and I had asked for it, and I wanted to go in, so I just took part to the best of my ability and everything I was asked to do. We had what were called "Dis," Drill Instructors, and some of the girls complained that they couldn't hear. So he said, "If you can't hear, speak up." So one day I couldn't hear him and I spoke up. And, man, he was furious. (interviewer laughs) He said, "You go back to the barracks!"

Just because you couldn't hear him?

Well, that's neither here nor there. What he said, you did. So, the delightful part for me was that I met the commander of the woman Marines on the way.

On your way back to the barracks?

Yes. And by then I knew how to salute and to give my name, and all that. And he was fascinated that I was from North Carolina. He thought that was really neat. I can't remember word for word our conversation, but it was very pleasant and it really made all of this chatter that I had had to be sent back to the base....

So you're saying that the DI sent you back to the barracks as sort of a disciplinary thing, but on the way walking back you got to meet this commander and had a nice conversation...

Oh, a wonderful conversation with him.

When you referred to the DI, you said "he". Were some...

There were no women DIs that I was aware of. Later on in the Marine Corps, but not when I went in.

All your DIs were males. Was your women's group segregated from male recruits?

Oh my, yes!

(laughs) You say, “Oh my, yes.” It was absolute?

Yes. No question about it. Even the person who marched us to classes or whatever we did was a woman.

Was there any fraternization with the male recruits on your off hours?

Well, you see, when you were in boot camp you had no off hours. You just went to your barracks and did whatever classes, lectures, etcetera were on the schedule.

So, you couldn't mingle with them outside the barracks or at a PX or something like that?

That's correct. Yes. Or at least that's the way I remember it.

In your opinion, if you knew at all, did you feel like you were being treated in the same manner that male recruits would be treated?

I doubt that I gave that any thought at all. (laughs) I was just treated the way I was treated, and it was all right with me. Which made my life a lot easier, because if I had been unhappy about it there would have been nothing I could have done.

Part 4: Marine Corps Experiences:

Where did you go after boot camp?

To the Motor Transport Training, also at Camp Lejeune, after which I was assigned to the recruit depot in San Diego on the main base there. But there was a two week layover until the train was put together. And this time the train had prisoners of war on it, so we were definitely confined to our own two or three cars. When we stopped in Memphis, TN I asked my Lieutenant if I could call a very dear friend. She said, “No, you can't,” and I didn't.

Before you got on the train for San Diego, were you allowed any home leave?

I don't remember.

Immediately after boot camp you went to an assignment, rather than advanced training of any sort?

That's right. There was no advanced training in what I did.

This train that took you across country, was it a civilian train or a troop train?

No, no, it was a troop train.

And it had prisoners of war...

German

German prisoners of war. Where were they being taken?

Well, I don't know. They were just in a different - let's say they were in the back half of the train, we were in the front half, and that's the way it was.

You never saw them get off at some town along the way?

No. No.

So your first assignment was at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego?

Yes. And I'm wondering how that worked out, because I had to have motor transport training, and that was done in San Diego.

So, you were sent to San Diego for this...

Not San Diego. I mean where I had my boot camp.

Oh, back at Camp Lejeune?

Yes.

What did your training for motor transport consist of?

Learning to drive trucks that were heavier than anything I had ever driven before.

What size truck were you qualified to drive?

Um. I drove a small pickup truck for jobs close by. Had a six weeks dump truck job to bring dirt into the base for a landfill. A "six by six" to get groceries for the mess hall from another base- Camp Pendleton.

You were qualified to drive trucks. Jeeps?

Yes. That was part of our training. We would drive out and get stuck in sand and then use the four-wheel drive to get out.

Sedans? Regular passenger car sedans?

Yes. Yes, because if you were called to pick up an officer, you went in a very proper car like that. Maybe to take him to a train or another office.

So, when you first got to San Diego, was your assignment to be a driver?

Yes. All that was gelled before I left Camp Lejeune.

When you were in San Diego, how long did you have the assignment of being a driver?

Well, I was a driver for about a year. What happened was, I drove the man in charge of the recruit depot art shop.

You were his regular driver?

No, I just happened to pick him up. And I was very aware of the fact that I had been trained in art, so I told him that and I said, "If you ever need another person." He had two women already

working in his section. And by golly, he had me transferred.

How long had you been there when you drove him?

About a year. I drove dump trucks as much as 20 miles to bring gravel back to the base.

You drove a gravel truck?

Oh yes. I drove a fairly big truck to Pendleton and got supplies to bring back to the mess hall. In fact, part of our training was driving those trucks in convoy, so that you knew how to do it. In other words, you had to be spaced.

So there was a special procedure in driving in a convoy, certain intervals?

Oh yes.

Do you have any rough guess as to how many of those trips you made between San Diego and Camp Pendleton for supplies?

No.

More than 20?

I did that for a whole year, so.....

Roughly how often were you making that trip?

Well, there were other trips that came in all along. That was not the only trip I made. If an officer needed a car and I was available to get him, I went. When Kay Kyser came to the base with his band, I told the director of the motor transport that he and I were from the same state, that my next door neighbor was one of his best friends, and I said I'd love to be able to drive him, and he allowed me to.

When you had that assignment did you have a conversation with Kay Kyser?

Oh sure.

Anything that you recall that you talked about?

Well, my next door neighbor in Waynesville, NC was a very close friend of Kay's. And I had known his family for years, so that immediately gave us a little special sense of knowing each other.

A little rapport. Besides Kay Kyser, did you have any other famous personalities that you drove?

Oh, I can remember driving a Captain who was late getting to his train, and he said, "Now I don't want us to get a ticket, and not get to the train at all," so I slowed down. (both laugh) I mean, I probably was just weaving through traffic in San Diego. But he got to the train on time. That was the goal.

Going back to the truck driving duties, because that's the one that would be sort of unusual

for women to do, when you drove in a convoy were there...

That was part of the training, of truck driving. So we would learn how to space our truck. You see, the faster we drove, the further back we had to be from the truck in front of us. I still, to this day, I gauge how fast I'm going and how close I am to the car in front of me.

When you'd be driving in a convoy, would they all be female drivers or was it a mix of male and female drivers?

Oh no. This was strictly the women's training.

Training. OK. When you drove the gravel truck, for example, or the big trucks on any of the other occasions...

They were dump trucks, for hauling gravel.

Dump trucks.

And they were not so very large, as I recall.

But they didn't have automatic transmissions, did they.

They didn't even have springs! (both laugh)

Was that tough for you as a woman, to drive a big truck like that?

Yes. Yes. That upset my system, and when I mentioned it to the (man in charge of assignments), he took me off of it.

When you say upset your system, what do you mean?

(the interviewer is signaled to turn off the tape recorder so that the female facts of life can be discretely explained to him)

OK. So you were taken off of that duty because it upset your female system.

Right.

So you met this sergeant you were driving and you told him about some art background that you had? Did I understand that...

I told him. Yes. Yes, I was making a ploy to change from truck driving to art pushing (laughs).

So, how long did it take from the time you mentioned this until the time you got the assignment in the art department?

I don't remember in days, but it seemed to me that it happened awfully fast.

Were you glad for the change?

Yes, I was. I learned to use a projector.

A motion picture projector?

Well, no. Just a slide projector. I learned to enlarge, or make a picture smaller. The commander of the base put in a request to the male boots to make plaster castings of the Medals of Honor, and when they came back to us they had been smoothly sanded and all that. And we painted them in oils, and they were beautiful. The outside rim was made to look like a rope, and then the medal itself sank down into the frame. Much to my pleasure, they are still in the Marine Corps base museum on display.

Even to this day?

Well, I was there five years ago, and they were there.

During the time you were at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, what would you say was your most memorable experience?

Well, there were other things that we were allowed to be involved with if we could qualify. I was a pretty good swimmer. We had a women's diving and swimming team, and I was on that.

Where did you compete?

Around town, and with women from other bases. It was interesting. I was in my late 20s, and the women in San Diego that we competed with were 18 years old. I never got more than second place ribbon.

But you got second place in some of the events?

Oh, yes.

What was your rank when you were at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot?

I was, of course, a buck private when I went in. After awhile I was made a PFC. And then I became a Corporal. And by the time I went home, later When J.D. and I were dating, my husband and I, it was in August. The marriage date is August 4th of '45. So it was becoming toward the end (of the war), and while we were on our honeymoon, we had V-J Day. So, you see, that led the way to his going back to Fayetteville, NC to be released from the Army, because he wanted to go back to school. And I went back to San Diego, and we were both properly discharged. And for the next month we just had our honeymoon all around San Diego and San Francisco before we started the rather long trek to Chicago where his family was, and North Carolina where mine were.

You mentioned your husband, who you called J.D., John. When did you first meet?

We met when he was in North Carolina State College in 1942 or 3.

So, when you went into the Marine Corps you were already seeing each other?

Yes.

Was he in the military before you?

Oh my, yes. He graduated from North Carolina State College in June, 1941. So he had four years of ROTC, so he had no choice. He wasn't asked, "Do you want to go" (laughs). He had a uniform put on him, and he went to Ordnance School.

Did his being in the military affect your decision at all to join the military?

No. Except that it probably separated us and I thought, "Well, if he was going to, I might as well".

When did you become engaged?

When he had to sail from San Francisco to go to New Guinea.

What year was that? (pause) Where were you at that time? (pause) When you became engaged?

Well, we were separated when we became engaged. He asked me before he sailed if I would wait for him, and I said I would. So he had a ring mailed to me.

Were you already in the Marines when you became engaged?

Yes.

Were you at (Camp) Lejeune or in San Diego?

I was in San Diego. Because that's where I got my discharge.

So, you were stationed in San Diego working motor transport and then in the art department when you were already engaged, and he was off in the Pacific.

Yes.

What was life like for you in San Diego, you being a fiancée of somebody who's overseas? I mean, what kind of social life did you have?

Well, the thing was, it was a big joke. An enlisted person was not to associate with an officer. And when I went to my commanding officer, the women's base, she knew that J.D. was a Major in the Army. She also knew, obviously, that I was a Corporal in the women Marines (laughs). See, we were not in women Marines. We were in the US Marine Corps, Women Reserve.

What's the distinction?

Well, the girls who go in now have to do the same thing as the men. They have a four year period that they have to declare. We had no period. We stayed until the end of the war.

So, your life in San Diego. Social life?

Oh, sure. I had three friends that I associated with. We played golf, we went to movies, we had meals. I went to San Francisco with them, and we met friends of theirs, from their time. My closest friend was my Sergeant Major, and the sergeant who, how do you call it? She was in charge of my group. (pause) I should have done some homework for you.

(laughs) Don't worry about it. The next question I have is, did you ever have any pressure or stress? Often (the stress) we are talking about, in the case of men, is from combat. But in your case, I'm going to ask you did you ever feel pressure or stress from sexual harassment during the time you were in uniform?

No. No, I had very strict personal rules that I kept. And, interestingly enough, a Cherokee Indian that I dated in the Marine Corps was the most trustworthy, true friend I ever had in the male group.

Where was this?

This was in San Diego. He was stationed there.

Were you already engaged at the time?

Yes.

But you had an understanding with John that you....

Oh, certainly.

Off record, you mentioned the term "BAM". Would you describe that for me now? That term, what it meant to you, to other people?

Well, it made me mad, in some cases. For instance, two of my friends and I were walking home from the theater right on the base in San Diego. And we kept hearing behind us, "BAM. BAM". And I guess my friend could tell I was getting a little wrought up. "Now, Louise. Now, Louise, be calm. Be calm." And finally I just said to them, "You two, you just go ahead. You don't know me, you don't know anything about me." And I turned around, and I came back. And here were two DIs, who were always trim and thin, and the fattest male Marine you ever saw between them.

(Interviewer is struggling for composure) So, these were three Marines in uniform?

Uh huh, yeah. And I just said, "Well, if I ever saw a BAM, I'm looking at one right now." And I turned and I went away. And I have remembered that so many times. I have thought. "Why didn't you say, 'And you two DI's, who are the little gods of the Marine Corps, you sound like 19 year old boys.'"

Well, for the record, so that anybody that reads this interview will understand, what could BAM mean, and what did it mean?

Well, BAM, when they said it, it meant “Broad Assed Marine.” And that’s why I think that the powers that be were so smart to immediately get out a picture of a beautiful Marine woman and put in big letters “Beautiful American Marine.”

So, you think the term started in the derogatory sense, and this poster came afterwards to try to give it a better....

Oh yes. I had no idea how it got started, but I do know that that followed.

So BAM started out as a derogatory term for a female Marine, but in this encounter you just described you turned it around on the heavy set male Marine.

Yes, and I felt awful to do that, but I wanted to get back at those two DIs, and that’s what came to me.

How did you stay in touch with your family while you were...

Oh, letters upon letters upon letters. Many of which are right in that book (points at album on table). My mother never threw one of those away.

I knew when I asked the question because sitting before us is an album, leather bound cover, and it’s probably three to four inches thick. I have glanced through it. It’s full of photographs and letters, and it’s a wonderful album.

I have another album, and I don’t know how it compares in size to that, but it has all of J.D.’s letters in it. When he wrote, there was a form, letter. And what did they call those?

V-mail?

Every letter he wrote was read, and if he used a wrong word it was cut out.

Did you have letters that had holes in them?

Oh my, yes.

I would think to save weight they would have them write on both sides of the paper. So if a word had to be cut out on one side, you’d lose part...

Right. Right.

Did his have a lot of holes in them, or did he learn to avoid the...

Well, he was pretty knowledgeable about what could be said and not.

While you were in the Marines did you take any leave? Travel anywhere?

Yes, I always went home, because I knew my mother and dad would want to see me.

How did you get from California to North Carolina?

By train. There were times when I was able to fly a military plane. I can remember going to the San Diego airport, getting on a plane, and we stopped at Love Field in Dallas, and then on to some eastern state, and then I guess I just went by train.

Roughly how many times did you make the trip home while you were in California?

I have no idea.

Do you remember any particularly humorous or unusual events you want to share on this interview?

(laughs) I've already shared an unusual one with the BAM bit.

(laughs) Yes, you did. And I would say humorous.

I'm sure there were others. I don't want to take up tape time thinking. That's why I said I should have done my homework.

That's OK. No rush. (pause) While you're thinking I'm going to ask you a couple of other questions then. Were you awarded any medals or citations while you were in the Marine Corps?

I never have taken time to get those. I will have two medals, two ribbons I believe, and that will express that I was in WWII, and probably a Good Conduct Medal. I have a friend who is very knowledgeable, and she said, "Louise, if you just give me your dates I'd get those for you."

Part 5: Life After the Service:

What was it like the day you got out of the service?

Well, it was great. Because J.D. and I were just Scot free to go and do what we, excuse me, but if I said "broad assed," I can say "damn well" pleased. (both laugh) And we went up to San Francisco and stayed in the Mark Hopkins, one of the nicer hotels up on the hill. We had friends there, and we visited them. And then, finally we headed back to the east, Midwest.

Do you recall the date of your discharge? Do your records show?

Yes, it does. (tape is switched)

We were running out of tape on the other side, so I stopped the tape and turned it over at the point where I was asking you when and where you were discharged from the Marine Corps Reserves. And your answer was? October 20, 1945?

Yes.

What did you do then?

Well, I was married, and my husband had gotten his discharge, and we just went off and had a honeymoon together.

Were you married before you were discharged?

Yes. Because we had V-J day on our honeymoon.

What was your wedding date?

August the 4th, 1945.

You told me earlier that they did frown on fraternization of officers and enlisted (personnel). How did...

Yes. For instance, my company officer, she gave me a week's leave, she gave me a ten day leave or whatever they were at that time, and she just did all kinds to stretch our honeymoon out.

That was kind of her.

Yes.

So, you were married around V-J Day. Where did you go on your honeymoon?

We were in San Diego, and we got a car and we drove up to San Francisco, and we stayed there, I guess maybe for a month or so. I'd have to do some research on that one.

You bought a car?

Yes.

Were cars hard to come by then?

No, but when I look back on it now, we bought it in San Diego. No need for a heater or anything like that. And then we come out, and we go across the mountains. (both laugh). The Denver area, you know. And I can remember wrapping a blanket around the pot bellied stove in the motel where we stayed, and then I'd go out and get in the car and J.D. would come and wrap that all around my legs.

What kind of car was it?

I have no idea. (Husband J.D. later said it was a Mercury.)

That's OK. So you came back to Chicago? (pause) Where did you go after your honeymoon?

Well, J.D. wanted to get back in school as quickly as possible, and that's what we did. He wanted to go to MIT. Because he had been such a top ranking scholar at State College and so forth, he was accepted.

So you lived around Boston?

Oh yes, we lived in Newton Center and one other suburb whose name doesn't come to me right at the moment. (Later recalled it was Brookline, MA.)

What were you doing while he was in school?

Well, that was three years, because in three straight years of college they got credit for four years. I ... (pause)

You mentioned, and it may have been off record, that you became a mother.

Oh sure.

Was that while you were in Massachusetts?

Yes. He was born in Boston.

Did you ever go back to work yourself?

Yes I did, but not until the children were in their high school years.

Where were you living by that time?

In Wayne, NJ. I was a high school secretary while there. And our older son says, "I don't want you to know me or anything."

(laughing) You were a secretary in his high school?

Yes.

I can understand that.

And I was in a corner office and the two sides were all glass. And before long he would be pointing to me, "That's my mother." (both laugh)

Did you stay in contact with any of your wartime friends?

Yes, I still am in contact with them.

Roughly how many do you still have contact with?

Two in very close contact. Right now, one who was in Boston now lives in Maine. Her husband has passed on. Our second son was named in part after him.

This is someone you were in the Marines with?

Yes, she was the top sergeant, of my company. And then also, the woman who was my sergeant major, I talked with her on the phone just a couple of days ago. We keep in very close touch. Several of them have passed on.

Have you ever joined any veterans' organizations?

I belong to the Women Marine Association. We have a convention every two years, and I've been to about ten of them, I think. They're in places like Savannah, San Diego, Denver, all over. Also the Women in Military Service has become quite a big thing now. Their purpose is to get as many as possible, from the American Revolution on through today.

Traced their roots back?

Yes, trying to get the names. I'm in close touch with them because I read the obits in the Chicago paper every day, and if there's one on women who served in the military, I cut it out and send it to them.

If it's on women who were in the service?

Right.

What was the name of that organization again?

Women in Military Service for America (WMSA). Once a month (holds up newspaper obituary clippings) I send these in.

You're showing me obituaries. This is from the Chicago Tribune, it looks like.

They're all from the Chicago Trib. Well, sometimes they're in the little daily paper here in Downers Grove.

(looking over the clippings) Their style is to have an American flag at the top of any obituary for a veteran, so you look for those that have both the flag and a woman's name so you can cut those out.

Right. It's not a big job, but she told me that the woman in charge of WMSA, she said when those obituaries come in each name is taken and put through the system. I always write on it that they were in the Army or the Navy or whatever, because with this great volume of names, if they had to look through them all, this really saves time.

Part 6: Closing:

We're getting near the closing of the interview. One thing that I do want to ask you, how do you feel that the service and the experiences you had as a woman Marine have affected you in your life?

I've always been proud of the fact that I was in the Marine Corps, actually USMC Women Reserves. I think it has particularly affected my stature. I don't slouch around; I stand up straight and hold my shoulders up. The funny thing about it is that when I get all ready to go downtown to shop, I one day realized that I had put everything in my left hand (laughs), and here my right hand was free to salute.

Still ready to salute! (both laugh)

This was years later. It's very awkward not to carry everything in my left hand still.

Louise, is there anything else that you can think of that you would like to add that we haven't already covered in this interview?

Oh, I'm sure there are things, and sometimes when I've made a statement I have wondered if that actually was the way it was. After all, it's been over 50 years now, and I've gone from 27 to 85 (both laugh) Thank gosh I'm still fairly sharp.

Yes, you are.

And my swimming has carried over. I've been a member of the masters swimming...

At our YMCA?

Well, yes, but it's a worldwide thing now. I've been a member since 1973.

So that swimming keeps you in good physical condition.

Yes. I feel that is due a lot of credit for my physical condition. Right now at 85, it blows some people's mind. I try to swim at least five days of the seven each week. And I swim 500 yards freestyle without stopping. One thing that prompted that was that in the masters swimming magazine I noticed that women 85 had no time for 500 yards. I felt, well gee whiz, we're going to have a meet in March and I intend to swim that 500 yards and get a figure. (She set the record on February 16, 2003).

Put it down in the record book.

Right.

Well, if you don't have anything else that you can think of, we'll conclude the interview. I thank you very much for agreeing to do it.

It's been fun.