

**Rose L. Miller
Veteran**

**Wayne Clark
New York State Military Museum
Interviewer**

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Pine Plains, New York**

Q: For the record, would you please state your full name, and your date and place of birth?

RLM: My name is Rose L. Miller, however, my married name is Rose Landsman Miller. When I went into the service my name was Rose Landsman. I was born July 24, 1916 in Massena, New York.

Q: Did you attend school in Massena?

RLM: I went to grade school in Massena, finished grade school in Syracuse. I went to Wilmington High School in Delaware for two years and finished up my high school in Massena, New York. I graduated in 1933.

Q: Once you graduated, did you go onto college?

RLM: I became a nurse. I went to nurse's training in 1934 in Brooklyn, New York in a Jewish hospital and graduated as a registered nurse in 1937.

Q: Did you start your nursing career at that point?

RLM: Yes, I started my nursing career, I did staffing for about a year, then I did private duty in the hospital for about three or four years before going into the service.

Q: Do you remember where you were, and what your reaction was when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

RLM: Oh yes. I remember I was ready to go off duty, it was about four o'clock in the afternoon and we heard this horrible news that we were at war. I had visions of flying. I had been taking flying lessons for several months. In my flying lessons. I was taught how to land on the water. I was in Brooklyn and I went back to Massena. I had to learn how to land on the land. I got as far as soloing. Everybody who flies remembers the first time they took a plane up alone. You come down, you think you were in Paradise. That's the feeling that you get. Everybody, I was talking to somebody just recently, he's a pilot, and he says that's right [smiles]. I will never forget it.

Q: What kind of airplane did you fly?

RLM: At that time they were Piper Cubs. Today, you get into a machine and learn everything there. Then, a number of my classmates from training were going into the service. I had already enlisted, I didn't want to tell my father I was going into the service.

Q: When did you enlist?

RLM: Sometime in July. I went down and I applied, but we had to go through the Red Cross. At that time nurses had to go through the Red Cross. We were not considered part of the service. It was all complicated. But once we were in the service, we were given the rank of First Lieutenant.

Q: Once you entered the service, where did they send you to begin with?

RLM: Atlantic City. Atlantic City at that time was an air base. There, we encountered everything that was thrown at us. I'll use that word. We weren't receiving any wounded at that time, it was just an enlisted base.

Q: Did you receive any sort of training?

RLM: No we had no further training, we were nurses, that's it.

Q: And they gave you a uniform and a commission?

RLM: Yes, white uniforms, white caps and shoes. We encountered meningitis there. In fact, the base was almost closed for anybody coming in or going out, even by train. I would say because we were alerted, and knew about a lot of these things we saved an awful lot of these boys. I know that there were over five of them we could not save. That was unfortunate.

One time, at lunch time all the officers would go to lunch and leave an (unclear @7:49) on. When I was there, they were ready to admit a patient with a temperature and I loosened his coat. I took a look and said you have a stiff neck, he said yes. I saw these marks on his neck and called down to the admitting office and said I'm not admitting him to an pneumonia ward. I am sending him upstairs to the meningitis ward. That's how quickly we saved all the rest of them that we knew.

Well, things changed and Spring came. Everything was fine again. Then it was in April or May there were two of us who had applied for flight training. I was a little bit annoyed because I said why did they call her before me? Anyway, I knew a number of the officers and they said well don't worry about it because you're gonna be in the next class. They had to take her because of her age, if they didn't call her she was going to be over the age of going. I was in the next class and they sent me to Bowman Field for flight training. We had to adapt how to conduct ourselves in the plane. They were all mock ups like the C40, we'd go in with equipment and come out with patients. In the interim, once the equipment was unloaded they had to set up what is called a litter strap. The litters were just slipped into the litter straps. We had to learn all these things in order to do our jobs. In the meantime, they sent us to different

hospitals to do this and that. Around November, they had already broken up our class and put us into our squadrons. The squadrons consisted of twenty-five nurses. There were four flights of six nurses plus the chief nurse. Around the end of October, our squadron was called to attention and he said the first group of you will be leaving in four hours to San Francisco. So that meant packing up quickly and getting everything ready to leave in four hours. We got down to the plane, they bumped everybody off. They broke us up so that each group went onto a different plane and we all met in San Francisco. We didn't know where we were going.

When we got to San Francisco they equipped us with arctic gear-boots, parkas, you name it. Around the first week of November, we were alerted for our flight. We were leaving on four C54s, they weren't passenger planes. They were these big C54s and they were able to fly long distances. Three of us left on time, and one was a little delayed because of engine problems. We got there on a Friday. The plane that got left behind, one of the nurse's husband was based at Wheeler Field with the fighter planes. She said to the Chief Nurse, would you please call when you get there and tell Ray I'm coming down. Fine. So she called the Commanding Officer when we landed and he said, when she comes in, have her call me. Well, Sunday morning their plane landed and she called the Commanding Officer and he said you stay right there, I'm sending him down to get you. He was probably only a First Lieutenant at that time and he's fussing and fuming why should I go down and pick up a lousy Second Lieutenant, he doesn't know who this is, you know. The crew was alerted when they landed and the crew disappeared to pick her up. When she got out of the car, her husband said to her Annie, what are you doing here? Go on home. I like to put a little bit of humor into stories.

Anyway, like I said, it took us close to four or five months before (I'll use the word) Admiral Nimitz decided that flight nurses were okay in the Pacific because he said there's no place for it here. Well, I like to say we proved him wrong. The first group was sent down to Port Moresby to evacuate anybody coming up. They were to bring all the injured all the way up to Hickam Field, which would have been over thirty hours. There would be two nurses coming up alone only with their crew and their patients. When they finally got up, they decided it was too much. I mean you can't put someone on a plane and ask them to take care of their patients for thirty-six hours all alone. So they decided no, they broke that up. Then they were going from Port Moresby, New Guinea into Guadalcanal. From Guadalcanal into Kanton Island back up to Hickam Field. Then another flight would be taking the States runs which would have been anywhere from twelve to fourteen hours depending on the winds. Finally, they sent the second group down to Guadalcanal and that was going to be almost twenty hours in the air. And the third group would be taking the states and the fourth group was going onto Tarawa.

I remember the first flight, we hadn't really begun our runs until we were out (unclear @16:25) and then suddenly they said two of you would be going to Kanton Island to pick up five burn cases. The plane hit a bunker and blew and five of them were burned. They sent us down to bring them back. When we got down there, that's almost nine to ten hours down and nine to ten hours back. When we got there, the patients were just swathed completely. The treatment

that they got down in Kanton Island must have been so good that, we met one of them, and all he had was just a little scar on his nose. The treatment that we were getting in the Pacific was unbelievable.

From that time on our (unclear @17:42) was the four spots. I was down on the Guadalcanal run and I picked up a flight there, that one had just come out of New Guinea. She said, I think you had better prepare a blood transfusion when you get to Kanton Island and I said why? This was sixty-five years ago and everything was different. She said he has aplastic anemia. Now that could have been anything, he probably could have had leukemia, or whatever. The poor boy was oozing blood from his mouth, all he was doing was spitting. So before we took off, I wired ahead-for whole blood transfusion. We didn't have RH then, I said prepare for a whole blood transfusion upon landing with the (unclear @19:09). So for nine hours from when we took off I strapped on the oxygen, all we had was a little tank. No sooner did I have it on he says I have to spit. Off comes the mask, put it back on, I have to spit. I said to my corpsman, you fly with one nurse and one corpsman for about thirty-five patients. So I said to my corpsman -you look after all these others, this one needs me. So for the rest of the flight I took the mask on, off. On, off, you know what I mean? We landed on Kanton Island, they took him off and they gave him a transfusion.

As soon as the transfusion was over he was loaded back up. We took off and it was fine, I could strap the mask on and attend to the other ones. When we landed at Hickam Field, I told my Commanding Officer I would suggest that this boy remain on the ground and have him transfused before going out on the next leg of the flight. He said I'm sorry but he's going out in about four hours. Well, he was the Commanding Officer, there was nothing else I could do. And let me put it this way, if it had been one of the other girls, the southern girls, he would have listened. This Commanding Officer was a Southern from maybe Mobile, Alabama. [Laughs] I had two strikes against me, he didn't like me. First I was a damn Yankee and secondly I was Jewish so he didn't like me period. Anyway, the boy went out in four hours and they almost lost him. My roommate was on that plane and she said they almost lost him. The only thing they had was plasma and they put (unclear @21:25). To this day I only hope he was able to get home before he went.

This wasn't a war wounds but we evacuated everything from war wounds to psychos, to medical problems and whatever. We also evacuated more psychos and more jungle rot. If it wasn't our turn to go out, we had a little clinic and we brought our patients in there for a few hours. While I was there, and they brought some of these jungle rots in, the stench was overpowering. Now how the girls sat there for eight hours and smelled that, I really don't know. We never knew what we were picking up. Over the years, you remember the bad ones. You remember the psychos. For every plane load of patients we were bringing out of the South Pacific, we had to have five psychos on the plane. They tried bringing out a planeload of psychos and it didn't work.

Anyway, on one of my planes we had a latrine on the plane and he decided to get up and streak up and down the plane. [Laughs] Like I said, you look at it and see a bit of humor in spite of the war. There was one psycho who saw ducks, he was in New Guinea, wherever he went he saw ducks. Well, the psychiatrist tried to rid him of the ducks. Finally, they sent him back to (unclear @24:14) and he still saw his ducks. They decided, he's no good we'll send him back to the states as a Section Eight. Well, its four hours from New Guinea to Guadalcanal, another twenty hours to Hickam Field, another fourteen hours to San Francisco. All of this time he saw his ducks. Finally, about an hour out from San Francisco he calls the flight nurse over and says Lieutenant, you can have the ducks now, I don't need them anymore [Both laugh]

I was on the Kwajalein run. From Kwajalein we went off to Saipan and Guam. When hospital ships picked up the wounded in Saipan, they unloaded 1,500 sick and wounded at Kwajalein. We had all of those sick and wounded back in Hawaii in the general hospitals in less than a week. Where if the hospital ship had gone, it would have taken them three weeks out and then three weeks back. I guess we proved Nimitz wrong.

My last flight, we went from Kwajalein into Guam and Saipan. I think it was in Saipan that they gave us the quarters just beyond the hospital so that we wouldn't interfere with the nurses and all. I had injured my hand and I couldn't sleep. At about two o'clock in the morning I hear a door bang and there were Japanese all over Saipan, in spite of it they were all hidden. I'm scared, everybody is asleep and I'm hurting. I hear someone walking on the gravel and the door slam. Finally I said "proowler! Prowler!" The guards, the M.P.s came and searched the place up and down, sideways and backwards and everything was quiet and we finally all went back to sleep. In the morning, the nurse said I got up and went to the latrine and when I got back, all hell broke loose. I didn't dare tell her that it was me. [Both laugh] There are some very strange things in Saipan.

Q: Were you there during the bonsai attack on Saipan?

RLM: Right after that. The reason I'm saying that is the Japanese that were still there did not want to be taken by the Americans. Whether they were afraid or whatever, I don't know. All the families committed suicide. There was a section there called suicide hill or cliff. They would line up their children and push them off the cliff. Then the second one would push the other until the father was left and then he would jump. These were high cliffs. So you can just imagine. They had a lot of sugar cane factories there and it was a very peculiar smell, very unpleasant. Most of us were pretty close to the air base so it didn't bother us that much. I don't think any of us ever saw any of these brown snakes that they talk about in Guam. My last flight was to Okinawa. We had been married in February.

Q: Do you want to tell us how the marriage came about?

RLM: I met my husband at Hickam Field/

Q: Was he a pilot, an enlisted man?

RLM: No he was with the Signal Corps. One time he was telling me they had to set up communications in Kauai. Now Kauai is a peculiar island, I'll say it that way, because you can't go all the way around the island because the mountains go right through to the end all the way down. You have to use a boat to go all the way around. They had to set up communications right through the mountains, through the forest, all the way through. They had to set up communications in Hawaii on top of the mountains. That was his job. But, of course, like everything else, you're on Hickam Field and you get to know all the Officers there. He was already back from Tarawa when I met him. He had to go to Palau). That's another group of islands that we had taken from the Japanese. Anyway, we didn't know when the war was going to be over. I had already been overseas eighteen months and he had been overseas longer than that. So we were talking about it and said if we got married and went back to the States, I'd be on one end and he'd be on the other. Because at that time, you couldn't be married and be on the same base. So we decided I'll get out of the service. I'll get pregnant. We were married in February.

Q: Do you want to tell us about the service?

RLM: We were married by the Chaplain from Pearl Harbor. I was in the Air Force and my husband was in the Signal Corp in the ground force.

Q: What rank was your husband?

RLM: At that time he was only a Second Lieutenant because he was always fouling something up. [Both laugh]. Everybody else was becoming a Captain. Anyway, we were married on February 15, 1945 at the Chapel on Hickam Field. The Chaplain was from the Navy, a little Chinese boy played the organ, a Marine sang the hymns. So it was kind of an international wedding. I had gotten quite friendly with the General next door. He would send his orderly in and invite me to dinner. I complained to him that my husband could not get off the island at all. He said, don't worry about it. You set up the time you want to get married and I'm sure he'll be there. The next thing I knew, I got a letter from my husband setting up the time that he would be there. I guess it's important that you get to know different people. Like I said, my last flight was to Okinawa. I was getting morning sickness, and it was a little bit too much. I just turned myself in to the Medical Department and was discharged.

Q: When were you discharged?

RLM: I was discharged in San Francisco in June but it didn't take effect until August. I should have waited a little bit longer because in August they dropped the bomb and that was it.

Q: Once you were discharged, where did you go?

RLM: I went to my husband's folks. They were waiting for me, they had only met me once in San Francisco. My father-in-law was a theatrical lawyer and he had some business out there. My mother-in-law came out first. I met them both in Los Angeles. They were very anxious for me to come back, they had heard I became pregnant. I stayed with them. I went back to Massena for a while to see my folks. We couldn't even find housing, at that time, even

after the war was over there was no housing available. If you had a room in a house you were lucky. Nothing was available until the new housing developments went up.

Q: When was your husband discharged?

RLM: In September, right after the war ended. There was something very funny. We went to a party, by this time I was about eight months pregnant. There was a fella there who asked when did your husband get back? I said September, and here I am like this [Indicating her stomach is very big due to pregnancy]. He looks at me, and I say Oh, I forgot to tell you we were married overseas. And his face dropped [Both laugh]

Q: When your husband was discharged, what did he do?

RLM: He went back to school.

Q: Did he make use of the G.I. Bill?

RLM: Yes, he went back to law school. He was supposed to have joined his father in the law business, but like everything else, a lot of things fell apart. His father died, and like a told you things fell apart. I just went back to nursing.

Q: Did you make use of the G.I. Bill for any additional training?

RLM: No. By that time I had the one child and then fifteen months later my daughter was born. So with him going to school it was impossible for me to go back to school.

Q: How many children did you have?

RLM: Three. My daughter lives in Long Island.

Q: After you got out of the service, did you stay in contact with anyone you served with?

RLM: Yes and no. About four or five years later, the flight nurses decided they were going to have their own group. There were 1,500 flight nurses worldwide. We covered everything from North Africa, all of Europe, England, the CBI (China, Burma, India) route. The girls flying that, they were flying the hump (nickname for eastern end of Himalayan Mountains). The entire South Pacific. Because there weren't that many when you compare the 1,500 of us to those hundreds of nurses on the ground. We weren't very many. So we decided to form the World War II Flight Nurses Association. We more or less once a year have a reunion. Since we losing them every year, it has dwindled down. If we have 150 nurses a year, that's an awful lot. In January we hope to have the last reunion, I hope it isn't. There's a lot that I know we have lost contact with completely. We know those that have gone. Outside of that, we don't know where a lot of them are.

Q: Did you join any organizations like the VFW or American Legion?

RLM: I am a member of our American Legion over here, but at that time I worked a lot and did not have time to join any organizations where I was so I just let it go. At one point someone had asked me when you went back to work, how did the other nurses treat you? I

couldn't understand what she meant. Then I began to understand what she meant because I didn't go back to work until seven or eight years later. By that time, the war is over and I said, they treat you like any other nurse. They didn't ask you where you were or anything else. And that was it.

Q: How did your family react when you had gone into the service? Were they worried or upset about that? Did you have any other family members serve?

RLM: You have to stop and consider, way before the draft, if someone has joined the Army at that time something was wrong with them. It was almost like the dregs of society. So my father always had an idea that the service was something else. So I was very reluctant to tell him. But my oath had already been in, and when my orders came home that's when I told him. I think by that time he kind of accepted that this was war. I guess he was very proud of the fact that I was the only one of the whole family that was able to put my time and energy into helping people. My brother could not go for physical reasons and the rest of us were all women.

Q: How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life? Obviously you would not have met your husband.

RLM: It's difficult to say because once you come back and you pick up ordinary life again it's almost like a bad dream-or a good dream you had depending how you look at it. I really don't know.

Q: Did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life after being in the war zone?

RLM: Oh no. [Laughs] When I first got back my mother-in-law asked me if I wanted to go to the Congregational meeting? I said no. I am very happy just sitting here. Nobody's going to tell me when to get up, nobody is going to tell me when to go to bed. Nobody's going to tell me when to go out. Just let me sit for a while. That's the way I felt. Leave me alone.

In between our flights, it might have seemed we had a lot of time off because for every twelve hours in the air you had to be on the ground a full two days. They had one flight down in the South Pacific doing the New Guinea to Guadalcanal run which was four hours in and four hours back with your patients which was eight hours in the air. Then another twenty-eight hours to Hickam Field. If they didn't have enough of their nurses, they would pull ours. That meant these girls were in the air twenty-eight hours. We would come off like this [Shaking both her hands nervously]. We couldn't eat, we couldn't sleep. At one time we were all taking Seconal to help us sleep. Even that didn't work so they issued a command that we had to be on the ground for at least forty-eight hours. There was one ground nurse who had to be flown out somewhere and when she got off she said I would not want your job. We were considered the elite. We were different you know.

Now, it doesn't make any difference. When you take a look at the equipment on the plane that we had you would not believe how primitive it was. We had no penicillin at that time. We had sulfur, sedatives, and pain killers. But there were a lot of things we just did not have.

Sometimes you wonder how in the world we ever won the war [Laughs]. We had used up a year's supply of aspirin in six months. At one time in the hospital, we had about 1,500 patients of various conditions, they had no urinals. So what do you do? You need the urinals. They went to the Red Cross who brought back all types of shapes and sizes of vases to use as urinals. [Both laugh]. That's why I said, how we won the war, I don't know. It was just persistence I guess.

Q: You've got a lot of interesting pictures there. Do you want to show us what you've got?

RLM: PHOTO OF THREE WOMEN LOOKING TO CAMERA This picture was taken at Bowman Field during our training. .

> PHOTO NOT CLEAR OF RLM IN HAIR BRAIDS This photo has a funny story. We were on Kanton Island and the men had caught a large tuna. They said they were going to have a tuna fry for us and they came over. At that time I had long hair and put it in two braids and a little bow on each one. So of course you know what I looked like [Both laugh] There was a directive order from the Commanding Officer on the island to put my hair up.

> PHOTO OF RLM WITH BICYCLE -CASUAL SHORTS/BLOUSE My husband had brought back a Japanese bicycle which was ride able so I would go off to the PX. I didn't have to get dressed up.

> PHOTO OF RLM LONG DARK SKIRT/LONG WHITE SHAWL FROM HEAD TO WAIST We decided to get dressed up. The General had a nice little pond. I said lets go over by the pond and get some pictures there. Well, this one isn't by the pond, but I got all dressed up

> PROFESSIONAL PHOTO OF RLM IN UNIFORM This one is when I was at Atlantic City, before I became a flight nurse. I had some relatives in Atlantic City, my cousin said to me did you know your picture is on the Boardwalk? I said you're nuts. He said, come on I'll show you.

And there in the photo shop was me [Indicates a large size image with hands about three feet by three feet] And there was a picture of me with about 250,000 troops.

Q: Really? Well you were a good looking gal back then. I mean you still are.

RLM: Oh? thanks [Both laugh]

> PHOTO OF RLM IN WHITE BLOUSE AND SKIRT UNIFORM The flight nurses were the first ones with, I'll say Air Force Blue-but it was more like a cross between blue and grey. They issued us two pair of pants and a skirt and our jackets were almost like flight/hike jackets. If we went back to the States, that's what we were supposed to wear. Then we went into brown uniforms. They told us no more blues because everybody else was wearing brown. At this time I only weighed about 104 pounds.

> PHOTO OF RLM SITTING WITH A DOG ON HER LAP. WAIST LONG HAIR WEARING LIGHT COLORED BLOUSE AND SLACKS This was Kanton Island. I don't know where the dog came from. Kanton Island is nothing but a drop in the middle of the ocean.

> PHOTO OF RLM IN SWIM SKIRT This toy boat, you can't see it in this picture, it was this boat.

Q: Do you want to tell us about how you obtained that small boat?

RLM: HOLDS UP A TOY/MODEL OF A NARROW BROWN BOAT ABOUT TWO FEET LONG WITH A TRIANGLE SAIL AND SIDE FLOAT DESCRIBED AS AN OUTRIGGER-TYPE BOAT MADE IN TARAWA.

RLM: I had done something for one of the Captains. He asked if I would send something back to the States for him because they couldn't send anything. So he had a lot of things that the natives had made and he wanted to send them to his wife. So I took it. When I got back again, he had these boats made for me. This one is a smaller one, it was the better looking one so I kept this one. It's over sixty-five years old now, I hope it would last.

Q: Okay, I'm gonna stop here and change tapes.

TAPE 2

RLM: (begins in the middle of her answer @00:03)...they weren't all prepared for us so the Commanding Officer took his flight wings off and gave them to her.

Q: Do you want to hold up that photo? That's a very nice photo. Was that the photo that was in the shop you told us about in Atlantic City? Let me zoom in on the flight wings.

RLM: PROFESSIONAL PHOTO OF RLM IN UNIFORM WEARING A CAP WITH A VISOR A LARGE INSIGNIA .No, that was the other one. This photo is when we went into brown uniforms. Our flight nurse uniforms were the blue-grey ones, we didn't like these at all. At that time it was the Army Air Force until it became the regular Air Force.

>PHOTO OF RLM'S WEDDING. Here is the wedding picture.

Q: Were you able to have a honeymoon at all?

RLM: Yes. I took my R&R () In the Jewish religion, you are supposed to have two Jewish witnesses. Of course, I forgot. Both the best man and the matron of honor were both good Catholics.

Q: Was your husband Jewish also?

RLM: Yes. We were on our honeymoon when I remembered it. Well, we were married. But my mother-in-law said don't tell anybody. But when I told my father about it, he had been trained for the rabbinical and he said, it's America-you're married-that's it! [Both laugh]

Q: When you were overseas, or even in the States, did you see any USO shows?

RLM: Yes, we saw an awful lot of the shows. But most of the time when we were there, we didn't have very much time to sit in on them because we were either coming or going. I was coming up from Guadalcanal, we were on Kanton Island and we heard a VIP was coming down. Everybody was saying who's this VIP? It could have been a General. The plane landed and what came off the plane was a lady. Have you ever heard of Olivia DeHaviland?

Q: Oh yes, she was in *Gone With The Wind*.

RLM: She was beautiful. But more than beautiful, she was a lady. She came off the plane with a simple dress, normal high heels, but gracious. I'm a woman and I look at her and just say "oh!". The aura that she expelled was like the essence of womanhood. She wasn't Betty Grable, excuse me [both laugh] but like I said, she was a lady. She could have been your sweetheart, your wife, your mother, your sister, everything. I mean, that is the way I looked at her and I think the men looked at her the same way. Betty Grable was, I'll use the word, a bore.

Q: Did you ever see Betty?

RLM: There was an occasion in the South Pacific with the USO Troop. Betty Grable was there. She happened to ask one of the flight nurses if they could iron her costume for her. I hate to tell you what they told her to do. [Both laugh]. The idea is that we're working our necks off and she's enjoying herself, I'll use that word. Oh well.

Q: Were you ever shot at or bombed at all?

RLM: No, actually no. But when we went into Okinawa we went in on Red Alert. Anything could have happened, a bomb or an airplane could have come over and hit the airfield. We were down there for only two hours, enough to load up our patients, refuel, and get the hell out of there. When they went into the Philippines, we were on our honeymoon. We had a week to ten days of R&R. That's when they went and evacuated all of the internees. They said these girls were coming out almost like skeletons. For three years they were interned.

One of the stories that came out of the Philippines was about a Japanese soldier who had appendicitis and had to get his appendix out. So they made sure the American doctors and nurses took care of that. They were standing over them with guns. Fortunately he recovered, and because of that they got an extra ration of rice or something. So there were all kinds of stories that came out. One of these days I will get that book about these nurses that got caught in the Philippines.

Now as far as MacArthur is concerned we did not like him, period. He was a very selfish man. Instead of trying to get some of the other Americans out, he loaded up his plane with his household goods. Things like that. The people who were down in the Philippines, who got captured and even after we went in, they did not like him period. You read in the history books and you think, well that didn't happen like that. History actually distorts reality. I suppose that's the way it is. People used to say, weren't you afraid of flying that whole distance with nothing in between? We said no, it never occurred to us.

Q: Did you ever lose any aircraft?

RLM: There was a plane with General Harlan (Parks?@08:55)going from Hickam Field to Saipan and the plane went down. What happened, no one will ever know. They never found

him. And yet, we flew the entire Pacific. Yes, many times we came in on three engines and hope to God we didn't feather another one. Now coming into San Francisco in the middle of winter the fog hangs over there like pea soup. You can't see in front of you. We had no radar then. You never know where you are going to land. There were four air fields that we could use. One plane came in and it was all fogged out. He said he's going over the mountains. I guess they tried to reach Reno, but they had to land in a fighter training strip because they were running out of fuel. We came in, again practically closed in. He said I'm going to try Oakland and so help me God he found a hole in the clouds and came down in Oakland. We would never know. They could start out, they're losing fuel and hit a mountain because all along the coast are mountains. And yet, I guess our faith in our pilots was such that we didn't think about it. It's a job to be done and that's it. People would say to me what did you see when you were over there? I said see? Sky, water, and telephone poles. They said telephone poles? Yes, when you bomb an island what's left? Telephone poles. [both laugh]

Q: Did you ever contract malaria or any kind of tropical disease?

SLM: No, but somewhere along the line I don't know what I picked up I think in Guam or Saipan I woke up in the middle of the night shivering. I wrapped myself up in a blanket and waited until it was over. It didn't last long and there were several other incidences. Someone said to me you might have had a touch of malaria. And because you got out of the area apparently my immune system might have taken over.

When we were on Tarawa, I know I knock the Navy too... Tarawa was a Naval insulation. But the Navy had no idea how to set up a ground facility. Two of our girls came down with dysentery and they were isolated for about six weeks. Like I said, the facility wasn't the cleanest and that was Navy. Maybe it's different today, but it wasn't then.

Q: What about your living quarters over there? Were you in Quonset huts or tents?

RLM: Sometimes it might have been a Quonset hut, but sometimes it was just a wooden shack to keep the rain off. That was just about it. When you were down in Tarawa, it was just a small wooden building. The water was brackish. If we wanted to go out and bathe in the ocean we wanted to be sure the squids weren't there. There was a little ledge, and very often they would be hiding under there.

Q: Did they scare you?

RLM: Not too bad, but you had to be careful. On Kanton Island, there were two coconut trees and some dessert bushes and that's it. Well, a number of our girls were fair skinned, fortunately my skin is not fair. But if they went from our quarters, which is about from here to that chair, they would be burned. A lot of the girls came down with bad sunburns. Me, I just turned so dark, my daughter has a picture somewhere that I looked like one of the natives. Yet when I got back all I did was this [indicates rubbing her forearm]. I didn't burn fortunately, I just flaked off a little bit.

Q: What about your mess facilities? What kind of food did you have over there?

RLM: [Laughs] Vienna sausages, pancakes, and anything that was canned, powdered eggs.

Q: Did you have a regular mess hall?

RLM: Yes, we had a mess hall. Sometimes we would go to the mess hall, and sometimes we would just say (yells something unclear maybe corn? @17:53) and we would be told by the Commanding Officer to be quiet.

Q: Did you get many packages from home?

RLM: Not really. When we went to the States we would pick up the things we didn't have before. There were a lot of things that we enjoyed. I remember once we had strawberries or something and we would come back and we would share it. For some reason or other we couldn't get very much chicken, so we would bring that back from the States. The makings for dinner. In Hawaii, you had plenty of meat. In the big island, it is the Parker Ranch. I think part of it was owned by an actor. Anyway, the whole family has dwindled down and the Ranch was deeded to the town of Hilo for the use of the town. It's a big cattle ranch. In fact, the services always use their facilities. From what I was told, when they butcher the cows, the excess gets tossed to the sharks so they don't have a mess.

Q: What about fresh fruits, was there any shortage of those?

RLM: In Hawaii, yes we would get it. But wherever else we were, we didn't get it. If we were on Kwajalein, there was nothing there but coconuts. Guam and Saipan were so, I'll use the word level, that there is nothing. So whatever is brought in, is being brought in by ship. Everything else was canned, fruit, vegetables, eggs, everything like that. I think oleo got started there too. We had heard something about a substitute for butter, we didn't know what it was, but it was used. Today, it was probably a form of oleo. When you get home, you want all the things you didn't have before. You want to go out for dinner and get a good steak. Or you want something fancy that you hadn't had in years. So in a way, you begin to enjoy yourself.

Q: Did you get to see movies at all?

RLM: Yes. In fact, when I was in Hickam Field, my husband used to bring home the camera and the reels. When the war broke out and families were evacuated to the States, and those houses were empty so they put the flight nurses in the staff quarters. We would have our own showing of the different shows. In between reels I was reading this book, they're laughing at me, but wouldn't tell me why. After the reel is finished they told me a big bug was climbing up and down on the cord behind right above my head. They didn't tell me because they knew I would have been hysterical. We didn't have insecticides like the kind they have now. We had DDT. One time, we were in the Majors' quarters. I had a roommate, and we turned the light on to go to bed. As I turned the light on, I screamed. There was big spider with legs this

thick [uses her pointer finger to indicate size of legs]. We managed to swat it around and it disappeared somewhere. The next day I called down to wherever it was, and I said you better send up a bomb. So we moved the beds into the middle of the room so we wouldn't be anywhere near the spider. When they moved us into the bachelors' quarters and I saw this huge thing crawl across the floor, I went berserk. I don't like them.

Q: Any other stories or incidents?

RLM: I'm trying to think. When you go to the end of the Hawaiian island, it's called Kolekole Pass. We were there about five years ago and I said I would like to go over the Kolekole Pass. They looked at me like I was crazy, they never heard of it. If you go to Wheeler Field, it's the beginning of Kolekole Pass. You were timed from the time you left, to the time you got to the bottom. As you get near the bottom, you can understand why. In the side of the mountain are ammunition dumps. You can see the doors. But when I got there five years ago, no one had heard of Kolekole Pass.

Also in Hawaii is what we used to call the Pali Road. You go to the top and start down the Pali Road. The Pali Road is like this all the way down [using her hand RLM snakes a trail in the air steeply downward] and there are 2,000 feet drops on the side of that road. On the bottom there is a twenty foot drop on a hair-pin turn. These big trucks would go up and down Pali Road with only their half-light. That's during the day, can you image it at night? So we wanted to over the Pali Road five years ago - but it was closed, you can't go anymore. Even as a scenic route, they won't let you go over it anymore, because it's that treacherous. There's probably a lot of tourists that would like to see it, but don't even know about it.

We were married in February in Hawaii where it might rain for five minutes and that's it. We went back there this time and found it extremely humid. Before it was pleasant. I guess as you get older, you can't tolerate it as well. I stopped to think, down in Guadalcanal, it was extremely humid there. Yes, we felt the humidity but I guess because you are young it doesn't bother you as much. Now, when I go down to Florida, it's too humid and too hot.

Q: Anything else?

RLM: Come and look at this book.

> PHOTO OF RLM IN UNIFORM WHITE BLOUSE/DARK SKIRT TAKEN
EARLY 1944

> PHOTO OF RLM IN UNIFORM SHAKING HANDS AND RECEIVING THE AIR
MEDAL TAKEN MAY 1945

> RLM READS FROM HER 1942/1943/44 DOCUMENTATION OF AIR MEDAL
AWARD (@36:10)

Thank you so much for your interview.

RLM: Okay, thank you.