



## **Norma Day**

United States Navy

Communications Specialist

Washington, DC

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Interviewer:

Rick Randle

**THIS INTERVIEW IS NOT EDITED FOR CONTENT, LANGUAGE OR HISTORICAL ACCURACY**

**Rick:** We're happy to have with us today Norma Day. Do you want to just tell us your name and spell it for us?

**Norma:** Well I'm Norma Anderson Day and just D-A-Y,

**Rick:** All right and Norma you're a native Utahan, tell us about your early life up until Pearl Harbor and talk about where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor and that kind of thing.

**Norma:** Well I grew up in Monroe Utah and at the time of Pearl Harbor our Postmaster's son was on the Arizona and that's how we heard about Pearl Harbor because at that time I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was and I doubt if any of my friends knew so that kind of struck close to home.

**Rick:** So the Postmaster's son was on the Arizona and did he perish?

**Norma:** Yes. In our little town that was the beginning of the war for us.

**Rick:** And before that time were you aware of what was going on in Europe and do you remember...you must have been a teenager I guess?

**Norma:** Yes, well we were aware that there was a war going on but it was a long ways away and it didn't seem to effect us very much. But then when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, I was a senior in high school so then some of our students, the young men left school early to go into the service.

**Rick:** They signed up right after Pearl Harbor?

**Norma:** Yes, because I guess they didn't want to be drafted so they signed up to go into the Navy or whatever so they could choose what branch of the service they went in.

**Rick:** And what did you do in Monroe? Did you work after school somewhere?

**Norma:** There wasn't anything to do in Monroe because it was a very small town. So I really didn't do anything other than just helping my mother. When I was little I had to herd the cow out on the ditch bank, but other than just helping around home.

**Rick:** What happened after you graduated from high school?

**Norma:** Then I came to Salt Lake and then in August I went to work at Remington Arms.

**Rick:** Okay now tell us a little about that Remington Arms plant, where it was located, what it looked like and what your first experiences were there.

**Norma:** Well it was out on Redwood Road and I guess 17<sup>th</sup> South and I know there was a very big arch across and I can't remember what it said but '*through these gates*'. But there were different buildings and it seemed to me that they were brick buildings but I'm not sure and I worked in the 30-caliber building.

**Rick:** And that was your first assignment?

**Norma:** That was my first assignment in that 30-caliber building.

**Rick:** And did they work around the clock 24 hours a day?

**Norma:** We worked different shifts but I can't remember if we worked midnight till eight. I know we worked a swing shift and we worked the morning shift. When I went to work I was assigned to this '*Clip Machine*' and if I'm not mistaken we would hand feed the bullets one at a time into this slot and then a gal would pull the crank down and it would clip the bullets into a clip.

**Rick:** So it was an assembly line operation and you were on the 30-caliber?

Norma: Yes.

Rick: How much did you make?

Norma: Oh, I know I didn't make 200 a month because that was a few years later that I made that much. I don't know but it probably wasn't very much, but in those days it was good.

Rick: So you were happy to be working there?

Norma: I was happy to be working there.

Rick: Can you remember any experiences? Was your boss nice to you and did you all like him and did you have breaks every so often?

Norma: Yes and I think we probably had a cafeteria there but I don't remember, I think we probably took our lunches with us. But it was...I liked my boss, I had kind of a crush on him in fact. That was when I was working there but then after I left that clip machine is when I was soldering the lids on the cases of ammunition. Because after they left the clip machine then someone put the clips in bandoleers that the soldiers then would drape over their shoulder and after they were in these bandoleers and in these metal boxes, then we would solder the lids on those boxes. And we'd write little messages with our names and...

Rick: Inside the box huh?

Norma: On the lid, on the top of the lid after we'd finished soldering it and I don't think we were supposed to do that but we did hoping that some of the soldiers would see it.

Rick: What kind of messages? Do you remember what the messages were?

**Norma:** Good luck and then we'd write our names. I don't think we put our addresses because that would've been a bit too much and then we had to test to make sure they didn't leak. Then I think they were put in wooden boxes because the metal boxes could dent. So they put them in wooden boxes and put a lid on there and then after...I guess I was promoted because I went to work on '*Pocket Machines*'. I think there were about six pocket machines with an isle between – three on each side. And if the machine jammed you were supposed be able to fix it and then you would spot check the shells to make sure that everything was working all right. But if the machine jammed and you couldn't fix it then you could call someone else to come fix the machine.

**Rick:** This was a '*Pocket Machine*'?

**Norma:** Yes and it made the little pocket to put the primer in.

**Rick:** Inside the shell casing?

**Norma:** Yes.

**Rick:** Well that's interesting. About those boxes, when you'd solder them, how would they open them up?

**Norma:** I don't know, when they'd get over seas maybe they used a can opener, I don't know.

**Rick:** A hammer or something to get at the shells, but the boxes were completely soldered?

**Norma:** Yes and we used those...we had the little furnace thing where you had to heat the solder, the soldering iron I guess it was and then use the strips of solder. The old fashioned way.

**Rick:** And did you write your name and put Salt Lake City on it?

**Norma:** Yes.

**Rick:** Did anybody ever hear back from any servicemen or anything like that?

**Norma:** No.

**Rick:** I guess there was a sense of pride by all the workers that you were doing your part?

**Norma:** Yes. I liked it. I like that and I liked the people that I worked with.

**Rick:** How many employees roughly did they have?

**Norma:** I would say in that one little department where I worked, there would probably be maybe 40 or 50 people working on the different...

**Rick:** Just in your department?

**Norma:** Yes, and I never ever went into any other department until I was moved to those pocket machines. Because you did not wander around. You stayed where you were assigned.

**Rick:** Did you have to go through any security checks?

**Norma:** I think we had badges you know, to go through the gate you had to have some identification.

**Rick:** How many men and how many women...what was the ratio?

**Norma:** Well now where I worked there were all women except the supervisor was a man.

**Rick:** So probably in that plant it was about maybe 90 percent women and 10 percent men  
[**Norma:** yes], and the men were obviously older I would guess?

**Norma:** Yes, the younger ones would be off fighting.

**Rick:** Well can you think of any other stories or instances that happened? How many years did you work there?

**Norma:** I went to work there in August of '42 and I left in November '43 because then the plant was...well they were not producing as many bullets because I guess...I don't know why because in '43 the war was just still in full force. But they were starting to cut production and that's why I left in November of '43.

**Rick:** Any other interesting stories about the arms plant that you can share with us?

**Norma:** Well, I wish that I could find that little notebook that I kept all these little sayings – it seemed like there was a sign that said “*a slip of the lip can sink a ship*”. You see we really weren't supposed to talk about what we were doing there and I don't think we did talk much about it.

**Rick:** So they had these posters around there like “*loose lips sink ships*” and things like that?

**Norma:** Yes, because you were not supposed to really be talking about how many bullets or maybe the general public didn't know that they were making bullets out there. And they may have made more than 30 and 50 calibers. I don't know because I have no idea, and I can't remember how many buildings there were. That's a long time ago – over 60 years ago, so...

**Elizabeth:** Describe the sense of pride workers had at that time.

**Norma:** Well, I think that everybody was happy to be working there and I don't think it was because you couldn't find another job, it was just a nice place to work and you did feel like you were doing something to help. In as much as women normally couldn't...well I doubt very much, maybe if you were a nurse you could go over seas but generally speaking women weren't going over seas I don't believe.

**Rick:** I imagine there were a lot of ladies that worked that had brothers or husbands that were over seas. Did they ever talk about that while you were working?

**Norma:** Yes, well I did have a lot of friends out that and I know that some of them had husbands that had gone over seas.

**Rick:** Were you allowed to talk to each other during the assembly line and operations?

**Norma:** Well we were really pretty busy you know and I did make a lot of good friends there but really we were pretty busy. Because they kind of kept track of how much you did.

**Rick:** Did you have a break every 45 minutes or so?

**Norma:** I'm not sure that that was a law back then but I'm sure we had lunch but I'm not sure if we had 10 or 15 minute breaks. I think that came later in life.

**Rick:** You had to work pretty hard I guess out there on the assembly lines.

**Norma:** Well yes, because you had to keep up you know. What you were doing, the next person was depending on you keeping them supplied with things to do.

**Elizabeth:** How did the Postmaster's son effect you? Can you tell that story?

**Norma:** I do remember you see it was on Sunday and you had post office boxes in the post office and but I do remember that the Postmaster was there and that's how...it just spread through the town that this Dee Norrison was on that Arizona and he was the Postmaster's son and everybody felt like it was someone in their own family because you know this was so unusual. You didn't know people who had been killed in a war and especially the Japanese bombing our own territories. But people were very...the whole town was shocked.

**Rick:** Did most of the townspeople know personally this young man?

**Norma:** Yes and he had played in the band in high school and stuff and he had a younger brother and sister and everybody knew...well everybody knew everybody in the town but you especially knew the Postmaster and so it was very close to home for everyone. And I think initially...he was the only one that was at Pearl Harbor from our town that was killed.

**Rick:** And then there were others I guess later in the war that didn't return.

**Norma:** A boy that lived across the street from me was at the Battle of the Bulge parachuting and he was killed parachuting into the Battle of the Bulge. And that was a big thing in that town too because he was...

**Rick:** What was the population of Monroe at that time?

**Norma:** I thought at that time it was maybe around 1,000 but it could have been a little more.

**Rick:** That brings the war pretty personally back to the little town of Monroe doesn't it?

**Norma:** Yes. And then I had two brothers who had left in 1941, early 1941 with the National Guard for a year tour of duty and of course then Pearl Harbor happened and so they didn't come home. They came home eventually but they had to stay in the service then until after the war was over and then my brother younger than I was went in the Navy. He was at Tokyo Bay for the Japanese surrender.

**Rick:** Now you were 18, if he was younger he must have joined when he was 17 and had to get his parent's consent.

**Norma:** Yes. They let kids leave school, the men – they let them leave before graduation before they graduated to go into the service.

**Rick:** Well now this was December 7<sup>th</sup>, you guys were still in school, can you remember the attitude of the young men and the people in your class on December 8<sup>th</sup> which was a Monday when you went to school? Tell us about that.

**Norma:** Well, of course everybody was talking about it but all the men and well the boys in my class then were eager to go. They were eager to get into the service and a lot of them did leave. In fact most of the fellows who were seniors then left before graduation to go join.

**Rick:** So at the end of that year when you graduated, how many boys did you have in the class to graduate?

**Norma:** Oh goodness, well we didn't have a very big class to begin with but I think that initially there was maybe about 75 of us but I would say that maybe 10 had already left before graduation – of the boys. See they weren't 18 yet.

**Rick:** Yes, and so they all had to have parent's signatures?

**Norma:** I don't know if you did in those days. My brother who went in the Navy didn't go until...well we left the same day to go our boot camps because you see by that time I was 20 and we left home on the same day. He went to Farregut Idaho and I went to the Bronx in New York.

**Rick:** Well this was after you worked at Remington Arms though?

**Norma:** Yes.

**Rick:** When you moved to Salt Lake to work in that arms plant, that was your first time away from home?

**Norma:** Yes, and I was homesick.

**Rick:** And did you have a roommate?

**Norma:** Yes, I lived with this girl who lived across the street, we were good friends and we had gone to school together and I lived with her in Salt Lake for a while. Then I moved in with some others. There were five of us that rented a house on 2<sup>nd</sup> south between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> east. I think they probably worked at the arms plant too I don't quite remember but...

**Rick:** That's pretty tough for a young girl from Monroe to leave home and come to the big city and then work in the arms plant or it might have been exciting for you.

**Norma:** Well yes but I got lost once, you know you could go in on Broadway and then out on Main Street and I got lost, I didn't know where I was and they had a hard time finding me.

**Rick:** What kinds of transportation did you have to get to the arms plant?

**Norma:** The bus, we went on the bus.

**Rick:** So you took the bus from 2<sup>nd</sup> south and it took you right out there?

**Norma:** Yes. I don't know if we had to transfer. I think we probably had to transfer downtown. There were probably special busses that went out to the plant and so I think we'd take a bus to town and then...but sometimes when we'd get off work, when we worked the swing shift and we'd get off work at 11:30 maybe and we'd go to the Capitol Theater to those scary movies that I won't watch anymore. And then of course you couldn't get a bus to go home or anything and we'd walk home. From the Capitol Theater at 2:00 in the morning and walk...I'd usually walk in the middle of the road up to 2<sup>nd</sup> south between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> east scared to death but I mean...

**Rick:** Do you remember the street cars?

**Norma:** Yes.

**Rick:** I think they had a line running down South Temple.

**Norma:** That's where Trolley Square...that's where the trolley's parked up there. And, yeah they'd go along Main Street and sometimes where I would be going I would ride the trolley and not a bus.

**Rick:** The swing shifts would start at what time?

**Norma:** I think 3:00 in the afternoon.

**Rick:** And get through about 11:30 counting a half hour lunch it sounds like.

**Norma:** Yes.

**Rick:** And the busses were running that late so you could...

**Norma:** Yeah, if we wanted to go home we could've gone home but that was on Friday nights when we would go to the spooky movies and then walk home. I can't believe it but we did.

**Rick:** I heard that there must have been a terrific shortage of men for boyfriends and dating.

**Norma:** Well there was Kearns Army Camp and we met a few.

**Rick:** Soldiers that were stationed out of Kearns, tell us about that.

**Norma:** I met a young man who really liked me and his name was George Dupont. The word Dupont didn't mean a thing to me and...

**Rick:** He was from the Dupont family?

**Norma:** Yes I think so because he was from *there* and then he was transferred to Pocatello I think and lost touch because I didn't keep up the correspondence.

**Rick:** Where would you meet those guys, I mean the local guys were all in the war and so...

**Norma:** Well, you know downtown around Walgreen's and I have pictures about where the City and County Building – some of us sitting there with some of the boys from Kearns.

**Rick:** They were in Army barracks and stuff out at Kearns?

**Norma:** Yes and I think Kearns – was that a point of deportation? They went overseas usually from there didn't they?

**Rick:** Well that's interesting.

**Norma:** Oh yes, we managed.

**Rick:** We hear stories you know of songs written about how lonely it was for young girls when all the guys were over there fighting but some of us forget there was a big army camp out there.

**Norma:** Yes, there was Kearns.

**Elizabeth:** Did you ever go to Camp Kearns?

**Norma:** No. Never went out there because you know it seemed like it was way way, many many miles out there.

**Rick:** In those days that was way out there, there weren't any busses or anything going out.

**Norma:** Yes. In fact last November I was in a Veterans Day Parade that started out at that skating oval out in Kearns and it ended there where they were putting up a plaque "*Camp Kearns*" and I think it was only about 42<sup>nd</sup> west and 5400 south.

**Rick:** Something like that, yes. But in those in days that was way out there.

**Norma:** Yes, it was unbelievable and I'm going to have to drive out there and see that plaque because that's where Camp Kearns was.

**Rick:** Well now tell us about how you signed up for the Navy and your experience in basic training and as many details as you can about joining up in the service and what motivated you to do it.

**Norma:** Well after I left Remington Arms, see now that was in November so I didn't want to go to California before Christmas so I think it was maybe January that a friend and I went to California and we worked for Northrop Aircraft for about a month or so and hated it.

**Rick:** This was January of '42?

**Norma:** That would have been '44. But we lived with her relatives and we had to travel you know by bus and stuff for a couple of hours to get to that Northrop Plant. So we only lasted maybe a month and then we came home and I joined the Navy and in March of '44 I left home to go to boot camp in New York.

**Rick:** Did you go alone or did you have a friend that joined you?

**Norma:** No friends. When I got on that train I thought '*what am I doing*'? I just really thought I'd maybe jump off the train but I made really good friends and it took three days for us to get to New York. And then those girls that I had met on the train that were from Utah – one from Midvale, one from Sandy and one from Salina – and we were able to get into the same room at the camp so that helped. But my first morning at boot camp, this bell went off above my head and scared me so bad I fell out of the bunk and I was in an upper bunk and then in our pajamas we had to go out into the hall for '*muster*', and the little gal from Midvale fainted and I thought '*they're going to wonder what kind of people come from Utah*'.

**Rick:** So everybody was in kind of a barracks situation where there were three bunks on each side?

**Norma:** We had two bunks – four girls in each of these rooms but the Navy had taken over apartment buildings there in the Bronx and so it was a big apartment building but there were two of us in each room. And then there was a big hall.

**Rick:** So you were there with three other Utah girls and the first morning there was a big bell that rang?

**Norma:** Yes, and you wondered '*what in the world*' but it scared me so bad I fell out of that bunk but I was so scared it didn't break anything.

**Rick:** Was it five in the morning or?

**Norma:** I think it was about 5:30.

**Rick:** Tell us more details about how this girl fainted.

**Norma:** Well they're just out there taking muster to see if we were all there and she just keeled over on the floor. But she came out of it real fast. A lot of those girls were from Boston and any little thing that you did that you shouldn't do then you got extra duty you know scrubbing floors and stuff like that and then I had telephone duty where you had to take turns with this telephone duty and it was the parent's calling for their daughters. And some of those accents, I couldn't understand a thing they were saying, and then you know they get impatient with you because you didn't know what they were saying and I thought '*I'd rather scrub decks than answer these phones*' I mean because it was so... And we did a lot of marching and we went to a lot of classes. I don't know, the classes were more identifying different aircraft, we didn't have the kind of aircraft back then you know that they have now but... But we were there six weeks.

**Rick:** Did you have to do any physical training?

Norma: No.

\*\*\*Tape Interrupt\*\*\*

Rick: All right Norma you were right in the middle of your early days of basic training so give us an idea of what you had to do when you were back in New York at Waves Basic Training Center.

Norma: Well, in addition to the physical training and stuff we did have entertainment and Frank Sinatra came and of course you know we were young and I used to think when you'd see pictures of him with that microphone and you know he was about as big as the microphone and there weren't enough tickets you know and we were issued tickets. Some of those girls offered me 5 dollars, which was a vast amount for my ticket, but I didn't sell it but you know he did have kind of an effect on you.

Rick: That was in his early hay-day wasn't it when he was about your same age or a little bit older maybe.

Norma: Maybe just a little older.

Rick: Did the girls scream?

Norma: Oh my crimony yes even I did. I couldn't believe it!

Rick: How many Waves were in that basic training camp?

Norma: I think there were different regiments.

Rick: Probably several thousand I would imagine.

Norma: I would think so because there were lots and lots of girls.

**Rick:** Okay, well how many attended when Frank Sinatra sang?

**Norma:** Oh the auditorium was full but not everybody got to go.

**Rick:** How did they determine who got the tickets and who didn't?

**Norma:** Well I think it was kind of a lottery thing and I was one of the ones that got a good ticket, so a lot of girls couldn't go.

**Rick:** \$5.00 in those days was a lot of money wasn't it?

**Norma:** Oh yes, I maybe was tempted but then I thought '*well I don't want to miss out on this*' so I didn't give up my ticket. But then there were other people who came that nobody wanted to go see and they'd make us all go.

**Rick:** Who?

**Norma:** I remember there was...he was blind and he played the piano and no one wanted to go hear that and it was raining...

**Rick:** It wasn't Ray Charles was it?

**Norma:** No. I used to know the name, but no one wanted to go and they made us all go through the rain to hear that concert.

**Rick:** Do you remember what songs Frank Sinatra sang?

**Norma:** No I don't.

**Rick:** You didn't have a favorite at that time?

**Norma:** No and I really wasn't even a Frank Sinatra fan it was just that you know he was just so in demand I thought *'well I'm gonna go check this out'*.

**Rick:** And you stood up and screamed when he walked on the stage like everybody else?

**Norma:** I was as silly as the rest of them. So it was kind of...but boot camp was fun. I made a lot of friends and a lot of the girls were from Boston area.

**Rick:** So in your case it wasn't six weeks of hell like some of these...

**Norma:** Oh sometimes we'd say that, we'd look out the window and see people walking around free as birds and we'd think *'how would it be'*.

**Rick:** So your routine was established, get up in the morning maybe have calisthenics before chow.

**Norma:** I wrote a thing about my boot camp but I didn't bring it.

**Rick:** That would be interesting, you mean you wrote just kind of about your experiences there?

**Norma:** Yes, and what the daily routine was and everything. I've got some copies so I could send you one.

**Rick:** So then any other experiences about boot camp?

**Norma:** Well all I know is they gave us a choice of where we wanted to be stationed and then they posted it on the bulletin board and I said I wanted to go to California and when I looked on that bulleting board it said Washington DC and I was almost in tears. And the one girl said *"oh Norma they have a beautiful Sue there"* and I thought *'well that's supposed to make me feel better so I guess I better feel better'*.

**Rick:** Did they ship some overseas from there?

**Norma:** Because you could not go overseas. You could go to Hawaii later on but that was as far as the Navy could go.

**Rick:** Some girls got sent to California I guess?

**Norma:** Oh yes a lot of them but I went to Washington DC to the Communications Annex and I was the Seaman in charge of that Washington draft and it was a whole trainload of Navy girls going to Washington DC, but my name was Anderson so I guess I can't think *'well maybe I was the best qualified for the job'*, I probably was the first name on the list. So then when I saw the barracks in Washington DC it was horrible, it looked like a prison camp. It just was gross.

**Rick:** Tell us in detail about that.

**Norma:** Well the bus drove up to that place; it had a high wooden fence around it, hardly any trees and all these wooden barracks.

**Rick:** You'd walk in and there'd just be cots on both sides of the building?

**Norma:** It was just...well from the outside I didn't even have to go into the barracks to feel like *'boy I've made the mistake of my life'*. I had to go into the administration building and get the sheets and the blanket for my bunk. I got my bunk assignment and I shouldn't tell this but I cried. They had to send another girl with me to help me make my bunk because I was so devastated. And that barracks, I guess that's where the new recruits went because it was rows and rows and rows of barracks with those metal lockers like you had in school and you put your suitcase on top of that locker and hung your few things inside.

**Rick:** Did they have bunks or were they just cots?

**Norma:** Bunks, upper and lower bunks. But that barracks had many, many many girls and there was just rows, no partition or anything. But then I was only there for a while and then I was transferred to a better barracks. Barracks nineteen.

**Rick:** What was that like?

**Norma:** It was nice, I liked it.

**Rick:** Was it the same situation?

**Norma:** No but it was partition, there were four girls in each cubicle and of course it was all open.

**Rick:** But you felt a little more privacy anyway.

**Norma:** Yes and it had better lockers, they were built in lockers that had more room and then we had a little green table, just a little table with a mirror over it and then the four bunks. But each side, each of the bunks had this little green table and a mirror on each side. So, I mean it was nice, and then the big down the hall...there were 70, I thought there were 72 girls in there but I found a poem that someone had written that said '*eighty three girls on each floor*'.

**Rick:** They had two floors I guess?

**Norma:** They had three floors but the third floor was a lounge.

**Rick:** Did any of these girls that you came out from Utah did you ever run into any of them?

**Norma:** No, I never saw a person that I'd ever seen before.

**Rick:** Well what were your duties there?

**Norma:** Then I was assigned to the Communications Annex across the street and these barracks were out on Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues in Northwest Washington and right across the street was the Communications Annex where they did the code breaking. It was big brick buildings but we had to go through a lot of security to go in. Marine guards...

**Rick:** What were your specific duties?

**Norma:** Well, when I first went the first office I was assigned to weather and you would take a message out of the basket and punch it in a clock for the time you took that message. Then you would go do your...I called it *'false addition'* because there would be rows of numbers and you would add them but you never carried you know like 9 and 9 is 18 you'd just put an 8 you didn't carry your 1 up to the next column and you would add those columns of figures then you got a code book and you converted these numbers to letters and of course I didn't know what it said, I had no idea what those letters meant. So after I would do that then I would punch the message back in that I'd completed it and put it in a completed basket. So what I had done would go to someone else who could figure out the message.

**Rick:** So these were messages sent by the US forces I guess?

**Norma:** They were Japanese weather reports and these code books were evidently captured from the Japanese. Some of them would have these ink blocks and stuff and people would say it was

blood but you didn't know what it was if it was ink, blood or what it was on some pages of the code books.

**Rick:** So these were Japanese messages, somebody had to translate them into English numerals I guess before you got them?

**Norma:** Yes and then you'd use that code book and be able to convert the numbers to letters but you didn't know what it said – just a bunch of gibberish. Then it would go to someone else and then after I was there for about six weeks or so I went to...they detailed me to another office and it was a little more complicated and I still didn't know what the messages said. I would just do my work and there were different methods. But then I was there until '45 when the Japanese surrendered in August then the Communications Annex started to...well they either transferred us or discharged us and I was transferred to Arlington Virginia to the Bureau of Personnel.

**Rick:** This was after the war ended huh?

**Norma:** Yes, but then I was in six months after the Japanese surrendered.

**Rick:** Tell us where you were when VE Day occurred and then tell us about VJ Day and what your attitudes were and what was going on.

**Norma:** Well see I was still at that Waveporter's D and also working at the Communications Annex when VE Day occurred but we went to this park – Lafayette Park is it? – Across from the White House. That's where we always went when something happened and we went to the park on VE Day and then also when the Japanese surrendered we went to the park again and everybody was so happy that it was over.

**Rick:** There was a big celebration? Give us a picture of Lafayette Park on VJ Day.

**Norma:** It was just wall to wall people I mean you could hardly move because there were so many people there.

**Rick:** They were all deliriously happy?

**Norma:** Very happy! Everybody was glad it was over because you always wondered '*when will it end*', but then you know back then you didn't have television or anything and the only time we would see what was going on would be the news reels in the movies or the radio and we didn't have radio's in our barracks so...

**Rick:** Mainly word of mouth?

**Norma:** Yes. I guess you know when it ended somebody must have sounded the alarm '*it's over it's over*' so we all jumped on the bus and go to Lafayette.

**Rick:** And we've heard stories of strangers hugging and kissing other strangers, did that go on?

**Norma:** You saw that in the...those pictures of the Navy guy and the girl, but I don't remember that, I just know everybody was just happy.

**Elizabeth:** Tell me about rationing.

**Norma:** The rationing, I know that there was gasoline rationing but my father never owned a car so we didn't have to worry about that and then there was sugar rationing. My mother of course canned everything and so I think the sugar rationing, well I guess your kids could get it because I've got that sugar ration book but...

**Rick:** You were issued a stamp weren't you?

**Norma:** Yes, well a little booklet that had the stamps in...

**Rick:** It had the ration coupons in it?

Norma: Yes.

Rick: And they had one for each commodity like sugar and I imagine there were others.

Norma: What else? There was gas and there was sugar. It seems to me that when you wanted a new tube of toothpaste you were supposed to turn in the empty tube to get a new tube and the foil you know you weren't supposed to throw foil away – keep it in a ball and turn it in like they do newspapers now.

Rick: Do you remember any shortages?

Norma: Oh, well when I was in the Navy we had everything but I used to go to the ships store and buy soap and other things and send them to my mother because she couldn't get them. So I would try to send stuff to my mother that you couldn't get otherwise.

Rick: Now we hear that young ladies couldn't get silk stockings or nylons.

Norma: We called them '*Navy Nylons*' and they were gross, a kind of cottonish and they even had a kind of an orange tint to them and we called them '*Navy Nylons*'.

Rick: They were probably made out of cotton or something?

Norma: Well I think because you didn't, no you couldn't get nylons. They were using the nylon for the parachutes.

Rick: Anything else you remember? Any other shortages or hardships, of course being in the service you probably had access to...

Norma: Yeah we could get things that other people couldn't get and even when you traveled you had priority over the poor civilians. You know when I'd come home – I could always get on the train where maybe some civilian couldn't get on the train.

**Rick:** Did you have to pay or was it free?

**Norma:** I think that a lot of this must have been free because I went places and I think *'how could I afford that'* and I think maybe in Washington I don't remember that we had to pay to ride the bus.

**Rick:** As long as you were in uniform.

**Norma:** If you were in uniform and when you left the barracks you were supposed to be in uniform.

**Rick:** You had some liberty there in Washington and can you remember some of the things you did around Washington?

**Norma:** One day I signed up for this tour of Annapolis and when we got to Annapolis we just went right through Annapolis and went to...they took us on barges out to a battleship. But we were never to say anything about that – we went to Annapolis and that was it, but they took us on barges out to that battleship. I was thinking it was the Missouri but I could be wrong. Those guys had been out on that ship a long long time. But we stayed out there and had dinner with them and saw a movie and...

**Rick:** Did you ever go through the Smithsonian at that time?

**Norma:** I went to part of the Smithsonian and I went to Mount Vernon which was very interesting and to (where George Washington went to church – what was that city?) The streets were cobblestone and there was that old church there that George Washington went to church there. Of course I went to the Ford Theater where Abraham Lincoln was shot.

**Rick:** So that was a pretty interesting time for a young lady from Monroe Utah huh?

**Norma:** Yes, because Washington is a very interesting place. But it was very sultry and we used to call it 'muggy' I think in Monroe and the humidity was terrible and there was no air conditioning but then you can't complain about that when you know what the boys overseas are going through.

**Rick:** It's hard for those of us today to imagine what it was like with no air conditioning in those building.

**Norma:** Yes, in those wooden barracks. Of course you didn't have fans in there, you'd open the window. But even in the office where I worked there was no air conditioning but you couldn't open the windows and you couldn't have fans because it would blow the papers around.

**Elizabeth:** Your mother had three sons in the war, did she worry?

**Norma:** Yes and you know you had a little flag, it seemed like a little silk flag with stars on it for the number of children and people that you had in the service and mother had that in the kitchen window with four stars for my three brothers and for me.

**Rick:** And they were blue stars I guess?

**Norma:** Yes, there were blue stars on this gold.

**Rick:** Right and if you're wounded it's a red star and a gold star if you passed away.

**Elizabeth:** Explain the stars.

**Norma:** Well I really didn't know too much about that except for my mother's little flag. I always say my mother but mother and daddy's but it had the four blue stars but I'm not thinking beyond that I guess because it does make sense that a gold star would be that a person was killed in battle because there were '*gold star mothers*' and the red if they were wounded.

**Rick:** I would imagine four stars was really unusual to have four of your sons and daughters at one time in the service though – that would be unusual in Salt Lake and I imagine very unusual in Monroe.

**Norma:** It was unusual in Monroe. I don't know about here, maybe bigger families had more.

**Rick:** Not many, one or two would be the maximum.

**Elizabeth:** Did your mother ever say anything to you about her concerns?

**Norma:** No but I have letters that I wrote to my mother and she did worry, she was very worried and I think she was especially worried about my brother who was in the Navy because he was in the Pacific, on a ship in the Pacific and my one brother was in the Air Force but he never did go overseas during the conflict. He later, I mean after things were over then he did go overseas and the other brother, I think he didn't – he was in California all the time.

**Rick:** So that one brother that was overseas on a ship and he returned safely I imagine.

**Norma:** Yes.

**Rick:** Now are they all still living?

**Norma:** No, the one who was in the Navy lives up in Sandpoint Idaho and he was a Pharmacist in Coeur d'Alene for a lot of years, now he's moved to Sandpoint and he's still around. He's three years younger than I am.

**Elizabeth:** Did you worry about your brother overseas?

**Norma:** He used to write to me. He never writes to me anymore but when he was overseas I'd hear from him all the time.

**Rick:** So you'd get these V-mail letters? Is that what you'd get? Tell us about that.

**Norma:** Well stuff blanked out. I know a gal that worked in that type of thing where she would have to gut out the words that they couldn't say.

**Rick:** Every letter was read by some supervisor?

**Norma:** Someone censored the letters and we'd cut out or blackout words that you weren't supposed to say. Of course when I wrote home and stuff no one was censoring that mail but then I never did tell them anything that was going on. They said trips I would take around the area.

**Rick:** Did you have to submit your letters from Washington to home?

**Norma:** No.

**Rick:** But these letters your brother sent you'd get them and they were photographed is that correct?

**Norma:** Well you'd get the letter but it was maybe some words would be blacked out.

**Rick:** So somebody had gone over it and crossed out things then?

**Norma:** Yes, if you were overseas, they were censored. Because I guess you weren't supposed to tell anybody where you were.

**Rick:** What ship was he on?

**Norma:** He was on a troop transport. He told me but I can't remember what it was. But he ran in to someone he knew on a ship that was next to him and they even arranged for them to transfer over to visit and then go back.

**Rick:** So then you received your discharge. You were still in Washington DC and got discharged?

**Norma:** Well the last six months I was over in Arlington Virginia at the Bureau of Personnel and that's where I was discharged from there. Then I went on a little trip with a friend of mine that was discharged the same day and we went to Philadelphia – her home town and to New York City and to Ansonia Connecticut to her Italian friends and then up to Boston to visit some of her friends. And in Boston her mother said that I talked more like them than any of the other girls they had met.

**Rick:** So you were developing a Boston accent then?

**Norma:** Yes, and people would say to me “*are you from the Bronx*”? and I'd say ‘*what have I said that they would think I was from the Bronx*’? So there was the Bronx and Boston and I was from Utah. But one thing that I used to say that I know (and this is southern Utah – do you know people from Southern Utah?) – we do have a unique way of saying things because I would say, “*if this war doesn't end pretty soon*” and they would just hoot and I'd think ‘*now what have I said that was so funny*’? Because I would say ‘*war*’. But they called it my western accent.